

# Bat Conservation Trust



## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2017**

BCT Scottish Batworker's Conference, Battleby Conference Centre, Perth  
Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2017

David Gibbons (BCT Chair) chaired the meeting and covered the rules for voting:

- He pointed out that spare AGM papers were available at the front.
- He advised that as proxy voting had been made available, the Chair would call for a poll on every resolution so that the proxy votes could be included.
- He described the manner of the poll – that it would be by a show of hands (in which the voting card should be held) to which the proxy votes would be added.
- All those who had submitted proxy votes had appointed the Chair as their proxy.
- He checked if anyone present had also submitted a postal vote; it was confirmed that nobody had

**26 voting members attended at the start of the meeting (plus 2 proxy votes had been submitted).**

### **1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from: Ed Wells, Helen Wells, Richard Cinderey, Nick Tomlinson, Bob Cornes, Robert Upex, Roger Mortlock, Tom Andrews, Rupert Lancaster, Steve Parker, Tracey Jolliffe and Kit Stoner.

Three members requested for the following statements to be read along with their apologies for absence:

Ed & Helen Wells: Please record our apologies and our dissatisfaction that there has been no conference to bring the bat community together and make the AGM part of a full residential weekend

Tracey Jolliffe: Would like it to be noted that she, and other members of the Bat Rehabilitators Facebook Group, were unhappy regarding a nomination for the Pete Guest Award of someone doing bat care but blatantly disregarding the bat care guidelines – not wearing gloves, allowing members of the public to handle bats and putting pictures of this on social media.

Lisa Worledge, BCT's Head of Conservation Services responded to Tracey Jolliffe's statement: Lisa clarified that Tracey Jolliffe's comment was made on the Facebook

Bat Carer's Forum, regarding Donna and Graham Street's nomination for this year's Pete Guest Award. Lisa clarified BCT's role in the Pete Guest Award. BCT does not have a say in who is nominated. BCT's role is to administer the award, by requesting nominations, overseeing the voting process and presenting the award, but these activities are purely administrative. BCT does not set conditions of who can be nominated, or police the nominations, as they are from those who have been inspired or enthused, and the purpose of the award is to celebrate these people.

BCT does not restrict who can vote for the award but shares the nominations document with bat groups, on the BCT website, in e-bulletins and via social media. Anyone voting will have been reached in some way, directly by their interactions with the nominee and/or by reading the nominations document, sufficiently for them to submit a vote for that person.

BCT has now explained our role and the criteria for the award on the Pete Guest Award page on the BCT website [<http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/nationalconferenceawards.html>] and will include the statement when we circulate the nominations document for 2018.

## 2. Minutes of the AGM 2016

The chair presented the 2016 AGM minutes and asked if there were any amendments to be made. No points were raised and consequently no amendments made.

To approve the minutes for the 2016 AGM (*resolution 1*)

**Proposer:** Sarah Escott

**Seconder:** Lisa Worledge

**For [28] Against [0] Abstain [0]**

## 3. Annual Report of the Board of Trustees 2016-2017

David Gibbons, BCT Chair, gave a presentation reviewing the year. He highlighted the following from the Annual Report, in the context of BCT's Strategic objectives

Discover:

- We secured two highly competitive Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) grants to develop and improve BCT's National Bat Monitoring Programme and use the latest technology, in collaboration with researchers from University College London, the University of Oxford, the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology and the British Trust for Ornithology.
- National Bat Monitoring Programme data contributed a whole suite of indicators including the 2017 UK biodiversity indicators report, the 2016 State of Nature report (an assessment of how nature is doing across the UK) and the European Bat Population Trend Indicator (produced by BatLife Europe and Statistics Netherlands), as well as two peer reviewed publications co-authored by BCT staff.
- The Kate Barlow Award was set up to honour the late Dr Kate Barlow, who made an outstanding contribution to bat conservation and worked for BCT from 2008 to 2015. As Kirsty mentioned in the conference awards session this

afternoon, the standard of applicants was very high (and we received 27 applications from 13 countries).

Act:

- We launched Bearing Witness for Wildlife, extending our successful approaches to tackling wildlife crime beyond bats to other threatened species and starting a new project to improve the evidence for how we can best mitigate any adverse effects of development on bats. As part of this we held a Mitigation Case Studies Forum to share best practice in mitigation approaches in partnership with ARUP. These new projects were made possible with funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.
- BCT saw the culmination of an intensive period of working with 8 other partners on a unique project to draw on the joint commitment and expertise of all the organisations to help combat the threats to our wildlife. Back from the Brink will save from extinction 20 species including the very rare grey long-eared bat. It will also help safeguard a further 118 species. The plans developed together have a total budget of £6.3m. While that's not enough to save all England's threatened species, it is enough to make a real difference. This project will also directly engage 50,000 people with their natural environment and reach a further 1,280,000 through wider engagement. We are discussing with partners in Scotland and Wales as to how we can bring funding in for species recovery projects to save threatened species in these countries.
- BCT led the Partnership for Biodiversity in Planning (a partnership of 19 organisations representing conservation, development and planning sectors) in work towards developing a toolkit to improve consideration of biodiversity in the planning process,.
- Following the EU referendum and the lack of certainty as to how the legislation protecting wildlife will fare under Brexit, BCT has worked with our supporters to identify allies and advocates for bat conservation amongst decision makers and politicians. We led a campaign where 90 of our supporters wrote letters to MPs, Members of Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly Members encouraging them to strengthen or maintain current protection for bats in the legislation and this has helped us identify people willing to speak up for bat conservation.

