

RAFOS/Sec/19

All RAFOS Members

22 Nov 19

**MINUTES OF THE 54<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE  
ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY HELD AT ROYAL AIR FORCE HIGH WYCOMBE ON 16 NOV 19**

Present:

Gp Capt (Retd) K R Cowieson	FALO
Sqn Ldr J E Lindley	Publicity Member
Lt Cdr (Retd) J K Springett	Ringling Member
Mr K W Earnshaw	Journal Editor and Web Administrator
Mrs S F Earnshaw	Treasurer
Mr C P Wearn	Production Manager
Mrs J-A Wearn	Membership Secretary
Mrs J M Knight	Secretary

and 18 members, listed at Annex A

Apologies had been received from 28 members listed at Annex B.

1. **Opening Remarks.** The Secretary welcomed all those present to RAF High Wycombe and thanked members for coming. She passed on the apologies of the Chairman who was unable to be present due to an injury. She thanked the guest speaker, Ms Daisy Burnell from JNCC, for her fascinating and informative talk which preceded the AGM, 'Seabirds count: taking stock of Britain and Ireland's seabirds', which included some interesting analysis of population trends in areas where RAFOS had provided survey data, and Gp Capt (Retd) Keith Cowieson for organizing it.

2. She reported that it had been a bad year in that we had lost several stalwart members: Jo Hamley, wife of former Chairman, Wg Cdr (Retd) Darrell Hamley; Frank Smith, former member active at Chew Valley who won the Frank Walker Award (FWA) in 1985; Jon Orme, demon of the toaster; Val Kersley, wife of Reg Kersley, a founder member, who won the FWA with Reg in 1981 and 1994 and which Val won in her own right in 2013; and, very recently, John Stewart-Smith who was not only an active member of RAFOS but also a founder and first Chairman of the Emirates Natural History Group in 1976 and was awarded the prestigious Bish Brown Award for conservation in the United Arab Emirates.

3. **Chairman's Report.** The Chairman's report was read by Sqn Ldr (Retd) Dick Knight and is at Annex C.

4. **Minutes of the AGM 2018.** The Minutes of the AGM 2018 were accepted as a true record.

Proposed: Mr J C Le Gassick.

Seconded: Gp Capt (Retd) R Springett.

Carried unanimously.

5. **Matters Arising.** Gp Capt (Retd) Robin Springett had proposed that a history of RAFOS should be written. The Secretary reported that we had been advised via a circuitous route that the Linnean Society librarian had found some old RAFOS papers including AGM Minutes and other material. We have recently taken possession of these papers which will be examined for relevant material for the history before being lodged in our library, held at RAF College, Cranwell. Gp Capt Springett emphasised that writing the history is an important task.

6. **FALO's Report.** The FALO's report is at Annex D.

7. **Treasurer's Report.** The Treasurer's report is at Annex E. She commented that it helped if payment for AGM lunches was made after 1 September; if made earlier it went into the previous year's accounts which made reconciliation more difficult.

a. The expedition grants for 2020 were approved.

Proposed: Gp Capt (Retd) J C Knights.

Seconded: FS S M Drinkel.

Carried unanimously.

b. The 2020 financial plan was approved.

Proposed: Mr K W Earnshaw.

Seconded: Mr I C MacKenzie.

Carried unanimously.

8. **Committee Members Updates.** There were no other verbal reports from the Committee. The report from the Membership Secretaries is at Annex F, the Ringing Member at Annex G, the Newsletter Editor and Social Media Representative at Annex H, the Newsletter Production Manager at Annex I, the Web Administrator at Annex J and the Publicity Member at Annex K.

9. **Election of Officers.** The Committee position of Social Media Representative was due for election. The incumbent was prepared to stand again but any counter offers from the floor were invited. In the absence of any other applicants the proposal was to re-elect Wg Cdr (Retd) W G Francis as Social Media Representative.

Proposed: Mrs S F Earnshaw.

Seconded: Mr G W Candelin.

Carried unanimously.

10. **Awards.**

a. Best written article – Dave Morgan for his article 'Crash sites and Caracaras'.

a. Art and crafts – John Le Gassick for his painting 'Return of the Gannets'.

c. Best UK photograph – John Wells for his picture of a Whimbrel.

d. Best overseas photograph – Ken Earnshaw for his picture of a Long-eared Owl.

e. Best photograph by a novice – Sally Earnshaw for her picture of a Bee-eater.

f. The Frank Walker Award – not awarded this year.

11. **Any Other Business.**

a. FS Scott Drinkel enquired whether future photographic competition entries could be submitted electronically as an alternative to being printed. In discussion this was thought

to raise challenges for the judging and projection of the images to the audience but these should not be insurmountable. The Committee would discuss it.

b. Sqn Ldr (Retd) Mike Hayes asked if there was a RAFOS policy on entering data to BirdTrack. Most of his sightings were entered to the website using his personal log-in but expedition sightings were entered using the RAFOS log-in. John Wells pointed out this meant that, likewise, he did not have all his records under his personal log-in. This then raised the question of how the website deals with double entries and the possibility of multiple people reporting the same bird(s). It was believed that validation of data was layered, by the individual then the website and then by the county recorder. In discussion with a Scottish regional bird recorder during Expedition ISLAY MIST it had been suggested that the General Data Protection Regulations had made it difficult to check some suspect records. The AOS and RNBWS representatives both said that they had no Society log-in and data were submitted using individuals' log-in. Dave Bodley and Capt Steve Chapman were both visiting BTO in the near future and volunteered to raise the subject.

c. Gp Capt (Retd) Robin Springett reported that the RNBWS had held a very successful AGM at RAF College, Cranwell and could we consider this venue for a future AGM? The Secretary replied that the major problem was that we needed a RAFOS member at the venue capable of arranging the setting up and dealing with last minute problems. We have found that relying on Station personnel to do everything does not work.

d. John Le Gassick proposed a vote of thanks for the work of the Committee over the last year and for the smooth running of the AGM given the last minute withdrawal of some of the key figures. The applause was taken as a vote for the motion.

12. **Arrangements for the Next AGM.** It was agreed that the next AGM would be held at RAF High Wycombe on 14 Nov 20.

Proposed: FS S M Drinkel.  
Seconded: Mr C P Wearn.  
Carried unanimously.

*Jan Knight*  
J M Knight  
Mrs  
Secretary

Annexes:

- A. Attendance List.
- B. Apologies Received.
- C. Chairman's Report.
- D. FALO's Report.
- E. Treasurer's Report.
- F. Membership Secretaries' Report.
- G. Ringing Member's Report.
- H. Newsletter Editor and Social Media Representative's Report.
- I. Newsletter Production Manager's Report.
- J. Web Administrator's Report.
- K. Publicity Member's Report.