



**ANNUAL REPORT
AND
ACCOUNTS
2018**

**Sussex Ornithological Society
(Registered Charity 256936)**

SUSSEX ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY

- To record and study wild birds in Sussex.
- To assist in the preservation of the wild birds of Great Britain.
- To encourage by use of films, books, meetings, outings and other means:
 - (1) the study of birds in the field and ornithological science in general.
 - (2) the education of its members and the general public in ornithological science and the need for the protection of wild birds and their habitats.

TRUSTEES

The Trustees of the Society are the President and members of Council.
As at 31 December 2018 the Trustees were:

Alan Perry	President & Treasurer
Sue Walsh	Chair (Member of Council)
Chris Davis	Secretary
Richard Black	Surveys and Projects Officer
Peter Plant	Editor, <i>Sussex Bird Report</i>
Robert Yarham	Press and Publicity Officer
Mark Mallalieu	Recorder
Richard Cowser	Conservation Officer
Anthony Holden	Newsletter Editor
Jonathan Cook	Member of Council
Alison Giacomelli	Member of Council
Chris Lowmass	Member of Council
Graeme Lyons	Member of Council
Mike Russell	Member of Council

COUNCIL

At the 2018 AGM; Clare Buckle and Ted Merrikin retired from Council; and Mike Russell was elected onto Council. At the first meeting of Council in May, Sue Walsh was re-elected as Chair.

The members of Council are the Trustees of the Society and their names are listed on page 2 of this report.

COMMITTEES

The work of Council is hugely supported by the work of the Society's two main committees (within which there are various sub-committees) whose membership at 31 December 2018 was as follows (an * denotes that the committee member is also an elected member of Council):

Scientific Committee Mark Mallalieu* (Chair), Clare Buckle (Secretary), Dr Richard Black*, Dave Boddington, Richard Cowser*, Dr Helen Crabtree, John Hobson, Dr John Newnham, Alan Perry*, Dr Peter Plant*, Dr Ken Smith, Dr Barrie Watson.

Records Committee Mark Mallalieu* (Recorder), Martin Orchard-Webb (Assistant Recorder), Ian Barnard, David Campbell, Dave Cooper, Matt Eade, Jake Everitt, Bernie Forbes, Bill Harvey, Andrew House, Simon Lington, Alan Parker and Mike Scott-Ham.

Bird Report Dr Peter Plant* (Editor) supported by Editorial Team; Chris Barfield, Joanne Chattaway, Luke Dray, John Hobson, Paul James, Mark Mallalieu*, Dr John Newnham.

Membership & Publicity Committee Val Bentley (Chair), Chris Brown, Anthony Holden* (Newsletter Editor), Tim Squire (Conference Organiser), John Trowell (Membership Secretary), Audrey Wende, Dr Mark (D M) Wright (Outings Organiser), Rob Yarham* (Press and Publicity Officer)

Outings/Programme Committee Dr Mark (D M) Wright (Outings Organiser), Bernie Forbes, Audrey Wende

To all those who have retired from Council and the Society's committees during 2018, our very sincere thanks for all your hard work and efforts.

The following is a summary by the Officers and members with specific responsibilities, setting out the Society's achievements during 2018, under the heading of the relevant Committee where applicable. The Society's Strategy is available to see on our website (<https://www.sos.org.uk/about-the-sos>), and the Minutes of the 2018 AGM are on pages 27 to 28.

REPORT OF COUNCIL

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR *by Sue Walsh, Chair of Council.*

The year started with a successful New Year Bird Race which raised £3,464 (including Gift Aid). This was followed by another excellent Conference at the end of January with 238 members attending. The AGM in April was attended by 56 members and was followed by a talk from Alan Perry entitled "Wealden Heath Breeding Bird Survey – An Update". Membership of the Society remains at a high level just below 2,000.

I am pleased to report that the Society's finances remain sound. The financing of conservation projects totalling £35,246, and agreed in 2017, were completed. During 2018 the SOS approved further donations of £15,520. The largest sums were to the RSPB for the repair of the viewing platform at Jupps View, Pulborough Brooks; and a contribution towards the Turtle Dove project in the Adur Valley. Chichester Harbour Conservancy was awarded funds for the construction of tern rafts to be placed in Thorney Deeps.

Council met five times during the year, and there were several personnel changes noted. At the May meeting, Council welcomed Richard Cowser as Conservation Officer and Mike Russell as an Ordinary Member of Council. Alan Perry was co-opted onto Council to act as Treasurer during the year as the position remained unfilled. Mya Bambrick and Jon Curson are invited to attend the next Council meeting with a view to being proposed for election prior to the AGM. We are particularly pleased to welcome Jon who has a long history of contributing to the SOS; and Mya who is several decades younger than most Council members and can bring fresh knowledge, perspective and ideas to the Society.

Major items for discussion at Council meetings have included the development and implementation of an action plan to ensure the Society complies with the new EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which came into effect on 25 May 2018. The Society prepared this action plan in good time and helped several other charitable organisations by sharing with them our plans. Council confirmed (with minor amendments) the Society's Strategy and the policy documents relating to Risk Assessment and to Health and Safety. Close links are maintained with other county wildlife organisations. Nicola Scothern (Regional Director of RSPB) was invited as a guest to our Council meeting in February 2018. During the year, Alan Perry and Sue Walsh met with Tor Lawrence, the new CEO of SWT; and Sue Walsh and Mike Russell met with Claire Kerr, one of the Countryside and Policy Managers with the South Downs National Park Authority. Throughout the year we have also kept in close contact with Hampshire Ornithological Society and shared information on different issues.