Inspire:

- We gave a bat theme to the 'Wild about Gardens' campaign this autumn in partnership with The Wildlife Trusts and the Royal Horticultural Society. The campaign had a huge impact, with over 200 articles about bats and gardening for wildlife, reaching an estimated 11.4 million people.
- Our National Bat Helpline fielded 14,781 enquiries about bats in 2016, providing crucial support to householders, church communities and those who have found a bat in need of help
- Strong relationships with Bat Groups is at the heart of our work. BCT has a formal relationship with 89 bat groups (67 Partner groups, and 22 Network groups)

Strengthen:

- It's been an encouraging record year for us in terms of our membership, supporters and volunteers – we now have over 6,000 members and have had record numbers of life and corporate members join us. We have reached over 100,000 likes on Facebook and an analysis of volunteer time put into our National Bat Monitoring Programme surveys alone each year highlighted this is worth nearly £300,000 per year.

The Future:

- Continue to improve the evidence base and to provide solutions for bat conservation, through scientific research, monitoring and cross sector partnerships such as the new Bats in Churches project.
- Continue our advocacy, speaking up for strong policy and legislation protecting bats in these times of rapid political change.
- And we need to increase engagement with and understanding of bats by the public and the media, through our National Bat Helpline and innovative new projects such as Back from the Brink.

David thanked all of the members, supporters, funders and partners who make BCT's work possible.

To approve the Annual Report of the Board of Trustees 2016-2017 (**resolution 2**)

**Proposer:** Kirsty Park

**Seconder:** Ani Binet

**For [28] Against [0] Abstain [0]**

#### **4. Annual Accounts and Auditors' Report 2016-2017**

On behalf of the Treasurer, Tom Andrews, BCT's Secretary, Steve Markham, provided an overview of the work towards a balanced budget. He was pleased to report that it has broadly been a positive year on the funding front:

- BCT has secured funding for three new collaborative projects (Bats in Churches, Back from the Brink, Bearing Witness for Wildlife)
- We have worked hard to increase donations, as well as receiving a couple of legacies.
- We have continued to keep careful control of expenditure

Trustees have continued to assume an average of 6% investment income per year, and have invested this in core strategic BCT projects that have not achieved full funding. As we mentioned last year, we also invested additional income in a new membership database and integrated website which is nearly complete. The funding climate remains

challenging, with statutory funding particularly pressured, and as a result, there is increased competition for other pots of funding.

In the coming year, we will continue to budget an average of 6% investment income per year, which allows us to plan more strategically.

To approve the Annual Accounts and Auditors' Report 2016-2017 (**resolution 3**)

**Proposer:** Abigail Entwistle

**Seconder:** Elisabeth Ferrell

**For [28] Against [0] Abstain [0]**

## **5. Appointment of Auditors**

Trustees continue to be satisfied with the overall level of service provided by our current Auditors, Sayer Vincent and propose that they are retained for the next year's audit.

To approve the Appointment of Auditors (**resolution 4**)

**Proposer:** Steve Markham

**Seconder:** Lisa Worledge

**For [28] Against [0] Abstain [0]**

## **6. Auditors' Remuneration**

To authorise the Trustees to determine the Auditors' remuneration for next year's audit. (**resolution 5**). (To provide some context to those at the AGM the Chair suggested that in recent years the Auditor's remuneration (£8,700 in 2016-17) had been a relatively small percentage of BCT's overall annual expenditure (£1.34 m in 2016-17).

**Proposer:** Lisa Worledge

**Seconder:** Elisabeth Ferrell

**For [28] Against [0] Abstain [0]**

## **7. Election of Trustees**

All Board of Trustees members are eligible to stand for up to three consecutive periods of three years, before they must stand down from the Board for at least one year.

One trustee stood for re-election at the 2017 AGM and the Board of Trustees was pleased to make the following proposal for Robert Upex to be re-elected as Ordinary Trustees.

Robert Upex – nominated for re-election as Ordinary Trustee (**resolution 6**)

**Proposer:** Abigail Entwistle

**Seconder:** Sarah Escott

For [28] Against [0] Abstain [0]

***New Trustees***

Tom McOwat has resigned from his role as Partner Bat Group Nominated Trustee, hence the Board of Trustees invited bat groups to make nominations for a new Partner Bat Group Nominated Trustee. BCT received one nomination from Jersey Bat Group, for Annika Binet, therefore the Board of Trustees is pleased to make the following proposal, for Annika Binet to be elected as Partner Bat Group Nominated Trustee

Annika Binet – nominated for election as a Partner Group Nominated Trustee  
**(resolution 7)**

**Proposer:** Lisa Worledge

**Secunder:** Anne Youngman

For [28] Against [0] Abstain [0]

David thanked Tom McOwat for his great service as a BCT trustee and said we miss him but we welcome Annika.

**8. Any other notified business**

No other business was notified.

David Gibbons thanked everyone and asked if there were any questions. There being no other business, the AGM has closed at 18.15.

Minutes: Andreia Correia da Costa (Fundraising and Membership Officer)