



Minutes of Extraordinary General Meeting

Date and Time: Saturday 23rd September 2023 at 1600hrs on Zoom

Chair: Duncan Locke ARPS (DL)

Members attending online: 84

Apologies for absence: 16

1. Introduction

DL welcomed and thanked those attending the EGM. He explained that the EGM had been called by the Group Committee for the sole purpose of recommending to and seeking Members' approval to increase the annual membership subscription from the present £14 per year to £18 per year with effect from the 1st January 2024.

DL set out the Agenda for the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from 16 Members. All except one, who did not express a preference, stated that they were in favour of the Proposed Resolution.

3. Background to the Proposed Resolution

DL reminded those attending the Zoom meeting that background information had been included with the EGM Notice emailed to the Nature Group Membership on 16th August 2023.

DL explained that the annual subscription was last increased on 1st January 2014 when it was raised from £10 to £14. The main income of the Nature Group comes from Members' annual subscriptions (including from Life Members). The previous decision to change The Iris magazine from A5 to A4 format added significant cost including a higher postage cost. Despite cost savings such as the use of Zoom for all Committee Meetings, which has saved £2000 per year, the Group is currently losing about £3500 per year; which is unsustainable.

DL pointed out that the proposed increase in the Annual Subscription will still be slightly less than the effect of inflation if measured by the increase in RPI over the relevant period. The comparison with other SIGs showed that the proposed increase was not out of keeping with the subscriptions charged by the more active Groups.

DL explained that he and the Committee are keen to further add value to members. To this end the Nature Group would be launching a new Group website, separate from the main RPS website, which will be the go to place to find information on all Group activities. The new Nature Group web site would be launched before the end of the month and would in future be the home of a new Monthly Competition, reports and galleries from field trips and it was hoped, a new Image Critique Forum.

4. Next Steps

DL would notify the RPS Membership Dept. by the 30th of September of the outcome of the today's vote. If the Membership of the Group approve the resolution for the proposed increase then it will take effect from the 1st January 2024.

5. Form of Motion

DL then presented the proposed resolution to the meeting:

“In accordance with the recommendation of the Group Committee the Members resolve that the annual membership subscription for the Nature Group be increased from £14 to £18 with effect from 1st January 2024.”

6. Questions Raised

The following questions were raised by Members attending the meeting:

Q. *“How many Life Members does the Nature Group have?” The questioner explained that he was concerned that as life members would be unaffected by the subscription change it might impact on the proposed increase in revenue the Nature Group was hoping to achieve.*

A. (After discussion) DL explained that there are currently 930 members of whom 34 are life members. However, those life members contribution last year was £476 pa. i.e. the same as other (non life) members. This was because the historic class of life membership that included free membership of Special Interest Groups is limited to a very small number of individuals who purchased their life membership before approximately 25 years ago.

Q. *“What is the Groups’ financial reserve?”*

A. PW confirmed that the Group currently held £24,354 as at the end of August. DL pointed out that this varied depending upon things such as deposits coming in for future activities such as the Residential Weekend.

Q. *“Could the Nature Group not apply different subscription rates for those prepared to receive electronic copies of The Iris rather than postal copies, something which the Digital Imaging Group already do?”*

A. DL explained that The RPS were resistant to allowing the Nature Group to establish digital and non-digital members at this point in time, as the process has been administratively expensive. The RPS were trying hard to reduce administrative overheads and as a result this was not an option open to the Nature Group at present. If members want to only receive an electronic copy of The Iris then please let DL know, but this would not currently result in any subscription fee saving for those opting to do so.

7. Vote

The resolution was put to the meeting and approved by a clear majority.

Number in Favour of the Motion:	78
Number Against the Motion:	4
Number of Abstentions:	1
Total votes cast:	83

8. Close

DL thanked the Members for their continued support and closed the meeting.