All members of Council, the various Committees and survey teams have once again invested a huge amount of time on the Society's behalf and sincere thanks go to them all.

During my four years as Chair of Council it has been my aim to keep the Society on track in delivering its core business as stated in the aims and

objectives. I am grateful to everyone who has supported and worked with me during this time.

TREASURER’S REPORT *by Alan Perry*

Income from members’ subscriptions, legacies and donations including Gift Aid exceeded £54,810 which is £27,072 more than last year. This was mainly due to the legacy from Mrs Barbara Mary Mortlock received in the year, mentioned in last year’s report. We are very grateful for donations received from members and can assure them that all monies given to the Society will be spent on conservation. This is because our subscription income more than covers the cost of member services and administration.

During the year, the Society donated £50,334 in total for conservation projects; We gave RSPB £20,000, a contribution towards the new Ferry Pool hide at Pagham Harbour, and £14,700 for work carried out by SWT at Burton/Chingford Ponds and at Graffham Common. These amounts had been awarded during 2017 and were paid this year. We contributed £500 towards the Peregrine project at Chichester Cathedral. Chichester Harbour Conservancy was awarded £3,760 to help with the construction of Tern rafts to be placed in Thorney Deeps. RSPB were awarded £8,817 for both the repair of Jupps View viewing platform at Pulborough Brooks and a contribution to the Turtle Dove Project in the Adur Valley.

From the Conservation Fund we awarded three projects £2,443 in total; the Brighton House Sparrow project, Karen Swann’s work on an ‘Insight into the lives of the Chichester Peregrines’ and Michelham Priory’s Wild Bird initiative.

I refer to note 13 in the accounts that £13,577 of the total sum awarded in the year has not been paid to Grantees in 2018 but appears in Sundry Creditors.

Taking account of our Reserves Policy (see note 2 to the accounts) our funds available for conservation at 31 December 2018 were £59,738, an increase of £9,624 compared to last year.

	2018	2017
Unrestricted funds not committed or invested for the long term	£95,569	£67,902
Six months of resources expended	<u>£35,831</u>	<u>£17,788</u>
Excess	£59,738	£50,114

The Financial Report for 2018 appears on pages 20-25, and the Examiners’ Report on page 19.

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Ken Smith was formally welcomed onto the Committee in January, and Mark Mallalieu was re-elected as Chair of Scientific Committee at the April meeting. With all other posts currently filled there were no personnel changes in 2018.

Committee were grateful to Richard Black and Ken Smith who worked jointly on a survey strategy for SOS. It was agreed that a priority for 2019 would be a Turtle Dove survey.

Following agreement in 2017 that the Conservation Officer role should include greater involvement in monitoring planning applications, particularly those relating to Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs), Richard Cowser has built up a Conservation Team who monitor planning applications and take action where plans could adversely impact upon birds. The team have been kept busy during 2018 responding to various planning applications around the county and Richard has developed criteria for proposing new LWSs. Scientific Committee and Council are grateful to Richard and the team for this important work.

Clare Buckle, Secretary to Scientific Committee

ARCHIVES

The Society's electronic archive has continued to be regularly updated over the past year. As before, the bulk of the documents archived comprise minutes of Council meetings and those of the various sub-committees, including the Scientific, Membership & Publicity and Rarities Committees; together with the relevant supporting papers. Newsletters and the Annual Report and accounts are also included in the archive.

The paper archives, which include most of the Society's documents prior to 2007, remain at the West Sussex Record Office in Chichester, where they can be viewed by making a direct appointment. To ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act, records of members and their details (such as addresses etc.) are only held in relation to archived rare bird descriptions held in the Society's archive, and not for any other reason.

Mark (CMV) Wright, Archivist

CONSERVATION

The SOS Conservation Team has been significantly strengthened during the year and now comprises six members, five of whom are covering most (but not yet all) of the District Councils in Sussex. Two training sessions have been held with RSPB and SWT, and at the end of the year SWT were able to give us access to their mapping system so that we can see the boundaries of all Sussex sites that have a conservation designation. Twice yearly liaison meetings are being set up with RSPB and SWT, and we are starting to share work between our organisations. RSPB have agreed to set up similar conservation work-share arrangements with HOS and with Hampshire and IOW WT, using their relationship with SOS as the model,

and HOS are going to follow our lead and strengthen their own Conservation Team.

The South Pagham planning application, referred to in last year's annual report, was approved, but only after we obtained (with support from Natural England) agreement that full like-for-like mitigation be put in place so that no net loss of foraging areas for Brent Geese will occur. During 2019 we need to ensure that this happens. We have also taken over from RSPB the surveying of all the fields around Pagham Harbour so that over several years we can map the fields where Brent Geese forage and try to ensure that key areas are identified as needing protection from future development. Such a scheme is already in place for Chichester Harbour (and the Solent).

The Brett Aggregates planning application at Tidemills in Newhaven was also approved, despite overwhelming opposition from local groups and SOS. The Lewes-Eastbourne Local Plan proposes yet more development on the Tidemills LWS, which we are opposing.

