



MINUTES
72nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Online – Zoom
Saturday 13 March 2021
14h00

ATTENDANCE

David Allan		Honorary President – ad-hoc position: Advisory
Office Bearers		Portfolios
Nicolette Forbes	Chair	Strategic Direction, Membership, Events, Marketing
Mike Du Trevou	Vice-chair	Support to Chair, SCB,
Mervyn Gans	Treasurer	Finance, Calendar Sales Tracking
Carron Dove	Secretary	Minutes
Portfolio committee members		
Jane Morris		Activities Co-ordinator – Indoor & Outdoor
Ticky Forbes		Newspapers Liaison / Atlasing
Rob Jamieson		Habitats & Restoration
92 members had joined online via Zoom		
APOLOGIES		
Members apologies and proxies		
The chair received 90 emailed apologies with proxies – list will be attached to minutes		
90 Proxies were received and will count as apologies.		

1. WELCOME

The Chair, Nicky, welcomed everyone to the 72nd AGM of BLPN and advised that this year's AGM had reached quorum with 92 members online. Nicky also gave a special welcome to Mark Anderson, CEO of BLSA, and thanked him for making the time to attend.

Nicky handed over to David Allan, BLPN Honorary President as per the constitution, to Chair the meeting. David Allan welcomed all and advised that this was a historic moment, having our first Virtual AGM. David also welcomed Mark Anderson. David advised that it was very important that we have a quorum as there are two major events to vote on today, these being the name change and acceptance of a new Constitution.

2. APOLOGIES

90 Apologies and proxies were received (see list attached)

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF 15 FEBRUARY 2020

The minutes of the previous meeting of 15 February 2020 had been sent to members and were available on the website. Acceptance of the minutes were proposed by Jenny Norman and seconded by Ismail Vahed.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

5. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Nicky delivered the Chair's Report.

A summary of the report highlights is included below:

Despite the Covid-19 lockdown restrictions our 2020 slogan "moving forward with a clear vision in 2020" and despite the difficulties of the year much was accomplished by and in the club. More interaction with and between club members was the surprise outcome of everything this year.

Nicky introduced and thanked all the Committee Members (Office Bearers Mike du Trevou, Mervyn Gans and Carron Dove and portfolio members Jane Morris, Ticky Forbes and Rob Jamieson for their support and work over the past year. There were two resignation, these being Virginia Cameron and Arnia Van Vuuren, both for health reasons. Nicky thanked Ticky who, in addition to delivering calendars all over KZN, had also stepped up in November 2020 to assist with Atlasing and fill the void left on the committee. Nicky requested that anyone that thinks they can assist the committee consider volunteering or nominating someone that is willing.

The club was extremely happy to reach our target of 500 members in the early part of the year and new members continued to join using our new online application form on the website. All members are encouraged to refer people to this website and to join the club as this adds more voices to conservation. There are so many birders out there that do not belong to any club and it would be good to reach out to them.

Despite lockdown, we sold out our 2021 calendar stock by the end of October 2020, a great and welcome achievement. Plans are underway on the design of the 2022 calendar so watch for more news on this.

All activities were suspended by the club in the interests of the safety of our members after 16 March 2020 and we had to become very creative with how we continued as a club. A lot of work and effort went into the lockdown challenge, and this resulted in great interactions between the members. This was followed by a series of online Quizzes. These had both club members and national birders participating. It added to the mix, was fun and kept members amused and interested. These are all still online and anyone who wants to go back and re-do these would be able to do so. Nicky gave a special thanks to David Allan and Steve Davis who continued to do the Bay Counts and CWAC counts despite Covid.

We still managed to roll out 50% of all our normal activities in the months where these were allowed to continue and visited new venue and also old favourites that had not been visited for quite some time. So in total 40 activities of which 21 were online meetings and workshops took place and these are set to continue. Jane Morris, Activities Co-Ordinator, was invited gave a vote of thanks to all who had assisted with activities and who had lead walks. She further thanked the new leaders who had taken on the role, Mike O'Donoghue, Mervyn Gans, Rowan Bartlett and Penny de Vries. Sadly, Terry Walls and Sandy du Preez (after 9 Years) have stepped down from leading the Saturday and midweek walks. Jane also welcomed Jenny Norman and Rowan Bartlett who would be working with her as a sub-committee. Jane gave a special thanks to Nicky for her invaluable input and assistance with activities and for so effortlessly putting all information on the website and various social media platforms and always stepping up to help Jane when she needed it.

Nicky mentioned the expansion of the communication channels for the club including the Whatsapp chat group which is a wonderful way of communicating. Members have been posting wonderful pictures and stories on Facebook.

Our conservation efforts have continued in the form of donations to conservation projects both local and national and Nicky mentioned that the latest had been further donation on Arnia's behalf to the Mouse-free Marion project.

