



Secretary's Report for AGM 2022

Duncan Locke ARPS

Committee:

Since last year's AGM on the 24th April 2021, we have had six well attended Zoom Committee Meetings plus a number of shorter ones to discuss particular issues. Committee Meetings will continue to be held on Zoom at about 6 to 8 weeks intervals unless there is an opportunity for the Committee to meet face-to-face, such as following the AGM. As noted previously, the use of Zoom for Committee Meetings has resulted in a considerable financial saving for the Group as well as reducing our carbon footprint.

There have been two changes to the Committee during the year. Gerald Griffin stood down as Editor of The Iris at the end of September 2021 and Julia Andrew left the Committee in mid-November 2021 due to pressure of work and family commitments. I would like to thank them both for the tremendous amount of hard work that they put into the running of the Group. Dawn Osborn has again taken on the role of Editor of The Iris with the consequence that we have ceased publication of eNews.

At full strength the Committee should have twelve Members and with the departure of Gerald and Julia it was reduced to just eight. I have two roles as Vice Chair and Honorary Secretary and Ralph Snook is both Exhibition Secretary and Webmaster. Going forward, I am very pleased to say the Christine Holt and Nick Bowman have agreed to join the Committee with Christine taking on part of the Secretary's role and Nick helping Ann Miles with Field Meetings. We are also aware that we have some specialist roles on the Committee and long term will have the difficult task of filling these.

Changes to The Iris:

With the change of Editor, the Committee decided that The Iris, which almost since its birth as the Nature Group Newsletter in March 1976, has always been in A5 format would double in size to A4 format. As you will be well aware, photography and magazine design have changed massively over recent years and the existing A5 format of The Iris was proving very restrictive. Moving to A4 format proved very popular with the membership and the Committee received close to 60 very positive comments from Members following the publication of the Winter 2021-22 A4 issue of The Iris.

Another change which arose from discussion at last year's AGM is that we now offer Members the option of not receiving a paper copy of The Iris through the post, but instead reading it electronically on the RPS website; at present 22 Members have taken up this option.

Nature Group Membership:

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 2022 was 960 as compared to 919 Members on the 1st March 2021, so I am very pleased to report that there has been a healthy 4.5% increase in membership during the year. Over the period 1st March 2021 to 1st March 2022, 183 New Members joined the Group and 138 Members left so there continues to be a high turnover of Members.

As of the 1st March 2022, the Group had 890 Members in the UK, Eire, the Isle of Man and Channel Islands plus 70 overseas Members. The biggest overseas Group is in the USA, where membership has roughly doubled over the past year to 23 Members.

Code of Practice:

The Nature Photographers Code of Practice, which is an internationally recognised and highly respected document produced by the Nature Group was last revised in 2007 and is now out of date in many respects. I have been working on revising it, firstly to ensure that it is fully up-to-date and secondly to simplify some of existing rather old fashioned language to make it more accessible and also more understandable to overseas photographers whose first language is not English.

I still have to check and update some of the detailed factual content and I am aware that it should make reference to changes in technology such as the use of drones. I also believe that a summary document that could, for example, be sent to Wildlife Trusts would make it more accessible. My plan is to complete the revision work within the next two months.

What Do Nature Group Members Want?

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 an ever growing programme of Field Meetings, Workshops and Residential Weekends. It would be very helpful if you could let Ann Miles or any other Committee Member know what events you would like the Group to organise.

Date and Venue of the 2023 Spring Meeting / AGM / Opening of the Annual Exhibition:

Finally, the 2023 Spring Meeting, AGM and opening of the Annual Exhibition will be at Smethwick Photographic Society, in April 2023 (date to be advised). In the mean time, stay safe and enjoy your natural history photography.

Duncan Locke ARPS
1st April 2022