During the year we have commented on the Local Plans prepared by Lewes-Eastbourne, Wealden and Worthing District Councils. We have also objected to specific planning applications where we feel important sites for birds would be harmed, and we have sought mitigation measures to protect Barn Owl, Nightingales and Turtle Dove during the restoration of the Robertsbridge to Bodiam section of the Rother Valley Steam Railway. In two cases, planning applications that we objected to (both in the strategic Climping Gap, which is a designated area for non-development) were refused. We are working with RSPB and local Swift experts on mitigation plans for the displacement of Swifts during the redevelopment of parts of Brighton General Hospital, and we are exploring whether something can be done along the River Adur within the National Park to create new bird habitat to offset the adverse impact on birds of recent and planned developments along the Lower Adur, south of the National Park.

SWT are now actively updating citations for existing Local Wildlife Sites (formerly SNCI's) and considering new sites for designation as LWS's. SOS is represented on the decision-making Sussex LWS panel. We have put forward two candidate sites that we feel are important for birds – the New Drayton Gravel Pits at Chichester, and Goring Gap. We have also developed three simple criteria (only one of which must be fulfilled) for putting forward sites as candidate LWS's because of their importance for birds:

- a) the number of species recorded as using a site (using means that fly-overs or sea birds flying by are excluded) has exceeded 100 over the last 10 years.
- b) the site has breeding evidence of 5 to 10 species of birds of conservation concern – where a red listed species scores 2 points and an amber species one, and where a score of 10 or more points must be met in at least 4 of the last 10 years.

c) we have records from at least 4 of the last 10 years that shows the site has a breeding population of at least half of one percent of the national breeding population of a species.

The CoBRA team have very helpfully programmed CoBRA so that we can simply pull off a report identifying all the sites that meet the first two criteria. Our newest team member, Nick Paul, is now reviewing these sites, and we expect to spend much of 2019 refining the list of sites we want to put forward as new LWS's, and identifying existing LWS's where we feel the boundaries could change to benefit birds. We will work with local birders to pull together detailed submissions. We believe that this is one of the best ways we can seek to protect such sites from future development.

Richard Cowser, Conservation Officer

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

The Society has management responsibility for the following two sites:

Charleston Reedbed

The annual SOS work party on 17 March at the Reedbed wasn't quite as well attended as usual with only four volunteers turning up. This was almost certainly because of a forecast of probable snow, and it was very cold and breezy. However, with 8 members of the ringing group also there, a lot was achieved; willows were coppiced, bramble removed, blackthorn cut and lowered. A local willow worker who has visited before was also present and cut and collected a lot of willow rods for working with. A very successful day in the end. Several subsequent visits by the ringing group were required to burn the resulting pile of cut material. On 19 April, seven volunteers from the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) paid their annual spring visit and together with members of the ringing group cut lots more blackthorn, with the ensuing material being burnt on both this and a later date. Having finalised this particular block of clearance, it is hoped the reeds will re-establish in this section.

During the summer the ringing group kept the paths cut and repaired the wooden walkways. This work continued into the autumn when the usual blackthorn bashing re-commenced and the SDNPA returned to successfully tackle a further area, before starting on a third one. Members of the ringing group also attended, and the material was again safely burnt. In the autumn, a stand of willows which had grown to an unacceptable height was coppiced by the ringing group and a large area of scrub cleared.

Very little invasive Balsam was found this year, thankfully. Whether this was due to the 'beast from the east' or because of the wet winter and spring we do not know, but we are happy that the battle with it is being won. Thank you to all who helped in these tasks and special thanks should also be given to Richard Brown, the landowner, for continuing to allow the Society to manage this important site.

Tim Parmenter

New Lake/Ivy Lake Reedbed

At New Lake, the presence of a thriving cormorant colony meant that there was no attempt at breeding by Common Tern. This SOS managed Nature Reserve continues to attract good numbers of wintering waterfowl.

Richard Cowser, Conservation Officer

DATABASE

During the year, the Society added almost 320K records for 2017 to its database, an increase of approximately 1.5% on 2016. More details of the breakdown of the 2017 records are contained in the 70th Sussex Bird Report. The usual data exchange with the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SxBRC) successfully took place in September.

The Society's multi-user online database (CoBRA2) continues to function very well. In 2018 work has included enhancements to management systems and dealing with various issues resulting from the system being migrated from one host to another. The writing teams for The Sussex Bird Report (SxBR) successfully extracted their own species data from the database for a third year and as in previous years, the process of writing species accounts generated many record queries and correspondence with the observers.

Hampshire Ornithological Society are continuing to work on the implementation of COBRA2 for their own records. John has provided support in helping HOS to migrate their old data to the new database, while Chris Brown, the Society's Webmaster, and his colleague Andy Lawrence, have continued to work with the system to make it more compatible with the way HOS records are structured. Other tasks, such as answering requests for additional data, have also been completed and the Society's Database Manager John Newnham has continued to keep abreast of BTO developments on the BirdTrack system.

The Council is extremely grateful to John for his ongoing work on database matters, to Mark Mallalieu who with John undertook a considerable amount of record checking and dealing with enquiries, and to Chris and Andy for the continuing work they are undertaking in adding new features to CoBRA2.

Clare Buckle, Secretary to Scientific Committee

RECORDS

A total of 256 species was recorded in 2017, compared to 264 in 2016. Records were submitted from nearly 1,400 observers, covering 88% of the county's 1,039 whole or part tetrads. Descriptions were provided in relation to 224 records of scarce or rare species and subspecies, of which 205 were accepted by the SOS Records Committee (SOSRC) and five by the British Birds Rarities Committee. Data were forwarded to the Rare Birds Breeding Panel, which publishes its annual report in *British Birds*.

