

Minutes of the 79th Annual General Meeting of Birds New Zealand held at  
Cophthorne Hotel, Waitangi, 3 June 2018 5:00 pm

**Present**

More than 80 members and friends.

**Apologies**

Jill West; Paul Sagar; Joy Sagar; Graeme Taylor; Rosemary Heather; Willie Cook; Kevin Matthews; Sharon Alderson

***Motion That the apologies be accepted Mel Galbraith /Denise Fastier. Carried***

**Minutes of the 2017 AGM**

***Motion That the minutes of the last AGM, having been circulated, be accepted as a true record of that meeting. Ian Armitage / Les Feasey Carried***

**Matters Arising**

**Rebranding**

There was discussion on the draft logo as presented by Shaun Lee.

David Melville posed a question from Willie Cook as to the percentage increase of members since we changed from OSNZ to Birds New Zealand.

The President replied the increase has been modest, but has gone up by 5%, and has reversed the downward trend. The big gains have been increased interest in the Society.

Bruce outlined the process the Council intended to follow with regards to the rebrand. Setting the context, there had been significant debate about the adoption of a new strategy for the Society which included how the Council wanted to reset the position of the Society going forward in an effort to increase membership. The Council wanted the Society to look more outward by, for example, making sure the conferences were open to all, including non-members, and supporting students to come to conference. In the 2017 survey of members a significant proportion of the Society were either supportive or neutral to a change in logo. This has been discussed in Council and in the magazine. The culmination of this work was presented by Shaun this morning.

Council feels they have taken into account members requests to look more outward and this is reflected in the logo presented. It is not envisaged that opinions on the new logo would go to vote as that would result in yet another year of delay before the new logo and associated rebrand efforts such as a new website could be launched.

However, members opinions do matter and Council would like to hear any feedback on the logo presented for consideration prior to the final decision being made.

We need to draw a line under this and move on as a Society. Council would like to provide leadership on this matter and as such are seeking the endorsement of the AGM. While constitutionally Council don't believe this is an approval matter, any constructive ideas on how it could be improved will be taken in to account.

John Cockrem disagreed that Council has a mandate to tell members what the logo is.

The relevant part of the constitution was read out. David reminded people the word of advice from Michael from Fruzio last year - that a branding exercise taken by committee is bound to fail. He advised we canvass all the views and take them into account, and then make a decision; which is the approach Council would like to take.

A range of opinions were expressed, including;

Several members agreed that Council, as elected officers of the Society, should be allowed to lead the process.

Two members thought it should go to vote.

A few members thought the timeframe from when they had seen the logo and to provide feedback was short.

There was discussion on whether the person in the logo was unisex, and whether the logo represented all that the Society does. Some felt science wasn't adequately represented, but others felt that the underlying fact about members of the Society was that we all like looking at birds and that science wasn't the only facet of the Society.

There was discussion about the mixed styles evident in the person as represented by the logo with the arms appearing very abstract in contrast to the body.

Shaun explained the reasoning behind that (the need to have space between the body and arms of the logo to give enough definition at small scale of what was being depicted) and that he had trialled hundreds of iterations of the person and this was the one that worked the best.

Thomas following up on that comment, having worked in a marketing for quite a while, what he found is that designing a logo is a progression and the amount of work that has gone into this should be acknowledged. There will be some people in this room who like it, there will be some who hate it, but we should put a pin in it and accept this logo.

Heather likes typeface but points out that most ornithological societies in the world have a bird in their logo.

Another member acknowledges the work and thinks the designer has captured what the Society is about. On a banner the bird tells you what the Society is about and the logo supports that.

Another member likes the logo and thought it will be a great challenge for the RRs to follow up and get younger people involved.

Several members thought we've elected our leaders, let's let them lead.

Another member thinks this logo primarily fits and gives a good impression of the group; at first impression its inviting and it shows people we are birders.

