Secretary's Report for AGM 2020

Duncan Locke LRPS

As you know this year's AGM has been postponed due to the present Covid-19 restrictions. We are planning to have a short AGM including the presentation of the Exhibition Medals during the Chairman's Day on the 31st October at Smethwick. If possible, we will also show the accepted prints from the Exhibition on the Chairman's Day.

There have been two well attended Committee Meetings since the last AGM. Our meetings have now moved from Smethwick to just outside of Northampton, a location that is more central to where Committee Members live. This has resulted in an overall big reduction in mileage for Members to attend Meetings.

Going forward, the Committee will continue to have two face to face meetings a year. We had already successfully trialled the use of video meetings before the present Covid-19 restrictions, but such meetings are now essential and we plan to hold them monthly with the aim of ensuring that the Group activities can be re-started as quickly as possible when the restrictions end. The AGM will remain at Smethwick as it is central and provides an excellent venue for the Exhibition.

There have been no changes to the Committee during the year. We still do not have a full-time Treasurer and so David O'Neill has continued to act as both Vice Chairman and Honorary Treasurer. Ralph Snook, in addition to being Exhibition Secretary, also acts as Webmaster. Ann Miles as Programme Coordinator keeps the Events and News sections of our website up-to-date. Both Ralph and Ann have put a tremendous amount of work into customising the Nature Group pages on the new RPS website.

I act as Membership Secretary in that I monitor the number of Members in the Group and send a welcome letter and a copy of the latest issue of The Iris to each New Member. The membership of the Group as of the 1st March 2020 was 905. At the time of last year’s AGM the membership was 897 and so there has been a modest increase during the year. About fifteen New Members join the Group each month and a similar number, generally those of more advancing years allow their membership to lapse.

As I said at last year's AGM, I believe that the aim of the Group is to inspire and educate its Members into taking better images of the natural world and so we must organise events for Members to get together and develop their nature photography. We now have a growing programme of Field Meetings, Workshops and Residential Weekends, sadly curtailed for the moment by Covid-19. Hopefully this will not be for long and normal service will be resumed.
Ann Miles is doing an excellent job of organising Events, but we can always fit in more especially in those parts of the country were none are held at present. So please think about whether you could organise an event that would be of interest to Nature Group Members – you’ll learn a lot from it as well – if you have any ideas then please come and talk to the Committee about it – we are here to help.

In case you are not aware of it yet, we do now have a Facebook Group, for you to share images and information about your nature photography. So please join the Group (you will need your RPS membership number) which can be found on:  

https://www.facebook.com/groups/188690442327099/  

Finally, the 2021 Spring Meeting, AGM and opening of the Annual Exhibition at Smethwick Photographic Society is scheduled for Saturday 24th April 2021. I very much hope that life will have returned to normal by then and it goes ahead as planned. In the mean time, stay safe and hopefully by the time the summer comes, we will be less restricted in our photographic opportunities.

Duncan Locke LRPS  
1st April 2020