It was a good year for Honey-buzzards, with five confirmed breeding pairs. Five pairs of Goshawks bred, continuing this species' spread across the county. One pair of Stone-curlews bred successfully; at least one other pair attempted to breed but was not successful. About 122 pairs of Avocets nested at three sites, another county record. At Rye Harbour, 240 pairs of Sandwich Terns fledged 79 young; at Pagham Harbour, up to 67 pairs had poor success due to predation. Also at Pagham, 21 pairs of Little Terns produced 17 young, whilst at Rye 15 pairs fledged at least six young. More than 200 pairs of Common Terns bred with mixed success, mainly at Rye and Pagham Harbours. Many breeding Peregrines were again successful, with at least 44 young fledging from 17 productive pairs. Turtle Doves continue to decline and there will be a county-wide survey in 2019. A survey of Yellow Wagtails revealed an encouraging 50-60 pairs in low-lying areas in the east of the county.

Two new species was added to the Sussex list in 2017; a Blue Rock Thrush at Beachy Head in April and an Elegant Tern at Pagham Harbour in June. Other outstanding rarities in 2017 included an Aquatic Warbler at Charleston Reedbed in August; a Baird's Sandpiper at Cuckmere Haven in September, only the eighth for the county; and a Daurian or Turkestan Shrike in East Sussex in late October, the second county record of a "red-tailed" shrike. The year was memorable for the influx of Waxwings in the early months. Then from October, there was a remarkable invasion of Hawfinches with counts of up to 150 from over 100 locations.

The members of the SOSRC who assess records of scarce and rare species or subspecies, and the Assistant Recorder, Martin Orchard-Webb, performed essential and much-appreciated work in support of the Recorder. The three volunteers who processed paper records for the database continued their work and the Recorder is indebted to them. Thanks are due to John Newnham, who helped the Recorder in many ways.

Mark Mallalieu, Recorder

SPECIES ACTION

Barn Owls

During 2018 we continued to fund and to provide nest boxes as appropriate, and to advise landowners wishing to erect their own. At least one such box was occupied immediately, and the box erected in 2017 for the National Trust was used for breeding while building work started on the nearby barn. SOS members with Schedule 1 Permits helped South Downs National Park rangers to monitor their owl boxes. A sample of nest boxes throughout the county was monitored during the breeding season and the data passed to the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre and, through the BTO, to Natural England.

Barrie Watson

Swifts

During the year Ray Jones had to step down as the SOS Swift Champion and I agreed to step back into the role.

Unfortunately, the Lewes Swift Group, which had got off to such a good start in 2017, ran out of leaders and 2018 has proved a quiet year for them. Happily, Chichester Natural History Society has set up a Swift Group which is a welcome new Sussex initiative.

Bad weather in the Mediterranean when Swifts were migrating to their breeding sites caused late arrival dates in Sussex. Eventually birds paired up, and as our weather turned into a hot and dry summer, conditions ensured that an excellent breeding season ensued.

It is welcome news that more people are actively increasing the breeding sites for Swifts, by either putting up Swift boxes, or asking the various planning authorities, for Swift bricks to be planned for and then installed in buildings at the application stage of new developments. Please ensure that records of existing colonies are recorded in Birdtrack to help enable their future protection and safety.

Audrey Wende

SURVEYS

A Sussex winter Rock Pipit survey of 2017-18 organised by Helen Crabtree has now been completed. The results are being analysed and will be published in the 2018 Sussex Bird Report. Helen Crabtree also organised a Sussex breeding Firecrest survey in 2018 and 46 volunteers surveyed 76 1-km squares. The results of surveys are being analysed by Mark Mallalieu and will also be published in the 2018 Sussex Bird Report.

Two BTO surveys were also organised for Sussex by Helen Crabtree: The BTO Tawny Owl Point Survey which ran from mid-August to mid-October, required point counts in selected tetrads for seven 10-km squares, and a high proportion of these are reported as having been covered. Additionally, there is a Tawny Owl Calling Survey which runs until the end of March 2019

This BTO English Winter Bird Survey 2018-2019 began in December and finishes in March 2019. It involves survey visits to BBS squares that are dominated by farmland and will assess bird populations present. It will also monitor the availability of food resources throughout the winter, thus providing national-scale monitoring of the effects of agri-environment scheme management on birds in winter.

The following long-term annual surveys continued to be carried out in 2018 (survey co-ordinator's name in brackets):

(a) The Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), (Helen Crabtree), 168 1km squares were surveyed by 122 volunteers. Population trends for 1994-2017 have been analysed by BTO and trend tables for 39 species will be provided for the Sussex Bird Report.

(b) Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS), (Helen Crabtree and Dave Boddington). All the main sites were covered in 2017-18 but more volunteers are needed, particularly at Pevensey Levels and Bewl Water.

(c) Co-ordinated sea-watching records for 2017 were summarised by John Newnham in the 70th Sussex Bird Report.

(d) The 2018 Heronries Census (Helen Crabtree) obtained counts for most known heronries and Egret/ Cormorant colonies.

(e) The Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey – West Sussex (Alan Perry) covered twelve heathland sites in 2018 and has produced population trends for key species. Tree Pipit showed a worrying decline.

