

S.O.C. Fife Branch



AGM

Minutes of the AGM held on Wednesday 14th April 2021 Via Zoom

1. **Apologies:** No apologies were received.
2. **Minutes of 2019 AGM:** The Minutes of the 2020 AGM were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting, proposed by Norman Elkins and seconded by David Heeley.
3. **Matters Arising:** There were no matters arising.

4. **Chairman's report:**

When I wrote the chair's report a year ago, I had no inkling that for the next 12 months there would be no face-to-face meetings and no outings to report on. Nevertheless, it is a tribute to the loyalty and commitment of members and to the stability of the SOC that there are many positives to report now.

Membership of Fife Branch has remained stable. A few have left and some have joined, leaving our overall branch numbers the same as a year ago – at 155.

Although we have been unable to meet in person, we have enjoyed a full programme of meetings via the Zoom platform. The SOC has paid for the cost of the pro Zoom licence and we share our meetings with Tayside SOC. That has all worked very well and we have enjoyed their company. We began the programme in September with our postponed AGM, followed by a fascinating talk from Professor Jeremy Greenwood about the pioneering ornithologist Emma Turner. We continued in October with George Smith on Peregrines in Scotland and then in November we heard Ben Darvill speak about Arctic Skuas. In December we enjoyed a social quiz and began again in January with David Steel talking about The Isle of May. February saw Yvonne Stephan speaking about Corn Buntings, and in March Justin Grant gave a presentation about White-tailed Eagles. This brings us back to April where our final meeting before the summer break will be the Fife AGM followed by a Fife and Tayside members' night to share good birding spots.

I have been absolutely delighted by the quality of all the presentations. All our speakers had to learn new skills and technologies and the quality and professionalism has been great to see. I have also been delighted by the ease of sharing screens and using the Zoom platform and I think that although we missed the sociability of face-to-face meetings (and Andrew and June Riches' refreshments), it does mean that people can log in from further away without concerns about travel and transport. I would like to thank everyone involved – including everyone who has joined a meeting and made them such pleasant and sociable occasions.

Looking ahead, we would all like to return at some point to the second Wednesday of the month in St Andrews Town Hall. However, until it is safe to do so, Zoom will be our fall-back position. We will also investigate the possibility of hybrid meetings to allow anyone unable to travel to join the meetings.

I would like to thank the Fife committee, who have all given their support managing the different way we have had to do things. The current committee has agreed to continue their roles over the next year, with the exception of Andy Falconer who will be standing down. The other committee members are Caroline Gordon (Secretary), John Irwin (Treasurer), Rob Armstrong, Dave Heeley, Andrew Riches and me (Elizabeth Irwin, Chair and branch representative on Council). We have a vacancy for vice-chair, so if you are interested in joining the committee, or getting involved in any other way, please do not hesitate to get in touch with one of us.

We continue to produce a newsletter every 3 months, and Mailchimps are sent out with information from Waterston House about meetings and – when they can resume – outings.

Members attending the AGM gave positive feedback on the quality of our quarterly Newsletter, on the success of the virtual meetings and on the link up with Tayside branch.

5. **Accounts:** John Irwin presented the branch accounts and reported that they remain in a healthy position with the current account balance at the end of March standing at £1459.28. During the year the branch made a donation of £500 to the South Kilminning Community Ownership project following the transfer of the site to the Crail Community Partnership. There was no other expenditure and no income.

In response to a query, John noted that the balance held was felt to be appropriate and would enable us to meet unexpected expenditure, for example, if replacement presentation equipment was needed, and also to support small local projects that may come forward.

The accounts were approved, proposed by David Heeley, seconded by Andrew Riches.

6. **Election of Officers:** There were no changes to the Branch Officers. The role of Vice Chair remains vacant.
7. **Committee:** Andy Falconer has had to stand down from the committee for personal reasons. Elizabeth encouraged members to consider coming forward to join the committee.
8. **AOCB:** Jean Stewart formally thanked Elizabeth and the other members of the committee for their work in keeping the branch going over the past year.

No other matters were raised and the meeting closed at 7.50 pm.