

DRAFT – FOR APPROVAL AT THE 2020 AGM

Hay Bridge Nature Reserve Society AGM 2019

Held at the Study Centre, Low Hay Bridge on Saturday 27th April 2019

Minutes of the Meeting

In the Chair: Robin Cope

In attendance: 38 members of the Society

The meeting was opened at 2.30pm by Roderick Smith, President of Hay Bridge Nature Reserve Society (HBNRS). He welcomed the Trustees of the John Strutt Conservation Fund (JSCF) and members of HBNRS to the 46th AGM of the Society and explained the proceedings of the meeting.

Apologies: Apologies were received from Andrew and Barbara Sykes, Sarah Bradley, Brian and Marie Whyte, Alan Jackson, Paul Cass and Sue Burkinshaw.

2018 AGM Minutes: These were approved as a true record of the 2018 AGM.

Proposed: Helen Loxam **Seconded:** Jane Chaloner.

Matters arising: There were no matters arising from the 2018 AGM minutes.

Chairman's Report:

As usual, my main thanks are to all those who have given their time free of charge to keeping the Society going. I don't wish to mention everyone who has helped by name, or we would be here forever but there are a few that I would like to pick out.

Cathy Johannesen, our new Membership Secretary and Treasurer has done sterling work. Cathy has very quickly come to terms with the requirements of her role but has also contributed to discussions about the future of the Society and managed the increase in membership fees agreed last year.

Nick Chaloner, our secretary, has continued doing an excellent job as secretary working behind the scenes to ensure that everything runs as smoothly as possible. Without his work we would not be able to achieve what we do.

Another person that I would like to mention is Bernie Young. Bernie has continued to lead the Natural History Group and is supported by a group of volunteers who meet regularly on the reserve and monitor the changes that are

occurring to the moss. If you are interested in helping out please talk to her today.

Our seasonal walks, which are led by Chris Berry continue to be well attended and much enjoyed. Our presence at the Rusland Show is a regular feature of our annual activity and we are now in our eighth year of attendance.

As in many previous year, I would like to thank Keith Loxam for all his support. Though he works as warden for the JSCF he continues to do a lot for the Society and I know that we all appreciate the work that he puts into making the Reserve such an excellent place to visit. I would ask members though to contact myself or members of the committee if they have any questions relating to the Society or their membership.

I don't wish to talk for too long but I do want to draw this matter to your attention. Hay Bridge is trying to be as cost conscious as possible. If you have an email address and would be happy to receive our newsletter via email then please give us this address so that we can save publishing and distribution costs. Of course you also need to inform us if you have already given us an email address and you then change it or cease using it.

Finally, I would like to thank the John Strutt Conservation Foundation for the way in which they have continued to look after the reserve. We are in discussions with the JSCF about our relationship with them. I am not sure how these will go - their first demand was for an increased fee for our use of the reserve and we may face a demand for extra fees to continue using the reserve. I do know though that without their support Hay Bridge would not exist.

Financial and Membership Report:

The Annual Accounts were circulated.

The Treasurer reported that total funds at the end of the financial year were £11,057.66, an increase of around £3,200 from the start of the financial year. Subscriptions throughout the year had amounted to £11,500, while donations amounted to £122, all from the little collecting pots in the members' area.

Expenditure comes to £8,416.67, covering the usual items with the main difference over the prior year being some additional website costs.

Total membership stands at 817, of which 64% are Family memberships. We welcomed 150 new members in 2018, similar to the number of new members in 2017.

It's not clear how the picture will change during 2019. We have been issuing advance notice and reminders about this year's fee increase, but we are finding

that 55% of members have not increased their payments on renewal day. It's not that people are objecting to the increase – it's still seen as very good value – but they forget to change their Standing Orders. With subsequent chasing and follow up, some of the 55% have been sending us the balance, but by no means all.

We have therefore had to start issuing refund cheques to members who haven't increased their January payment and that will continue over the year.

It is to be hoped that many of those receiving a refund will "re-join" at the new rate, but it is too early to say what will happen to overall membership levels.

We continue to receive a lot of new applications for membership – 23 in the first quarter of this year.

