

Porcupine Marine Natural History Society
46th Annual General Meeting
MINUTES

Sunday March 19th, 2023 at Pontio, Bangor University.

55 Members present.

1. Apologies for absence – received from Matt Green, Tammy Horton, Cat Joniver, Beccy MacDonald Lofts
2. Matters arising from, and agreement of, the Minutes of the 45th Annual General Meeting held online, as published in the PMNHS Bulletin, Autumn 2022 Number 18. No matters arising, therefore proposed as correct by Fiona Ware and seconded by Winter Dotto.
3. Officers' Reports:

The Hon. Treasurer's Report

Overall situation – Fiona Ware reported that the Society continues to have a healthy bank balance of £18,763. We are running a deficit of £1,452 over the year to date as the Society absorbs the costs of inflation and the 2022 Virtual Conference.

A further £2,555 is committed:

- £80 council meeting room hire
- £25 pmnhs.co.uk domain registration
- £250 conference deposit
- £2,200 Roger Bamber Research Grants awarded in 2021 & 2022

leaving an available balance of £16,208 – this includes £3,100 in bequests and donations which are to be earmarked for specific projects (Betty Green, £2,500; Shelagh Smith £500; Openshaws £100)

Donations

- In January 2022 the Society received a donation of £500 on behalf of **Shelagh Smith** – no restrictions were put on its use, but it was suggested it could be used for a marine mollusc project or to support conference(s).
- **Sheilah and Martin Openshaw** donated their Frank Evans Award of £100 back to the Society – they suggested 'it could finance the award next year; it could be put towards the bursary or it could finance 10 student memberships or it could finance something at the conference 2023.'

A question was asked about why the virtual conferences were so expensive. Fiona explained that they were run on platforms with functionality beyond what Zoom could offer. Council members had neither the expertise nor time and holding the conference during the pandemic meant that it was a growth industry for businesses offering this service. Council further decided that the online conferences should be made free of charge to Members.

The finance report can be found at the end of these minutes.

The Hon. Membership Secretary's Report

As the below table shows, membership remains pretty stable with new members joining, and others deciding not to renew. Offering free membership as part of the conference increases numbers of new joiners.

	March 2022	March 2023
Full (£18)	192	194
Student (£10)	31	30
Reduced (£10)	13	9
Life members	4	4
Free (Legal Deposit Libraries)	8	8
Total	248	245
New since March 2022		25
Hard copy Bulletin	153	157
Payments: PayPal		105
Standing Order		117
BACS		12

The bank account will no longer allow us to process payments using Direct Debit, so Members are encouraged to pay by Standing order, PayPal or BACS.

Any membership increases will only be made when absolutely necessary.

Question asked by a member – why so few students and how can we encourage them? Some discussion – promotional materials were produced and some contacts within institutions to help spread the word but limited success.

The Hon. Editor's Report

The Spring 2022 edition consisted of 12 articles with 14+ contributors. It was an issue embracing much of what Porcupine is about, with David Kipling's article on "Field observations of an inshore bloom of the coccolithophore *Emiliania huxleyi*", Warren Maguire's article on recording marine isopods and Julia Nunn's Lockdown project.

The Autumn 2022 edition contained 17 + contributors and 16 articles. These ranged from "Creating a marine INNS kit for Wales" by Anne Holmes and Katherine Slade to a field report from Lucy Kay and a report on Shoresearch written jointly by staff and volunteers from The Wildlife Trusts.

Thanks were given to all contributors, Teresa Derbyshire for putting it all together and Iain Dixon as Assistant Editor and Members who proofread: Iain, Sarah, Paul, Anne.

Copy for Bulletins is always required, and it is the variety of subjects which really makes it. Articles telling a story are particularly welcomed. The deadlines are kept consistent, and these are the end of first week in June for the Autumn issue and end of first week in December for the Spring issue. These lead-in times give sufficient time for all the background work that goes into creating the final product.

Guidelines for articles can be found on the website and any questions can be sent to editor@pmnhs.co.uk.

The winner of this year's Frank Evans Writing Prize was announced and was for David Kipling's article on "Field observations of an inshore bloom of the coccolithophore *Emiliania huxleyi*". Congratulations to him on a well-written and interesting article.

Finally, Vicki Howe announced that after 12 years and 24 Editions of the Bulletin, she is stepping down. In her time as Hon. Editor, the Newsletter became the Bulletin to better reflect the content.

Frances Dipper wished to propose a vote of thanks to Vicki for all her work. This gave a perfect opportunity for Paul to present Vicki with a gift as a token of our appreciation.