Tony Beauchamp agrees with let the leaders lead but would like Council to ask people who are not birders what does this logo say to you.

Bruce Postill favours the logo and thinks its good and well done to Shaun getting it to this stage, he put together a great presentation.

Josie notes that a key thing about logos is that it's a recognisable mark. Therefore this is brilliant. The word birds is right there - you can't miss it, and it's an activity,

Ian Southey misses the bird. There is a lot of history to the Society with the Notornis. No one is going to say anything about horse races with a bird in the logo.

Colin responded, we are not losing the Notornis – it will remain on the Notornis magazine. A key driver for this is the redevelopment of the website.

A member wondered if the designer could show a few mock ups of different people/silhouettes. Murray Williams offered to be a model.

Ian Armitage noted the logo gives the face of the Society a fresh new look, and an important feature of this logo is the way it will be used on social media such as Twitter and Facebook. We see this logo as working well in that context.

Helen outlined the anonymous feedback received.

**Motion** *That we adopt the logo.* Bruce Postill / Bill Campbell **Carried**

**Motion** *Move that this group leaves it to the Council to make the final decision, guided by professionals.* Lana Fraser / Bruce Postill **Carried**

Peter Frost wasn't present at last year's AGM where he was awarded a Meritorious Service Award and took the opportunity to thank members.

### **Treasurer's report**

The Treasurer's Report was read by Paul Garner-Richards.

The 2015 and 2016 accounts have now been audited and remain unchanged. They are available on the website.

Another apology that this year's accounts are in draft form due to a death in the accountant's family. These should be available in a week or two on the website. Last year's accounts are similar to the previous year although there is slightly more for Council meeting expenses now that Council are meeting 3 times a year.

The only other change is we had downgraded the value of the library, but this year it's gone up again thanks to David Melville's evaluation. It's now worth \$24k and our total assets are about quarter of a million Dollars so we are still in good financial shape.

Murray Williams noted the outstanding expense every year is printing costs which has gone up by 25% as a consequence of changing to a new printer.

The Treasurer explained that actually printing costs have gone down for the magazine. Printing costs are made up of more than just the magazine. At the start of this year we had liabilities outstanding of \$24,230 part of which were the printing costs of the December magazine due to the invoice not coming out till the end of January.

Murray asked for confirmation that the new printer was cheaper than Caxton.

This was confirmed – in addition to the printing costs being less we can also now print in colour for no extra cost.

**Motion** - Recommended by the AGM that the Treasurer's report and financial statements presented be accepted and that Council arrange to get the accounts audited as soon as possible. Paul Garner-Richards/ Helen Taylor **Carried**

President thanked Paul for his work and noted that in future the design and layout costs of Notornis will be slightly higher because, following recommendations from Murray (past editor), we have decided to outsource this part of the production process to reduce the workload of the honorary editor of Notornis.

### **President's report**

The President firstly asked if members would stand for a moment and remember those from the society who had died over the past year.

#### **Recent deaths**

- Russell Thomas
- Viv Rutherford
- Sheila Petch
- Kathleen Harrison
- Ian Sutherland

Sue Bell (widow of Brian, one of our fellows who sadly passed away last year) was welcomed.

This report has been published on the webpage.

Council were introduced - David Lawrie outgoing President, Bruce McKinlay President elect, Ian Armitage Vice President elect, Paul Garner-Richards Treasurer elect, Ingrid Hutzler Executive Officer, Denise Fastier Secretary, Keith Woodley, Mel Galbraith, Colin Miskelly, Helen Taylor (and Sharon Alderson, who was absent).

In an effort to break down barriers between the Council and members, several extra people were invited to Council meetings (Young Birder representative George Hobson and Wellington Regional Representative Geoff de Lisle).

The President confirmed that he is standing down and congratulated Bruce McKinlay as the incoming President. Bruce was elected unopposed for President, congratulations also to Ian Armitage who on a similar basis was nominated Vice President and Paul Garner-Richards as Treasurer.