The meeting was then asked if there were any questions regarding the Financial and Membership Report.

Andrew Musgrave: Has the Committee considered placing a cap on the total number of Memberships?

Robin Cope: Yes, this is under constant consideration, but at present we are just about happy with the total number. Keith keeps us informed on the numbers visiting the Reserve at any one time. .

Nick Chaloner: I have noticed many more applications for attendance at Society events, but we do limit the numbers attending each one to ensure everyone gains maximum benefit.

It was proposed to approve the Annual Accounts.

Proposed: Sue Smith Seconded: Bernie Young.

JSCF Report:

Another year gone by and another busy one on the Reserve. In brief summary:

The most visual habitat enhancement work that has taken place over the last year has been the hedge and tree planting. The total of new hedgerows planted now stands at over 1000 metres, all of which includes standard trees at intervals, and which greatly extends the wildlife corridors within the Reserve. The boundary between High and Low Moor, which for many years had been little more than a tumbledown wall, is now a fledgling hedgerow, and the newly laid hedge along the western edge of Crooked Dale Wood has been extended from the other side of the ford (on the Hulleter Track) all the way along the fence-line to White Moss Tarn. The JSCF have erected all the fencing, and Rusland Horizons have provided most of the plants and the lion's share of the volunteer manpower.

Thanks are also due to member Duncan Cook, who collected Hazel nuts from the Reserve, planted and raised a considerable number of them in pots at home, and brought saplings back for planting out where required, including gap filling.

The JSCF have also planted more than 600 trees along the riverbank on the Withies, which is a roughly equivalent number to those which had to be felled on the Moss to comply with Natural England's requirements.

This means that all the work on both Hay Bridge and Hulleter Mosses, which was carried out at the 'request' of Natural England, is now complete – the final part having been the re-alignment of the drainage ditch bounding the southern edge of Hulleter Moss. Making use of the excavator machines whilst on site, a new pond was also dug in the wet area of Low Moor. The JSCF would like to take this opportunity to record their thanks to the Society's Natural History Group for their dedication to setting up and carrying out their monitoring programme for the flora and fauna development on the re-wetted Mosses. Their data is a valuable addition to species records for the Reserve.

The Hay Meadow Restoration project has also been extended. With the help of Cumbria Wildlife, wildflower plugs have been planted in White Moss (the Lakes) Field, including some wetland marginals, and High Moor has been power-harrowed and seeded. Although some Yellow Rattle had already been established in this field, we hope for a much greater species variety this year.

There has been no major tree-felling work carried out other than the Oak and Holly along from the terrace, which were section-felled to prevent further damage to the stone wall bordering the footpath, and Owen Jones has continued with coppicing over the winter months.

Hard landscaping has been the resurfacing of the Car Park using local slate-quarry waste.

Forest Schools continue successfully, and last summer, scything and blacksmithing courses were held again.

As always, our final vote of thanks must go to Byron Lee for his unceasing and unstinting voluntary efforts on the Reserve.

Election of Committee:

The current Committee stood down and then stood for re-election en bloc:

Robin Cope, Cathy Johannesen, Helen Loxam, Chris Berry, Hazel Dole, Nick Chaloner, Bernie Young, Colleen Henshaw.

Proposed: Jane Chaloner

Seconded: Richard de Robeck.

It was further proposed that the following Committee members be elected to serve as Officers:

Chairman:	Robin Cope
Treasurer and Membership Secretary:	Cathy Johannesen
Secretary:	Nick Chaloner

Proposed: Chris Berry

Seconded: Jane Chaloner.

Announcements: There were no further announcements.

Any Other Business: Members were advised that the next event organised by the Society would be the Dawn Chorus Walk on 18th May.

The formal part of the meeting was then brought to a close at approximately 3.00pm.

Members then retired for tea, coffee, cakes and sandwiches.

This was followed by a detailed and interesting presentation about dragonflies made by Richard Tanner, National Trust Ranger for the South Lakes.

Finally a raffle of prizes generously donated by members was held and which raised £46 for the Society.

The AGM then concluded at 4.30pm.