The Hon. Website Officer's Report

Hosting and Costs: 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. Council email addresses can be found in the Bulletin and on the website.

Domain registration for pmnhs.co.uk for two years total: £23.98. Next due 28th October 2024. Web-Complete for pmnhs.co.uk costs £122.80, with payment every 2 years. Next renewal date is 27th November 2023.

Social Media: The Facebook group remains very active with **1147 (+ 90 since March 2022)** members. Facebook is well-used for PMNHS interactions; for posting pictures, general discussions and enquiries. The Twitter account is now steaming ahead with **1628 (+ 90 since March 2022)** followers and **>3750** tweets posted. Thanks to @cardiffcurator who sends many Porcupine posts for us. Porcupine Council email addresses can be found in the Bulletin and on the web.

Newsletter hosting & downloading: Issues of the Bulletin from the last two years are available to paid members of the Society and held on the website.

Council members & Constitution: Biographies of Council members plus information about the Constitution can be found on the website.

Conference & Field trip information: The website hosts information and downloads about the annual conference and field trips.

The Hon Records Convenor's Report

The recording scheme is principally used for field trip records. Over the last two years, with virtual conferences being held, there have been smaller numbers of local records received. All of these are now on Marine Recorder.

The 2022 Lundy records have been entered, as have casual records from David Fenwick and Charlotte Cumming.

The database now contains 43,648 records from 86 surveys across 565 different locations. All are entered onto Marine Recorder, from there they go to DASSH and finally onto the NBN Atlas and are made publicly available.

Julia also reported on the upcoming changes to Marine Recorder. She has been on the working group. The contract was awarded to Ocean Ecology, and the database will be completely online, with separate tenancies for each participating organisation. A Memorandum of Understanding is in place and has been signed by Paul Brazier on behalf of Porcupine.

Julia requested that all records that don't have a home should be sent to her. As discussed elsewhere in the conference, these should also include common species!

A question was asked about Seasearch records. There is an agreement between Porcupine and Seasearch that subtidal records should always go to Seasearch. Porcupine holds copies of records from Porcupine field trips but are not the custodian of these.

The Hon. Chair's Report

Paul Brazier reflected on a busy year but feeling very pleased to be back to in-person meetings. Particular highlights have been the Bulletins this year, which might have looked slightly 'thin' at times, but with Vicki working her magic, always plenty of good material. Lundy was excellent, but very hard work in the heat!

Two Council meetings were held during the year, which were very productive. The Council are planning to hold online meetings in between the face-to-face ones as there is always a lot of business to discuss. Subgroups have now been set up for different themes. One will be to establish a method of improving the searchability of Bulletins. Another is looking at ways to spend some of the donations that have been received, with a proposal to provide grants to increase accessibility to our events.

Planning is underway for the 2024 conference with a couple of options under discussion. It would be good to tie in with the fieldwork in the Fleet, so Bournemouth might be a possibility. Plus, a very exciting trip to Alderney later in the year. Watch this space!

Finally, Paul wished to thank the conference organising team, particularly Liz, Craig, the student helpers and David, the AV technician. Everyone pulled together effectively to put on a very successful event. Presentations were made to Liz and Craig as a token of our appreciation.

The officer reports were accepted, with Frances Dipper nominating and Peter Tinsley seconding.

4. Announcement of winners of Porcupine grants:

This year, there were 7 applications for a Roger Bamber Research Grant. Up to £1,000 per grant can be awarded. The two successful proposals are:

Elizabeth Beston to document the planktonic life off the coast of Norfolk and educate others about the findings. The quality of the application was commended, especially as it includes a plan to run outreach events.

Fliss Fraser for the Isle of Rum snorkel trail, where the applicants will work with local communities to increase awareness of the underwater world.

Congratulations to both and we look forward to hearing more about their projects in future issues of the Bulletin.

5. Election of Officers and Council.

This year, two Council members are changing places, and over the weekend, two nominations for Ordinary Members were received.

Vicki Howe is standing down as Hon. Editor and Iain Dixon is standing for that role. Vicki is standing as an Ordinary Member. The new nominations are Kate Lock and Vivien Shaw. The new arrangements were nominated by Anne Bunker and seconded by Sheilah Openshaw.

For the en-bloc re-election of the remainder of Council members, Teresa Naylor nominated and David Kipling seconded.

6. AOB

Sheilah Openshaw proposed a vote of thanks to the members of Council for all their hard work. All present agreed and gave a round of applause.

Sarah Bowen,
Hon. Secretary
24.03.2023