(f) Three Waterways Breeding Bird Surveys (WBBS) (Helen Crabtree) were carried out. A fourth site requires a surveyor and negotiations are ongoing with BTO about increasing the number of sites in Sussex.

(g) In winter 2017/18 the Sussex Winter Bird Surveys (Christine George) were completed for a seventh year. 167 1km squares were surveyed by 99 volunteers, and 126 species were recorded; three of which were recorded for the first time.

(h) The "South Downs Farmland Bird Initiative" farmland bird survey (Helen Crabtree) was completed for the fifth year. This survey aims to determine breeding population trends for farmland-dependent species. 126 1km squares within the National Park (across Sussex and Hampshire) were surveyed. Details are available on www.sdfarmbirds.com.

In 2019, SOS will be participating in Willow Tit (February and March) and Turtle Dove (April onwards) surveys, and these will build on survey work carried out in previous years. Volunteers are being sought for both surveys.

As always, a huge number of volunteers were involved in these surveys and SOS is very grateful for the efforts of all those who have contributed so much time and effort to this valuable work.

Richard Black, Surveys and Projects Officer

SUSSEX BIRD REPORT

The 2017 *Sussex Bird Report* was published and delivered to members in early December 2018. The 304 page report consisted of the systematic list summarising the 256 species recorded during 2017, augmented with maps, tables and photographs, the Review of the Year, the Wealden Heaths Breeding Bird Survey table, BBS and SWBS tables, the Ringing Report, updated First and last Migrant Dates and New Species for Sussex in 2017 (Elegant Tern and Blue Rock Thrush). Scientific papers were:-

The Sussex Waxwing invasion of 2016-2017 Winter; Kittiwakes at Seaford and beyond; Results of 2017 surveys of Breeding Cetti's Warbler and of Breeding Dartford Warbler and Woodlark; and Breeding Yellow Wagtails in East Sussex. The full updated Sussex List including species status, was reproduced to illustrate the changes arising from the adoption of IOC taxonomy and nomenclature.

The drafting and production of the report involved a team of about 50 people, consisting of species account writers, proof-readers, sub-editors, the writers of the various articles, and those concerned with the many superb photographs. SOS is extremely fortunate to have such a large, willing and dedicated team; and as editor I would like to thank all involved. Special mention must go to the other members of the Editorial Team; Chris Barfield, Joanne Chattaway, Luke Dray, John Hobson, Paul James, John Newnham and the Honorary Recorder Mark Mallalieu.

Peter Plant, Editor of the Sussex Bird Report

MEMBERSHIP & PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

The Membership & Publicity Committee held four meetings during 2018, and there was no change to its membership. As well as the responsibilities designated by its title, the Committee looks after the Conference, Newsletter, New Year Bird Race, the website, social media (Twitter and Facebook), and arranges an evening meeting for volunteers, known as the President's Evening.

CONFERENCE

A very successful and sold out Conference took place on Saturday 27th January at Haywards Heath. This year's headline speaker was Mark Avery, former Conservation Director at the RSPB and now leading campaigner for the ending of persecution of raptors on grouse moors. Mark gave a well-reasoned and practical vision of the action required to end the environmentally damaging and criminal activity in our uplands. Graeme Lyons (Sussex Wildlife Trust) gave an entertaining talk about how he is recording all the wildlife species found on their reserves, with some impressive numbers of bird species found, and a few notable surprises. SOS founding member Mike Shrubbs's hand written bird records have been carefully documented by Richard Cowser, and Richard gave a fascinating insight into Mike's observations in the Sidlesham area in the 1960's and 70's. John Hobson surprised everyone by appearing on stage as a penguin before telling the story of his Antarctic adventures.

Thanks to all who helped make the conference a great day including the raffle, stalls and refreshments.

Tim Squire, Conference Organiser

MEMBERSHIP

Writing this report in late December, it is pleasing to record that although membership numbers are slightly down on last year, we still retain a total membership that far exceeds any annual total achieved before 2014. We should end 2018 with just under 1,950 members. In terms of new and returning members, we have added 100 to our roster but lost 50 through

non-payment of subscriptions, and sadly 16 of our members passed away this year. Our numbers of members in the categories of joint member, life/joint life, student and under 20; remain almost identical to last year. The volatility is caused by the coming and going of full members, and the estimated end of year total will be 22 less than at the start of year.

Our ability to attract younger members in the student and under 20 categories has not improved thus far, and we end the year with 5 student members and 9 in the under 20 age group. How to raise our appeal to these groups is an area we need to be actively examining.

At certain times during recent years we have enjoyed end of month membership totals in excess of 2,000, but by the end of each of those years, the magic figure of 2,000 members seems to just elude us. Maybe next year we will achieve that elusive total.

John Trowell, Membership Secretary

SOCIETY AWARDS

Annual Awards were presented at the January Conference by Alan Perry. The 2018 President's Award was given to Chris Brown. Chris volunteered to look after the Society website in 2006 and redesigned it shortly afterwards. After ten years the website had become increasingly difficult to maintain, and yet again Chris carried out a total redesign and relaunched a vastly improved version in 2017. It is a superb "shop window" for the Society, and we are very fortunate that Chris, who has such excellent knowledge of the technology, is prepared to give so much of his time on this aspect of the Society's work.

