



Secretary's Report

Greg Lovett ARPS

Meetings

The Committee meet bi-monthly, all meetings being undertaken by Zoom. We have therefore had 6 meetings since the last AGM. Committee meetings generally last a couple of hours on a Friday evening. I must thank the members of the Committee for their diligence in making the effort to prepare and attend Committee meetings and in particular to turn up on time. While there are inevitably occasional absences, the members of the Committee had all done their level best to attend.

Committee Changes

During the last 12 months there have been a few changes in the make up of the Committee.

Sadly, Julia Wainwright had to resign as Facebook Administrator. That role is now temporarily being delivered by Ann Miles and I try to help out as an additional Administrator.

Dawn Osborn has announced that she will be stepping down as Editor of the Iris next year. Dawn has a long involvement on the committee, being its longest serving member. While she joined in 1993 and was Chair between 2001 and 2003 she has been the Editor of the Iris since 2003. She has done such an excellent job that she is a hard act to follow. But that said, we do need to find her successor. We would be keen to hear from members with appropriate skills who would like to take on the Editor's role.

One of the concerns consistently raised by members in recent years has been to do with the well publicised problems with the RPS web site. In an effort to overcome some of the practical problems that this has caused the group, Dr Ian Wilson was co-opted onto the Committee as the Nature Group's Web Administrator. He has been responsible for the excellent new Website that we hope all our members have now explored. Thanks to Ian not only does this new site allow us to provide members with a single source of information for events (directly addressing one of the failings of the current RPS main web site) it has also enabled us to produce galleries from Field Trips, a monthly Competition and the new Critique Facility.

Most recently in January 2024, Bruce Kendrick also joined the Committee to help with Field Meetings in the north west of England and with Nature Group Publicity more generally.

Constitutional Changes

Very recently, the Trustees of the RPS have approved the introduction of some new Terms of Reference, this is the document that sets out how the Nature Group (and all the other Special Interest Groups) are governed. These changes will be fully in force by the time of the next AGM in 2025.

At that stage you will be asked to vote for an elected committee of 7 individuals (who will each stand for a 3 year term):

- Group Chair

- Group Finance Officer
- Group Secretary
- Group Engagement and Events Officer
- Group Communications Officer
- 2 further Ordinary Committee Members

This is a smaller committee than we are used to operating with, but we are allowed to delegate responsibilities to individual volunteers or to teams of volunteers to assist in the execution of committee duties or in delivery of Group activities.

As a result, your current committee do not consider that these changes will adversely affect the benefits that the Nature Group currently is able to offer to its members.

Image Critique Forum

As some of you may have seen from the New Section of the Nature Group's web site, we have recently set up the "Towards Associate" image critique forum aimed at those members of the Group who are working towards the Associate qualification and who would like to receive feedback on individual images. This is separate from the existing Advice Days and One to Ones (which look at panels of images) but is intended to be complimentary to them.

Our aim with the "Towards Associate" group is to provide a forum for those taking part to provide feedback which will, over time, help them recognise what constitutes images that meet the criteria needed for inclusion in a panel of images at Associate level. The facility will allow those taking part to upload images for positive critique by other members of that closed group. The group will include some individuals who have already achieved either Associate or Fellowship distinctions, who will be able to offer advice and guidance.

At this stage we have formed an initial group from those who respond first, although we hope to be able to extend the initiative to everyone who is interested, in time.

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7th April 2024