Murray Williams made a point that this Society has a very poor record in supporting women to become leaders in the Society.

The President announced that the new Council member is another woman – Natalie Forsdick.

Helen responded as a woman on Council and a recent representative on the SciCom that as a fairly recent Council member she felt she needed a bit more experience before undertaking a higher position. While she agrees with Murray that it would be good to have a

woman in higher positions, unless there are some more experienced women who have been on Council who would like to come back we're not in a position to realise this yet.

Gillian Vaughan noted you don't need to have been on Council for 25 years to be in a leadership position.

The president reiterated the key role that RR's play in the organisation and thanked them all for their input.

Bruce also stated his appreciation for the amount of work that has been undertaken by the RR's. He was aware there are some RR's that would like to stand down but were unable to find people to replace them. The role doesn't have to be onerous – other members can support this role.

The importance of following the Health and Safety policy and everyone's responsibilities under the Health and Safety Act to ensure the safety of all was reiterated.

Good news on our publications as Notornis has gained an impact factor due to hard work of Dr Bull and her predecessor Dr Briskie.

Eleanor Gunby as a young birder presented a paper in Notornis on the first NZ sighting of Cox's sandpiper. Well done Eleanor.

Birds New Zealand under editorship of Michael Szabo is a good magazine.

New awards for best new author paper and best student paper will be presented this year.

Jill West was thanked for maintaining the membership database.

The Beach Patrol Database Project, under Ian Armitage's guidance is well advanced and making very good progress of double-entry of data into a digital format. It's hoped it will be finished by the end of the year. It's one of the oldest biodiversity databases in New Zealand with 27900 records, of which 27100 have been double entered. Lloyd Esler, the convenor of the ongoing scheme, urges people to submit cards to him asap.

NZbirdsonline received great support from photographers and it's been great to see the continued acknowledgement of use of the photographs. The editors were thanked and Colin requested notification of any errors. It is currently getting around 2000 hits per day so it's a great source of outreach for the Society.

Ken Allen, the Administrator of T-Gear Charitable Trust is attending the AGM this year. T-Gear donates money every year to the birds research fund. Ken acknowledged the wonderful talent of those who had presented talks, not just of the depth of the work but the ability to articulate it in a way that a layperson such as myself understands what it is you have been doing. He also acknowledged the openness of the meeting, allowing everyone to have their say.

Fifteen projects were funded. Fruzio are also in the middle of a rebranding exercise and will now be known as 'Goodness Kitchen'.

**Motion** *Propose a vote of thanks to the sponsorship we receive from T-Gear and Fruzio.*  
Peter Frost /David Melville **Carried**

Adrian Riegen thanked all regions for their contributions to the National Wader Project which is getting calls about once a month for data. In the special edition of Notornis that is

going to cover waders, Paul Sagar's paper of 1984 will be redone with updated data so the two papers will be able to be compared.

David Melville had a major paper published in the last twelve months on the flyways incorporating all the OSNZ data. It's been hugely valuable in highlighting the problems of these birds which is important internationally, so please keep up the good work.

David acknowledged all the people who go out in the cold and wet to count the birds.

The Records Appraisal Committee had 97 UBR (Unusual Bird Records) of which 69 were accepted. Colin thanked everyone who supported that scheme, in particular Biz Bell as secretary and also Ian Southey, Andrew Crossland, and Sav Saville as committee members.

The Nest Record Scheme is languishing. In the last year Roger Sharp only received 12 records from one person.

Graeme Taylor was elected as convenor of SciCom (Science Committee) in Te Anau and Dr Helen Taylor was appointed as a member.

Graeme Taylor is also our representative on the World Seabird Union. The next conference is in 2020 in Hobart, Australia.

The Checklist, last published in 2010, is kept up by Alan Tennyson who is preparing a paper for Notornis.

