

PORCUPINE MARINE NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021
Held on 27.02.2021 as part of the online conference

Present: 78 members and all Council members

Apologies: none were received

Matters Arising:

Minutes of 2020 that were published in the Autumn Bulletin and also circulated prior to the event were agreed. No comments or amendments were received.

Officer reports:

Honorary Treasurer: Fiona Ware

Fiona presented the figures and reported that the accounts remain healthy. Several factors have contributed to this – a stable membership, little increase in core costs, a profitable conference in Oban and the Betty Green bequest. Fiona expressed PMNHS's gratitude for this generous sum of money.

Payment was made to Nick Owen who was awarded the Frank Evans writing prize and £500 was awarded to Teresa Derbyshire following completion of her work on *Myxicola* spp.

This year, two applications for the research grant were successful. These were Lin Baldock with 'A Plethora of Porifera' and Alison Nimmo and Fiona Sanderson for their study of limpets on the Isles of Scilly (an expansion of their work presented at the Oban conference about limpet behaviour on Orkney).

Membership Secretary Report: Roni Robbins

Membership remains stable with 222 members currently. Including membership with the Conference tickets has resulted in a small increase this year. Roni reported that most members pay promptly, and previous issues regarding amounts have now been resolved.

Hon. Bulletin Editor: Vicki Howe

The Bulletin usually has approximately 14 articles per issue. Autumn 2020 was a particularly lengthy and varied one, despite limited activity as a result of lockdowns. Vicki noted thanks to the team for help in sourcing, writing and proof reading articles, particularly Teresa who is responsible for typesetting and pulling it all together.

Vicki reminded everyone that contributions are always being sought. There are no word limits, in order to maintain flexibility.

This year's Frank Evans Writing Prize was awarded to Aran Lock. The judges felt it told a story, was accurate and well written. They expressed the hope that Aran will continue his interest in this area. He will shortly be sent the £100 prize along with free membership of Porcupine.

Other highly commended articles this year were as follows:

'Home Scars' – Fiona Sanderson and Alison Nimmo

Seahorses – Jenny Mallison

Lockdown Lookup – Peter Barfield

Hon. Website Editor: Tammy Horton

The website is hosted by UK2, which provides a good service including the hosting of email addresses for all council members which can be managed and access provided on the server. The Council email porcupinecouncil@pmnhs.co.uk forwards directly to all council members. An additional address was also added porcupine@pmnhs.co.uk this year so that members can easily contact the society and this forwards to Natalie (Chair) and Sarah (Secretary).

Tammy requested that any notices are sent to her for uploading. They need text and pictures sent separately and not embedded in a word document. She reminded members that the recording scheme webpages need updating.

Newsletter hosting & downloading

Issues of the Bulletin from the last two years are available to paid members of the Society. This is updated prior to the March conference each year. Therefore, all back issues of the Newsletter (and now the Bulletin) are or will be very soon available on the website up to Bulletin number 11 (Spring 2019). Table of contents are available for download for later issues. Downloads of the Bulletin (password protected) for students and others choosing to receive the Bulletin had been working well, with around 30 downloads tracked for each issue. However, we have had issue with the large size of the Bulletin – The website can only host files up to 8MB. The latest was sent by WeTransfer, which was an easy fix and provides a link for 7 days, although we have no tracking. We will still have to split the bulletin for download from the website though. Tammy asked that if anyone has any suggestions of how to overcome this to let her know.

Council member details/positions & Constitution

Annual changes to council members' details (still need biography information to for those without one). This year the duties of the Chair & Secretary were also added. We might want to write similar documents for the other roles. The Constitution and Privacy policy documents are available on the website, as are the AGM notices and minutes.

Conference preparation

Much of the work of the web officer happens around the time of the conference. This involves linking to Eventbrite and posting conference information including venues and speaker programme. Moving to Eventbrite has been useful for tickets but does require regular updating.

There is still a 'donate' button, and membership can be paid using PayPal via the website.

Social Media

The Facebook group remains very active with **934** current members. Facebook is well used for PMNHS interactions; for posting pictures, general discussions and enquiries. Our Twitter account is now steaming ahead with **1479** followers and **>3200** tweets posted. Both are useful platforms for disseminating information about PMNHS and require minimal effort although thanks were given to @cardiffcurator who tweets and retweets relevant posts. Consideration should be given to creating a more proactive Social Media role on Council – something for a future Council discussion.

Hon. Records Convenor: Julia Nunn

The Porcupine Recording Scheme remains small-scale and is mainly used for field trip records. Records for Aberdeen in 2019, and the 2020 trips to Oban in March and Dale in September have all been entered.

Seasearch records are not included, but a copy of records made on Porcupine trips are in our database. None were carried out in 2020.

No casual records have been received during the past year. The database was reviewed for errors and nomenclatural updates and some corrections made. All records added to the Porcupine *Marine Recorder* database are made publicly available to the NBN Atlas.

The database now holds 80 surveys with 40,136 species records: an addition of 7607 for the year.

Further work includes updating the NBN Atlas and the Porcupine web site about the Porcupine Recording Scheme.

Very few casual records are received, but are welcomed should any Members wish to do so. Julia also reminded Members to submit their records from the Conference Bioblitz.

Hon. Chair: Natalie Hirst

Natalie reported that her first year as Chair was certainly very different. Despite, or perhaps because of, the challenges, the Society continues to thrive, especially the Bulletin.

Thanks were noted for the success of last year's conference in Oban, particularly to Sarah Bowen and others involved. Pulling it off a week before the national lockdown was a minor miracle!

This year, thanks to hard work from the Council members, a field trip was able to go ahead. It was a real morale booster, so many thanks to Kate Lock and Vicki Howe for organising sunshine, pizza and barbeques.

Council have continued to work behind the scenes, contributing to the Bulletin, developing the website and social media presence.

Overall, the Society continues to achieve its aims and Natalie feels proud to be a part of it.

All Officer reports were voted on, with all Members agreeing them.

Re-election of office bearers and Council members

All office bearers had previously advised of their willingness to continue in their roles, so were available for re-election.

Jon Moore and Cat Oliver stood down by rotation and both were available for re-election.

Winter Dotto was co-opted onto Council following the Oban conference, and now wishing to be elected as a full member.

An en-bloc vote for all the above roles was carried out.

Proposer – Anne Bunker

Seconded – Frances Dipper

There were no expressions of interest for additional Council members at this time, so no further elections took place.

Sarah Bowen,

Hon. Secretary