Nicky ended on a vote of thanks the committee who has done a lot to support the changes and different procedures. Nicky also thanked Dave Rimmer for his assistance on social media, the Broomhall's for their massive effort with calendar sales yet again, and all other members who assist from time to time. David Allan then handed over to Mervyn Gans for the Treasurer's report but not before giving a resounding thanks to Nicky for all her hard work and dedication to BLPN.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT

Mervyn advised that he had circulated a Treasurer's Report which will be placed on the website for everyone to access. Mervyn took everyone through the Balance sheet and Income statement. Despite the challenges of lockdown, it has been a good year for the Club. There were a few challenges and concerns regarding old transactions, but these had been resolved.

His biggest concern was that there was the amount of money in the low interest-bearing Current Account so we will be opening a new savings/investment account and transferring the bulk to this. The Nedbank grant would remain in its current form. The biggest contribution to club funds this year was the Calendar sales. Donations to the value of R42 220,00 were made to the Mouse Free Marion and Southern Banded Snake-Eagle projects.

Nicky added her thanks for members who had made Donations over and above their annual subscription payments to the BLPN account.

Acceptance of the Annual Financial Statements was proposed by Jane Morris and seconded by Adam Cruickshank.

7. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

Mervyn proposed that we continue with Diane McArthur Financial Services as Auditor for 2021. The proposal was seconded by Terry Walls. Mervyn will confirm the appointment with Diane.

8. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

The current committee stood down at this point. David Allan advised that the existing committee had indicated their willingness to stand again and advised that in addition Lauren Calenborne had also agreed to join the committee and assist with the Social Media portfolio.

The incoming committee members are therefore Nicolette Forbes, Jane Morris, Ticky Forbes, Carron Dove, Mervyn Gans, Rob Jamieson, Mike Du Trevou and Lauren Calenborne. All were accepted by acclamation.

A plea was made for additional members to consider volunteering as the committee still needs assistance with Newspaper Liaison, Website content and general committee activities. The committee reserves the right to co-opt additional members as required.

9. GENERAL

9.1. New Club Name

It was confirmed that in the first poll 60% of members voted in favor of a name change and members submitted proposals for the new name. The Committee then shortlisted from these proposals to 3 names. 162 people had already voted online and members who had not yet voted were given a chance to vote during the meeting. David Allan went through the whole process in detail and advised that we needed to have a name that reflected our geographical area.

The results indicated that the name "BirdLife eThekwini KZN" had been voted in with just over 50% of the votes. This name would immediately be adopted into the Constitution to be approved in the next section. Nicky advised the meeting to be patient as the changes would be rolled out slowly as there was a lot to change. She reminded everyone that the committee members were all volunteers, some with full time jobs and the name change had a domino effect in terms of changing logos, bank accounts, letter heads, website etc. This is a major achievement to eventually get this accomplished and finalized.

Jenny Norman expressed unhappiness that we were losing our historical link with the Natal Bird Club and argued for a name such as BirdLife KZN or KwaZulu-Natal. It was pointed out that this would probably offend the other KZN clubs if we were to take a provincial name.

9.2. Approval of the Changes to the Constitution as Communicated.

Mervyn ran through the changes and the reasons for these changes. Primarily we need these changes for our NPO Status which when submitted was returned with the request to make certain changes. Fifteen clauses have been changed, the only significant one being the change in the Quorum which previously required 43% to be quorate. This number has been reduced

to 40 members. We are hoping that these changes will now be accepted by the NPO. The Constitution can now incorporate the new name and thus avoid a separate meeting to deal with this. Members were given the option to vote and there was a unanimous vote in favour of the changes to the Constitution.

9.3. Comments from BirdLife South Africa's CEO Mark Anderson

Mark Anderson was then given the opportunity to address the meeting and commented that this had been one of the best AGMs he had attended. He then updated the members on a number of BLSA initiatives as follows:

- Mark advised that Flock to Marion cruise would be going ahead in 2022. The ship did have a fire but will be prepared in time.
- AGM (The Flock) and LAB will be held virtually, and they have some amazing speakers.
- There will be the Virtual African Bird fair in July 2021
- Mark thanked BLPN for their contribution to the Mouse Free Marion project and advised that a Project Manager has been appointed.
- He advised that they will also be appointing a Communications Manager at BLSA.
- The state of their membership and the magazine have weathered the covid pandemic.
- They also managed to support the Community Bird Guides during the pandemic, due to donations received. Mark advised that they greatly appreciated all the support that they received.

David Allan thanked Mark for his leadership which has gone from strength to strength and mentioned that BLSA employs the highest number of ornithologists in the country.

Two members were given the opportunity to voice their concerns regarding the Flock to Marion Cruise. Mark responded to these concerns and advised what BLSA had done to ensure that the cruise was environmentally friendly.

10. VOTE OF THANKS AND CLOSURE

David Allan thanked everyone for their efforts and to look at getting back to doing the best with what's available to us and to incorporate the positives from the previous year. A lot of work goes into organizing the different activities, virtual, in person and online meetings and members were requested to try and attend as many of these as possible. Nicky thanked everyone for their favourable and complimentary comments on the chat connected to the meeting.

No additional BLPN related AGM business was raised, and David Allan then closed the meeting.

The meeting closed at 15:46

Signed: *N.T. Forbes*
CHAIR

19 March 2022
DATE