Peter Frost queried when the checklist committee would be adopting internationally accepted names.

Colin has been waiting for a published output from the checklist before changing the names on the website, but agreed its getting a bit embarrassing now.

Peter suggested the checklist become electronic which would enable being changed readily.  
**Action** Colin will feed that back to the Chairman of the Checklist Group.

Nikki McArthur updated the meeting on eBird which, thanks to those who regularly put their observations on, is approaching the millionth bird on the database. Keep up the good work. If anyone is not using eBird for any particular reason, please talk to your Regional Recorder for help.

Adrian Riegen earlier this year posted on eBird from N Korea and suggested it as a hotspot. Within an hour he got a phone call from someone in America who had nominated himself as the data checker for North Korea and was very excited about the proposal of a hotspot.

As for how the national monitoring scheme is going, there is a very early draft design with a set of research questions for the scheme. This work has been conducted in association with many of the agencies it is hoped will be end users of the data. The goal is an enjoyable scheme.

Trina has reported that the library is underutilised.

The President thanked the membership and the outstanding work of EO, and also the rest of the Council. He also thanked his wife Lynn.

**Motion** *Move annual report of Council be adopted.* David Lawrie / Bruce McKinlay **Carried**

**Motion** - *Formally acknowledge thanks to T/GEAR, and Fruzio.* Peter Frost/Helen Taylor  
**Carried**

**Action** - President to follow up these acknowledgements with a letter.

### **Election of Officers**

Bruce McKinlay has been nominated as President, Ian Armitage has been nominated as Vice President, Paul Garner-Richards has been re-nominated as treasurer for another three-year term on Council. These positions were unopposed.

A ballot was conducted for the remaining vacancy resulting in Natalie Forsdick being elected to Council. All votes were scrutinised by three appointed members and checked for validity against current membership records. The bulk of votes were by survey monkey.

**Motion** *That the ballot papers be destroyed* Denise Fastier / Mel Galbraith **Carried**

### **Constitutional amendments proposed (as advertised in March 2018 Notornis)**

Notice of Motion for four amendments to the Constitution of The Ornithological Society of NZ Inc.

1. At its meeting in Wellington on 7 October 2017 Council endorsed recommendations for four amendments to the Society's Constitution. Two Regional Representatives subsequently endorsed these recommendations; in the absence of any further comments it is assumed that other Regional Representatives do not object.
2. The Constitution requires that amendments can be made at a General Meeting of the Society after "due notice of motion has been given in the notice convening such General Meeting". Refer to Clause 17.1 of the Constitution.
3. The following Notice of Motion is proposed to enable four recommendations to be debated and voted on at the Annual General Meeting to be held in the Bay of Islands in 2018. This matter needs to be included on the AGM Agenda as "Amendments to the Constitution".
4. A full background paper has been published on the Society's website. Notice of Motion in terms of Rule 17.1 of the Constitution Notice of Motion is given to members that the Constitution of The Ornithological Society of New Zealand Inc. be amended at the General Meeting of the Society in 2018, as follows:

Amendment to Rule 16.1.1:

Delete: At every Annual General Meeting the Council shall submit an annual report and the audited statement of accounts of the Society for the previous year.

New amendment: At every Annual General Meeting the Council shall submit an annual report and a statement of accounts of the Society for the previous year. The Council may elect to have the statement of annual accounts audited, or reviewed, by an independent reviewer in accordance with the requirements of relevant legislation.

Auditing is expensive, but if we got the accounts reviewed it costs less.

Colin wondered if the addition of the word either; The Council may elect to *either* get the statement of annual accounts audited, or reviewed

Murray Williams: take out the comma and that takes account of that eg The Council may elect to the statement of annual accounts audited or reviewed

Peter frost change may to shall elect

**Moved and seconded previously Carried with above amendments**

Amendment to Rule 14.16:

Delete: All monies or other property held by the regions are to be held on behalf of the Society according to such conditions and procedures as the Council shall determine and the annual financial accounts for a region are to be audited by the Treasurer of the Society.

