

THE NORTHWESTERN NATURALISTS' UNION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Gallery Oldham, Greaves Street, Oldham on 9th March 2024.

This “hybrid” meeting was joined by the following, either in person or via Zoom:

Mr D. P. Earl (President)

Patricia	Francis	Committee
Phil	James	Committee
Alexander	Mansfield	Committee

Dr. Mike Canaway	Fern Section Secretary
Ms. Joan Egan	Ordinary member
Ms. Jasmine Jackson	Oldham Microscopical and Natural History Society
Mrs. Camilla Mansfield	Mersyside Naturalists' Association
Ms. Linda Turner	Rochdale Field Naturalists Society
Mr. Philip Whiteman	Oldham Microscopical and Natural History Society

1. OPENING REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT: The President, Mr D.P. Earl, opened the meeting, welcomed those attending and declared the meeting quorate in line with the Constitution of the Union. In his opening remarks, the President expressed his regret at the death of Ms. Margaret McCormick of Altrincham & District Natural History Society and Mr. John Somerville who hosted the British Wildflowers website. Both Ms. McCormick and Mr. Somerville had also run small nature reserves.
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Dr. John Watt, Dr. John Lowell, Mr. Norman Bamforth, Mr. Mike Walton (all ordinary members) and Mr. Ron Powell of Oldham Microscopical and Natural History Society.
3. MINUTES OF THE 2023 AGM: Adoption of the previously circulated minutes was proposed by Dr. Canaway, seconded by Mr. Mansfield and accepted unanimously.
4. MATTERS ARISING: Ms. J. Jackson enquired about the issue raised about the BBC's “Wild Isles” at the last AGM. The Secretary informed the meeting that Dr. Lowell, who had raised the issue, had been notified of, and was satisfied with, the decision of the Committee.
5. TREASURER'S REPORT: The Treasurer said that an operating surplus of £23 had been made for the year, showing that income slightly exceeded expenditure and that costs had been covered. There were restricted funds of slightly more than £1,200 set aside for the Flora and unrestricted funds of more than £8,000. It was agreed that these funds should be

retained for future use and to accrue interest. Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Dr. Canaway, seconded by Mrs. Francis and accepted unanimously.

6. SECRETARY'S REPORT: The Secretary thanked Mrs. Francis for once again arranging the Union's use of Gallery Oldham. The Secretary said that the year had been fairly normal until December, when he became aware that Mr. Bamforth, Secretary of the Bryophyte and Lichen Section, had become ill, since when, he had been assisting with some of Mr. Bamforth's tasks. The Secretary had, therefore, written a brief section report for the Newsletter and had arranged some field meetings in conjunction with Ms. Gail Quartly-Bishop. The Secretary anticipated arranging further meetings during the year. In October, there had been a meeting at Manchester University Botanical Gardens to coincide with National Moss Day. Details had been sent to the British Bryological Society for inclusion in a forthcoming issue of Field Bryology. The Secretary hoped to arrange the fitting of a plaque to the Moss House at the Botanical Gardens, commemorating the late Dr. Martha Newton and he would contact Dr. Oliver Hughes to progress arrangements. Acceptance of the Secretary's report was proposed by Mrs. Camilla Mansfield, seconded by Mrs. Francis and confirmed unanimously.
7. EDITOR'S REPORT: The Editor reported that two new editions of the Newsletter had been published, containing a nice spread of articles and was pleased to have received contributions from local societies. The Safety Code had been published in the first edition of the latest volume. Mrs. Francis thanked the Secretary for assisting with some of the duties normally covered by Mr. Bamforth and Mr. Walton for preparing and issuing the Newsletter. Mrs. Francis said that further articles would always be welcome and Dr. Canaway offered to research suitable material for articles on ferns.
8. SECTION SECRETARIES REPORTS : Reports from the Vascular Plants, Bryophyte and Lichens and Fern Sections had been published in the latest edition of the Newsletter. The President suggested that the Section Reports might be posted on the website and it was agreed to discuss this at committee.
9. ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE : The following nominations were received:

President	Mr D.P. Earl
Vice-President	Mr P. M. James
Treasurer	Mr A.L. Mansfield
Secretary	Mr P. M. James
Editor	Mrs P.M.A. Francis
Affiliated Societies Representative	Mr M.A. Walton
Individual Member's Representative	Mr N. Bamforth

All nominations for the positions noted above were elected unanimously.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS: Mr. Whiteman of the Oldham Microscopical Society asked if any visits had been made to the Southport Botanical Gardens. Dr. Canaway said that, whilst no meetings had been held there yet, the fernery was a potential site for meetings of the British Pteridological Society.

Following the meeting, Mr. David Earl, NWNUP President, gave a talk on “Local Nature Recovery” which had been written by Mr. Ollie Mackrill. The talk gave examples of the many classifications used to describe habitats and the benefits and difficulties of their use. The talk gave several examples of rare or otherwise interesting species found unexpectedly in both urban and rural locations and their potential for designating sites of value for conservation. Mr. Earl’s presentation encouraged a number of informed questions from the audience and was rewarded with enthusiastic applause.

The date of the 2025 AGM will be the 8th March 2025 at Gallery Oldham and/or via Zoom