Three members were presented with long-service Stonechat Awards. Andrew House is best known for his long-standing involvement at Pagham and Selsey. He is also a member of the SOS Records Committee, writes species accounts for *The Sussex Bird Report* and is a regular leader for outings. Richard Lowe has also been a regular leader of outings for many years, a Member of Council and Conference Organiser. Mike Scott-Ham joined SOS in 1968 on his father's subscription, has served on Council and was East Sussex Organiser for the 1988-91 Atlas. He carries out regular surveys, has written species accounts for *The Sussex Bird Report* and both avifaunas, and is on the Records Committee.

The Society is extremely fortunate to have such committed members who carry out so much work on its behalf, without which it could not function.

(We are very sad to report that Richard Lowe passed away in December 2018)

Val Bentley, Chair M & P Committee

NEWSLETTER

2018 saw a further increase in the number of members contributing to the newsletter, for which I am very grateful, and my thanks go to all members who have written articles or allowed their photographic work to be shared. Do please keep them all coming!

Recognition is particularly due to members who contribute regularly – Elliot Dowding and Chris Barfield have written the sightings reports throughout 2018, whilst Mark Wright has compiled the outings reports, and Mark Mallallieu has contributed the recorder's page. I would also particularly like to thank David Howey for writing a series of pieces, some of which have yet to appear.

Chris Barfield, Val Bentley and Audrey Wende have provided valuable editorial support and advice; and the team of Mags & Peter Whitcomb, Val Bentley, Dave Green and Audrey Wende have continued their unseen but essential behind the scenes work in the mailing of the newsletters.

Most members continue to prefer to receive a printed copy, and the number opting to have the newsletter delivered by e-mail has only increased marginally over the year.

Anthony Holden, Newsletter Editor

NEW YEAR BIRD RACE

A total of 51 members, divided into 17 teams, participated in the New Year Bird Race 2018. Between them they found 138 species, of which the worthy winners, The Splash Pointers, clocked up 123. This was a new record, beating the previous best of 121 set up by the Bald Eagles in 2008. Team@SussexBirding came second, with 102 species, and the Midhurst Martlets third with 101. Sponsorship raised was £2,817 enhanced to £3,464 by the addition of Gift Aid, which was another record. Many thanks to everyone who took part and to all those who sponsored them. All money raised goes towards conservation projects throughout the county.

Val Bentley, Chair M & P Committee

OUTINGS

There were 25 events in the SOS Outings programme for 2018, and the annual opportunity to participate in conservation work at Charleston Reedbed. In addition, there were 12 monthly mid-week walks, some to new venues and with new members attending. Details of these were published in the newsletters. As usual, the events covered East and West Sussex, and across the border into Kent with the ever-popular outings to Dungeness. The turnout for outings was good, despite some drop-off for outings encountering inclement weather, with numbers in double-figures on

good days and for popular outings (29 for the Whitbread Hollow outing led by David Jode in September for example). The number of Avian species recorded was generally very respectable, for example; just under 60 species seen on the Thorney Island outing. A good range of bird species were seen, including; Long-tailed Duck (Dungeness), Shag (Seaford), Hen Harrier (The Burgh), Black-necked Grebe (Rye Harbour), Red-necked Grebe (Dungeness), and Water Rail (Rodmell). The Outings Programme continued to highlight access via public transport where applicable.

Mark (D M) Wright, Outings Organiser

PRESS & PUBLICITY

During the past year, articles have appeared in local newspapers, websites and magazines, including the West Sussex Gazette and ETC Magazine, and featured on several local radio stations, including Juice FM. Eight media releases were issued to press, TV and radio media contacts to promote the Society's events and activities, sponsored conservation projects, and the news that The Birds of Sussex had won the "British Birds/BTO Best Local Bird Atlas of 2007-2017".

Social media continues to be an increasingly important part of the Society's communications mix. At the end of 2018, the SOS Facebook page had accumulated 664 followers and 616 likes, and our Twitter page also continues to grow, with 1,811 followers. In addition, the Society has added an Instagram feed, and will continue to develop its social media activities across these and other platforms over the coming year.

To keep up with all the latest news, including Society events, walks, projects and Sussex bird sightings, as well as bird news and science in and beyond Sussex, follow us on Twitter at @sussexornitholo, on Instagram at @sussexornitholo, and 'like' our Facebook page on facebook.com/ornitholosussex.

Rob Yarham, Press and Publicity Officer

WEBSITE

In last year's report I wrote that in August 2017 the SOS website, then 10 years old, had been replaced by a new WordPress-based site and I was pleased to report that at the end of that year the new site was working well.

That site continued to work well for the first couple of months of 2018 until events beyond our control disrupted its smooth operation. In March we were informed that the company that had provided the internet hosting space for our website for over twelve years had been sold to a much larger organisation and that soon our software would be migrated from the old company's computers to the new owner's. This process proved not to be as "seamless" as was implied by the new supplier and there followed a period of several weeks during which long hours were spent trying to ensure that the website in its new location was fit for purpose before the imposed date at which the defunct company's servers were due to be switched off.

Thankfully I can report that since then, apart from one or two minor “hiccups”, the website has performed without problems. I’d like to reassure members that we are putting contingency measures in place to minimise disruption should similar events ever occur again.

As usual, I’d like to thank the team which manages the Recent Sightings page whose task, requiring great commitment even when things are running smoothly, was made considerably more difficult by 2018’s events.

Chris Brown, Webmaster



The refurbished viewing platform at Jupp’s View Pulborough Brooks.



Members of SOS Council enjoying the view from the new Ferry Pool Hide at RSPB Pagham Harbour.