New amendment: All monies or other property held by the regions are to be held on behalf of the Society according to such conditions and procedures as the Council shall determine. The annual financial accounts for a region shall be incorporated within the annual accounts of the Society as a whole and may be reviewed by an independent reviewer in accordance with the provisions of Rule 16.1.1.

Peter Frost – replace the word may by shall

**Moved and seconded previously Carried with above amendments**

New Rule 14.17: Where a position of regional Treasurer for any specific region cannot be appointed Council may appoint a Treasurer from another region as Acting Treasurer in the region not having an appointed Treasurer for a period not exceeding one year. If a regional Treasurer position continues to remain vacant for more than one year, Council shall assume all financial responsibilities for that region, including the keeping of accounts, the management of bank accounts and the control of cheque books. Regional management of accounts may be delegated by Council to the region once a new regional Treasurer is appointed.

This was driven by a region not having anyone prepared to accept role of treasurer which is untenable.

Peter Frost – do you mean to imply flexibility in the first sentence or should that be shall

Bruce McKinlay, we do mean to imply flexibility as the preference is that regions will manage the finances.

Query: Is there any situation where you wouldn't delegate funds back if there – change the last may to a shall.

**Moved and seconded previously Carried with above amendments**

Amendment to Rule 3.7:

Delete: To maintain a library of ornithological literature for the use of Members and to promote a wider knowledge of birds.

New amendment: To maintain a library of ornithological literature and other media for the use of Members and to promote a wider knowledge of birds.

## **Moved and seconded previously Carried**

### **Notice of Motion: Review of Conservation Policy**

John Cockrem: Many of our birds are declining. Our Conservation policy was published 35 years ago. It says OSNZ will not be an advocate for conservation and we won't be a competitor for Forest & Bird. John suggested that from time to time OSNZ should have the capacity to speak out. At the moment RRs are bound by policy and are not allowed to speak out.

Talked to Kevin Hackwell at F&B who is very supportive of the Society being able to speak out for the conservation of birds from time to time. John is asking that the Council be asked to update the policy so it includes 'advocacy for conservation of New Zealand birds as one of the activities that the society can engage in'.

Karen Baird from Forest & Bird, as the potential competitor, can't say that she speaks for the organisation. But acknowledges that ecological grief is a thing. You see it every day. Young people especially are feeling this as we face the 6<sup>th</sup> mass extinction of species. As scientists you have that knowledge and with knowledge comes responsibility.

David Melville thinks the current Society position makes it difficult if you want to make submissions to local and central government, but it isn't impossible. It takes a lot of effort to present facts without saying that people shouldn't do something but implying it by the facts. There were specific reasons for the conservation policy to be worded as it was at the time. A lot of academic societies are facing similar questions on whether or not, as respected academics, they should be providing advocacy.

He was slightly nervous on the wording as proposed that it says we should include advocacy. If we are seen to be advocating, then the validity of the data is called into question. There was a case in which an important message was ignored as it was presented by an 'activist'. Kerry-Jayne Wilson noted this is a horny issue that has been around for all of the 40 years she has been a member of this Society. She has argued many times that we must look after our birds and we must advocate for them.

Peter Frost also would like to support this. He accepts there is a tremendous and valid nervousness over the word advocacy and suggests include 'promoting conservation of NZ birds primarily by providing information that provides a basis for solid management decisions to be made'.

Detlef supports this also and outlined a local example of local dog lovers overturning a decision that had been made to protect birds as one example of so many opportunities that have been missed.

Mike Bell provided a counter view – our atlas data is advocating for birds without actually going out and saying it. A 35-year-old policy certainly needs reviewing, but it doesn't necessarily need changing.

David Melville noted there was nothing to stop an OSNZ region putting in a submission on dog control under the existing constitution.

