

Treasurer's Report for Shoreham District Ornithological Society Annual General Meeting on 10th April 2025

The annual accounts for the **year ended 31 December 2024**, together with explanatory notes, are being provided in advance of the AGM to members with e-mail addresses and by post to members without email addresses. **If e-mail addresses are available this minimises our society's postage and stationery expenses.** especially as costs continue to rise. We are down to 4 memberships without email addresses (*Provision of an email address for Society administrative purposes is separate from membership of our members' e-mail User Group forum, which is optional, and allows us to advise extra events available and other changes to members at short notice*).

Principal costs:

Over recent years **costs** incurred in order to service our commitments to members have risen, principally hire of our new meetings venue, information technology, postage and speakers' fees which reflect inflation.

Information technology costs for our website and our computerised commercial database are £260 per annum.

Hire of Hall: St Nicolas and St Mary C E Primary School where the annual cost increased 10% this year to £66 per evening, £462 per annum.

Postage: Cost increases due to higher postal rates. However, we endeavour to minimise the impact by distribution of mail at indoor meetings and we thank members who have assisted with hand deliveries.

Printing: Newsletters etc. Cost minimised by being offered online.

Income:

With the exception of donations which are set aside for special projects, our **income** is principally from membership subscriptions which have substantially increased over the past two years.

For several years, our membership was peaking at 200 individuals whereas, as at 4 March 2025 it is 370. (*This may decrease by about 19 due to non-renewals.*) At the comparable time in 2024 there were 289 individual members with 12 outstanding.

Income from 2025 Subs renewals and new members to date (*4 March*) is £3,593.

This income is augmented by members who attend evening meetings purchasing raffle tickets which contributed £413 in 2024. We thank Margaret Costello for selling the tickets. Also, we thank Marion Taylor, Rae Titcomb and their team for serving refreshments which contributed £104 which largely covered the Christmas refreshments and a bulk supply of cardboard cups. Interest contributes £101.

'Shoreham Birding', our Facebook site inaugurated in June 2020, has now reached 2000 members, 600 up from last year. This social media facility, together with our Website, public engagement events, personal introductions and new 'business' cards, Instagram, X, You Tube and Alan Duffy's articles contributed to local publications will all have contributed to awareness of our Society resulting in an increased level of new Society membership applications and income.

The annual balance between income and expenses.

I keep a close eye on the position to ensure subscription income covers the cost of servicing membership commitments. Our current subscription income of approximately **£3,600** comfortably covers underlying costs budgeted at **£3,000**.

Reserve funds

The balance carried forward on 31st December 2024 is £9,570. This is prior to receipt of all of the 2025 renewal subscriptions. Allowing for membership commitments described above this leaves approximately **£6,500** surplus funds.

During 2023, the year before last, we had resorted to our reserves to cover the £1,445 cost of our "Rare Birds and Rare Events" publication celebrating our 70th anniversary. This was issued free to all pre-existing members and is part of the new member pack while stocks last in place of a copy of our newsletter. Copies can be purchased for £3 each. We are also exploring retail sales opportunities.

Already, in 2025 we have donated £225 to pay for a farmland Barn Owl box in memory of our late member, Dr Barrie Watson who for many years was a Sussex Barn Owl Group leader. Details will be in our Spring Newsletter.

Also, during the past two years, reserves have covered the purchase of display equipment for use at events: tables, trestles, boards and equipment to laminate photographs, posters, etc., churchyard bird boxes and repair of SDOS countryside seats. We are considering the funding of information panels and other conservation items when opportunities arise.

Conclusion

With an increased level of membership and therefore income, our financial position overall is healthy and membership fees can still continue at the 2006 rate for the time being subject to ongoing reviews and careful control of expenditure.

On behalf of SDOS Council I thank all members for your continuing subscription support.

Finally, my thanks go to John Bould for examining the accounts. John is agreeable to continuing as Accounts Examiner for a further year, but we will soon require a new candidate for this once a year task.