**2018 INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS' REPORT
to COUNCIL of the SUSSEX ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

We report on the accounts of the Society for the year ended 31 December 2018 which are set out on pages 20 to 25.

Respective responsibilities of Council and examiners

Council is responsible for the preparation of the accounts. Council considers that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Charities Act") and that an independent examination is needed. The Society's Rules require two examiners to be appointed.

It is our responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to our attention.

Basis of independent examiners' statement

Our examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiners' statement

In connection with our examination, no material matters have come to our attention which gives us cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

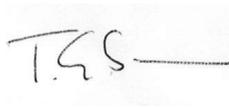
We have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Andrew M Stringer

4 The Gables
Nightingale Lane
Storrington
RH20 4TB

15/02/2019



Tom Snow

Walnut House
6A Brandyhole Lane
Chichester
PO19 5RJ

12/02/2019

SUSSEX ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY BALANCE SHEET as at 31 December 2018

Notes

2018
£

2017
£

	277.32	277.32	631.36	631.36
Current Assets				
Sundry debtors	277.32		631.36	631.36
Cash at Bank:				
Current Account - Barclays	1228.04		1,074.56	
Deposit Account - Barclays	611.58		12,005.04	
Cambridge & Counties Account	44864.44		34,151.01	
United Trust Bank account	69007.90		67,970.59	
Virgin Money account	8135.37	123,847.33	97.99	115,299.19
Liabilities: amounts falling due within one year				
Subscriptions paid in advance	(479.50)		(419.50)	
Conference fees paid in advance	(1,915.00)		(2,370.00)	
Sundry creditors	(21,002.53)	(23,397.03)	(5,589.00)	(8,378.50)
Total Assets less current liabilities		£100,727.62		£107,552.05
Unrestricted and designated funds				
General Fund			95,329.57	
Conservation Fund	11		7,819.62	
Life Members' Fund	12		4,334.00	
		100,527.26		107,483.19
Restricted Funds				
Conservation Fund		200.36		68.86
Total Funds		£100,727.62		£107,552.05

SUSSEX ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2018

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds (Life) £	Restricted Funds (Conservation) £	Total 2018 £	Total 2017 £
Income and Expenditure						
Incoming Resources						
Subscriptions, donations, legacies and similar incoming resources	4	52,838.03	1,300.00	630.00	54,814.43	27,742.25
Activities in furtherance of the Society's objects	5	3,433.45	-	-	3,433.45	3,309.76
Activities for generating funds	6	4,704.07	-	-	4,704.07	4,224.81
Interest income	7	1,886.52	-	-	1,886.52	1,799.51
Total Incoming Resources		62,862.07	1,300.00	46.40	64,838.47	37,076.33
Resources Expended						
Costs of generating funds	8	196.00	-	-	196.00	583.33
Costs of activities in furtherance of the Society's objects	9	65,406.13	-	2,443.41	68,348.04	31,974.04
Resources expended on administration	10	3,118.86	-	-	3,118.86	3,020.57
Total Resources Expended		68,720.99	-	2,443.41	71,662.90	35,577.94
Net Incoming (Outgoing) Resources before Transfers		(5,858.92)	1,300.00	(2,397.01)	(6,824.43)	1,498.39
Transfer between funds	12	676.00	(676.00)	-	-	-
Net movement in Funds		(5,182.92)	624.00	(2,397.01)	(6,824.43)	1,498.39
Balances brought forward at beginning of year		95,329.57	4,334.00	68.86	107,552.05	106,053.66
Balances carried forward at end of year		90,146.65	4,958.00	5,422.61	100,727.62	107,552.05

SUSSEX ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY Notes to the Accounts

1 Constitution

Sussex Ornithological Society is an unincorporated association registered as a charity.

2 Reserves policy

Council has established a Reserves Policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed or invested for the long term should be at least six months of resources expended. At this level Council feels it would be able to continue the Society's current activities in the event of a significant drop in funding. Council reviews the reserves level annually and limits commitments so that this level is maintained. Uncommitted and unrestricted funds at 31 December 2018 in excess of the minimum reserve as defined above are £59,738 (£50,114-2017).

The excess is being retained temporarily due to anticipated and indicated requests for funding from a variety of charitable organisations for financing the purchase and development of nature reserves in the county, and other conservation projects.

3 Accounting policies

a The accounts are prepared under the historical cost convention in accordance with applicable accounting standards. The Society follows best practice in preparing the financial statements, as set out in the Statement of Recommended Practice.

b Any books, reports, sweatshirts or other items held for resale are written off on acquisition.

c Subscriptions are accounted for in the year to which they relate. Each life member subscription received is released equally to unrestricted funds in the 12 years starting with its year of receipt. The balance of unreleased subscriptions is shown in the Balance Sheet as a liability. In 2018 £676 (2017-£588) was released to the General Fund.