Carol - one following on from Detlef – we actually won the dog control debate then one person spoke out and changed everything.

Graeme Loh has advocated for Forest and Bird and been an expert witness in court and won against an organisation that should have been an advocate for conservation. A smart lawyer could make the point that it's not allowable within the constitution to advocate for birds which would result in our evidence being taken off the table. He gave the example of the government's current push to plant millions of trees, many of which may be planted in areas we would consider good bird habitat.

Sue (Forest & Bird) talked of her experiences in the environment court and thinks it's easy to separate being an advocate and an expert witness. Just because you belong to a Society doesn't mean you have to be an advocate.

Sandra thinks this is a big issue and wonders if the Council be asked to review the conservation policy and come back and report to the meeting next year.

Karen would like the Council to be asked to consider this particular issue.

David pointed out the policy predates the constitution.

You can't have a policy that goes against the constitution.

Clause 3.6 of the Constitution was read out: "To assist the conservation and management of birds by providing information, from which sound management decisions can be derived.

Murray noted the policy is how you would give expression to the constitution. Doesn't think it contradicts the constitution.

Kerry-Jayne noted we have one of the highest rates of endemism and extinction in the world. And here we are debating whether or not we can advocate for their conservation.

Another member says the constitution covers that but the policy doesn't.

Kerry-Jayne - we are not going to become an activist advocate group like Forest & Bird, but we must nonetheless be allowed to advocate.

John said we are having some good discussion. The key word in the proposal is the word CAN engage-policy can be one sentence that allows for advocacy.

***Motion*** *That this meeting asks the council to update the society's conservation policy so that the policy includes advocacy for conservation of New Zealand birds as one of the activities that the society can engage in.* John Cockrem/ Kerry-Jayne Wilson **Carried**

By **general agreement** the AGM was adjourned so we could have dinner and was **agreed** to be resumed on the following evening.

## **1. Awards**

**AT Edgar junior award George Hobson.** For his contributions to research (the study of banded dotterels initiated by MIRO (Mainland Island Restoration Operation) displaying a range of birding skills, sharing his knowledge of birds through his role as a Zealandia Ambassador, coordinating YoungBirdersNZ, providing a youth perspective at council meetings, co-designing a Memorandum of Understanding between BirdsNZ and YoungBirdersNZ.

**AT Edgar junior award Eleanor Gunby** For her efforts in communication and promotion of the study of birds through a variety of channels, including editing BirdsNZ Canterbury

Regional newsletter, contributing to Young BirdersNZ online magazines and publishing her first short note in Notornis.

**Robert Falla Memorial Award David Melville** For his contributions to OSNZ including holding numerous positions (RR Nelson, Banding Liaison Officer, Council Member, convenor and Member Scientific Committee), International contributions to bird study, in particular shorebird migration and ecology, published widely on ornithological matters including co-authoring 'Moult in birds', and contributions to the global security of migrating birds through membership of Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbirds Conservation Committee Global Flyway Network Technical Committee of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership.

## 2. General business

**Peter Frost believes the Society owes David Lawrie a debt for his years of service.**

**Motion** *That the Society thank David Lawrie for his years of service.* Peter Frost/ David Melville **Carried**

Bruce McKinlay spoke to this motion and began by noting that with the closing of this AGM the Society is reaching a significant milestone with the retirement of David Lawrie. David has had three successful terms as President and was on Council before that as Vice president. David has also maintained a liaison role with Fish & Game and the National Wetlands Trust. He has also represented the Society in managing our interests in the Australasian Ornithological Conference with Birdlife Australia David's contribution to NZ birds goes back 50 yrs. A gift on behalf on Council with heartfelt thanks for leadership and encouragement and sense of humour over the last few decades. **(David was presented with a Keith Woodley painting)**

David thanked members, some jobs you do because you do them and some because you enjoy them and this falls into that category.

Meeting closed 7:31 pm.