



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2003
HELD AT THE BURRELL COLLECTION
POLLOK COUNTRY PARK, GLASGOW
22nd FEBRUARY 2003
AT 12.10

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from David Beaumont, Brian Boag, Sara Hawkswell, Paul Kirkland, Bob Saville, Andy Wakelin.

2. Minutes of previous AGM (02.03.02) at Dundee University

These were approved without alteration, proposed by Keith Bland, seconded by Jon Mercer.

3. Chair's report for 2002 (previously circulated with *Recorder News*)

Because the report had already been circulated to members, Anne-Marie Smout did not wish to go into it in any detail but was pleased to be able to announce that 2002 had been a good year for BRISC, and that this had been largely due to success in obtaining funding for a Development Officer.

BRISC still requires a new treasurer, as Mark Simmons has filled this role for 8 years and would like to stand down. The responsibilities are not onerous as BRISC holds a single bank account and runs a simple book of transactions. Activities consist primarily of paying money in and out (around 30-40 transactions per year but no need to visit the bank) and monitoring members' direct debits. Any future offers to fill this post would be most gratefully received.

4. Development officer's report on Strategic Plan

Alan Cameron was appointed as the BRISC Development Officer on 10th June to implement the BRISC Strategic Document, which had been endorsed by the membership at the AGM in 2001.

The Strategic Plan set out how BRISC would develop relationships with Recorders, Local Records Centres, Agencies and other public bodies. It addressed involving the membership in more practical ways through setting up three sub-groups covering different areas of members' interests. The Strategic Plan also provided an analysis of the requirements for data on wildlife by different sectors, including local authorities, recording schemes and SNH. This analysis would provide a framework for BRISC in work to improve the availability of biological records.

The Development Officer is implementing the Strategic Plan through a work programme, which has been agreed with the management team. This programme contains many elements, including membership support, practical activities and policy development.

BRISC views Local Records Centres as critical to achieving the aims set out the Strategic Plan, in particular the need to support and encourage biological recording at the local level. The work of the Development Officer during the initial 6 months has therefore concentrated on LRCs and has consisted of:

- ◆ Encouraging and advising partnerships working to develop new and existing LRCs
- ◆ Working with existing LRCs where important lessons might benefit others
- ◆ Advocacy with key stakeholders including SNH and the Scottish Biodiversity Group
- ◆ Development work to set and promote a shared vision based on common standards

A 6-month report summarising key areas of work has been prepared and is available to the membership on request.

5. Membership Secretary's report

Lesley Brown gave a breakdown of the current membership. Total members stood at 118. The importance of individuals was stressed, as this class of member constitutes 81% of the total.

Twenty members subscribe through a Bankers Order. AMS highlighted the great advantage to BRISC administration of members paying by Bankers' Order and asked members if possible to chose this method of paying their annual subscription.

6. Treasurer's report

Mark Simmons explained that 2002 had been a reasonable year, with income exceeding expenditure. As ever, grant income remains important to BRISC although this money is tied to particular activities and it is quite worrying that membership is at an historical low. It is hoped that the Development Officer can address this.

BRISC cannot afford to employ professional accountants, although the requirement to have the accounts inspected by an 'independent examiner' should be complied with. The receipt of the Development Officer funding may require BRISC to introduce further accounting, and this will be looked into.

It was reiterated that the post of treasurer is essential and that Mark Simmons has tried to stand down for 3 years now.

7. Website manager's report

Andy Wakelin was unable to attend the AGM and a report will be included in the next edition of *Recorder News*.

Anne-Marie Smout invited members to submit website addresses to which the BRISC site could link and pointed out that the Bumblebee Survey material is available on the site and has been improved.

8. Election of the committee

Three members are standing down due to lack of time – Julie Bett, Bob Saville, and Ann McKillop. All were thanked for their support and time, and it is hoped that all remain as personal members. Anne-Marie Smout extended thanks to all committee members for their hard work – without the committee BRISC would be unable to continue.

Geoff Johnson has replaced Jeanette Hall as the co-opted SNH representative on the committee. Geoff is the NBN co-ordinator within the Natural Heritage Data Unit. David Beaumont has been co-opted from RSPB and Alan Cameron is co-opted as the Development Officer.

Craig Macadam has expressed his willingness to be elected to the committee and was nominated by Thomas Huxley, seconded by Lesley Brown.

All other committee members have indicated that they are willing to continue.

9. AOCB

The lack of any commitment from Highland Council to developing the LRC based in Inverness Museum, which currently benefits from only a small portion of a staff post, was raised as an issue for discussion. The Development Officer explained that SNH has three Areas covering the region and that significant development funds should be available, although the lack of local authority commitment is clearly a problem. Due to the size and significance of the region for biodiversity, and the unsatisfactory level of resources currently available, BRISC will consider this issue a priority.

Alan Cameron explained that work to promote a network of LRCs in Scotland will be taken forward by a 'discussion paper' on LRC functions and locations with a view to agreeing on a national strategy. This will involve BRISC in promoting LRCs to all stakeholders, including the Scottish Executive and SEPA. SNH remains a critical partner and BRISC will continue to encourage the setting of policies and mechanisms by SNH that are appropriate and that assist LRCs to develop within a coherent overall vision.

Anne-Marie Smout informed the membership that BRISC has signed up to a significant Scottish Environment LINK partnership campaign called 'Everyone', which will be launched on 26th February and which will provide a focus for raising the profile of environmental issues in the run-up to the forthcoming elections to the Scottish Parliament.

Anne-Marie Smout also said that the Natural History Societies and allied Groups publication was now with the printer and would shortly be available. A printout was on view by the BRISC display stand.

There was no further business and the meeting finished at 13.00