Incoming resources

4 Donations, legacies and similar incoming resources

Membership subscriptions	20,237.50	1,300.00	-	-	21,537.50	20,993.50
Donations made with subscriptions	1,627.05	-	-	-	1,627.05	1,290.05
Income tax recoverable	4,597.30	-	-	-	4,597.30	4,587.00
Other donations	1,025.05	-	46.40	-	1,701.45	831.70
Legacies	25,351.13	-	-	-	25,351.13	-
Newsletter advertisements and subscriptions	-	-	-	-	-	40.00
	52,838.03	1,300.00	46.40	630.00	54,814.43	27,742.25

5 Activities in furtherance of the charity's objects

Recording and studying wild birds in Sussex

Advertising in Bird Report	250.00	-	-	250.00	250.00
Sale of Bird Reports	281.32	-	-	281.32	627.86
	531.32	-	-	531.32	877.86

Bird conservation

Sales of conservation products

Sale of nest boxes	128.00	-	-	128.00	56.00
	128.00	-	-	128.00	56.00

Education of members and the public

Conference and Meetings receipts	2,774.13	-	-	2,774.13	2,375.90
TOTAL	3,433.45	-	-	3,433.45	3,309.76

6 Activities for generating funds

Bird race sponsorship	2,815.72	-	-	2,815.72	2,523.56
Income tax recoverable	638.90	-	-	638.90	484.09
Proceeds of raffles	700.00	-	-	700.00	574.00
Sales of SOS branded items	435.45	-	-	435.45	257.16
Sales of donated books	85.00	-	-	85.00	250.00
Bird Report DVD sales	29.00	-	-	29.00	136.00
	4,704.07	-	-	4,704.07	4,224.81

7 Interest income

Bank interest	1,886.52	-	-	1,886.52	1,799.51
	1,886.52	-	-	1,886.52	1,799.51

TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES

	62,862.07	1,300.00	46.40	630.00	37,076.33
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	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds (Life)	Restricted Funds (Conservation)	Total 2018	Total 2017
	£	£	£	£	£
Resources expended					
8 Costs of generating funds					
Purchase of SOS branded items	196.00	-	-	196.00	583.33
	196.00	-	-	196.00	583.33
9 Direct charitable expenditure					
Costs of activities in furtherance of the charity's objects					
Recording and studying wild birds in Sussex					
Bird Report printing	6,232.00	-	-	6,232.00	5,569.00
Bird Report despatch and postage	3,376.92	-	-	3,376.92	3,241.68
Conference Expenses	1,880.29	-	-	1,880.29	1,572.61
Outings expenses	100.00	-	-	100.00	140.00
	11,589.21	-	-	11,589.21	10,543.29
Bird conservation (see note 13)					
Barn Owls	-	-	320.00	320.00	75.00
SWT (Graham Common & Burton & Chingford Ponds)	14,700.00	-	-	14,700.00	-
Swift conservation	-	-	178.50	178.50	-
SWT (Contribution for work at Waltham Brooks)	-	-	-	-	12,500.00
Charleston Reedbed	1.00	-	-	1.00	1.00
RSPB (Chichester Peregrines Carryx contribution)	500.00	-	-	500.00	-
RSPB (Contribution to Pagham Ferry Pool Hide)	20,000.00	-	-	20,000.00	-
Michelham Priory Nest Box and Field Guide production	-	500.00	-	500.00	-
BH Sparrows year 2	-	500.00	-	500.00	-
Karen Swann & BH Sparrows	-	1,443.41	-	1,443.41	1,424.30
RSPB(Pulborough Brooks Jupps View Repair)	4,000.00	-	-	4,000.00	-
RSPB(Turtle Dove Adur Valley project)	4,817.00	-	-	4,817.00	-
Chichester Harbour Conservancy Tern Raft Project	3,760.00	-	-	3,760.00	-
Subscriptions and donations to other bodies	113.00	-	-	113.00	73.00
	47,891.00	-	2,443.41	50,832.91	14,073.30

Education of members and the public

Website	401.88	-	-	401.88	266.40
Newsletter publication	3,319.00	-	-	3,319.00	3,609.00
Newsletter delivery	2,049.75	-	-	2,049.75	3,264.73
Cost of running Meetings	155.29	-	-	155.29	217.32
	5,925.92	-	-	5,925.92	7,357.45

Total charitable expenditure	65,406.13	-	2,443.41	498.50	68,348.04	31,974.04
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10 Administration costs

Postage and telephone	284.36	-	-	284.36	328.51
Printing and Stationery	1,290.02	-	-	1,290.02	1,498.13
Insurance	303.24	-	-	303.24	357.20
President's and Long Service Awards	121.24	-	-	121.24	-
Sundry expenses	1,120.00	-	-	1,120.00	836.73
	2,834.50	-	-	3,118.86	3,020.57

TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	68,436.63	-	2,443.41	498.50	71,662.90	35,577.94
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11 The General Fund includes legacies and bequests received in the last five years of £31,301(2017-£7,450) to be spent on conservation.

12 Transfers between funds

£676(2017-£588) was released from the Life Members Fund to the General Fund in accordance with the Society's policy (see note 3c).

13 The expenditure of £50,833 as shown in Note 9 is made up of £37,256 paid to grantees during 2018, plus £13,577 agreed by Council during the year and not been paid by the year end. This amount is included in the total of sundry creditors and is made up as follows, RSPB £8,817, for the repair of Jupps View viewing platform at Pulborough Brooks and a contribution to the Adur Valley turtle dove project. In addition Chichester Harbour Conservancy was awarded £3,760 for materials to construct term rafts to be placed near to Thorney Deepes, Michelham Priory £500 for the production of bird identification field guides and BH Sparrows £500 for year 2 of their project.

14 The Sundry Creditors total of £21,002.53, is made up of £13,577 see Note 13, plus the Bird Report printing £6,232, along with Newsletter printing and delivery £1,193.53.