

Northern branch AGM Minutes
Date: Sunday 29th November 2020
Held on Zoom
From 14.00 AGM (only members may vote)

1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

Caroline Austin (Chair) welcomed everyone. The meeting was attended by 14 Northern Branch members, two RSB colleagues and a student (awaiting confirmation of her membership).

Apologies for absence were received from Barbara Murphy.

2. REVIEW OF NORTHERN BRANCH EVENTS OF 2019-20

2019-2020 activities have been curtailed by the pandemic. In addition to the AGMs held each November, we have had two well-attended talks (July 2020, Chris Redfern which is now on the RSB YouTube channel; Sept 2020, Marcus Kaiser which will soon be on the RSB YouTube channel).

A programme of confirmed events for 2020-2021 was presented:

28th January 2021: Steve Lindsay 'Making the house safe from malaria'

4th March 2021: Pen-Yuan Hsing 'MammalWeb and citizen science'

6th May 2021: Keith Lindsey 'Growth Strategies in Plants'

Discussion of other potential events was deferred to item 7.

3. BRANCH ACCOUNTS

Helen Page (Treasurer) presented the branch accounts.

2019-2020 spending was limited by the pandemic to £270 for venue hire for the November 2019 AGM since other events were cancelled.

The 2020-2021 budget has been approved. The Committee proposed that the branch paid for members' entry to proposed visits in 2021. The budget was set on the basis of an estimated 25 attendance. If visits prove more well attended, then the subsidy will be reviewed.

4. CONFIRMATION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The committee membership was voted on and approved.

Chair: Professor Caroline Austin FRSB

Secretary: Ros Roberts CBiol FRSB

Treasurer: Helen Page FRSB

Education Liaison Officers: Professor Stephen Todryk FRSB; Professor Keith Lindsey FRSB; Barbara Murphy MRSB

Industry Liaison Officer: Tom Simpson MRSB

General Committee Members: Dr Shaun Nicholson
FRSB; Dr Paul Beetham MRSB

Student Liaison Officer: Eve Maguinness (from Jan 2021)

5. MEET THE COMMITTEE

Each committee member introduced themselves saying who they are and their role with the committee.

Other attendees were invited to introduce themselves too.

6. RSB HEAD OFFICE AND COUNCIL UPDATES

Professor Nigel Brown OBE CBiol FRSB, Chair of the College of Individual Members and Member of Council, gave an overview of the RSB council.

He reminded us that:

- RSB had decided there could be no face-to-face meetings before April but that this gives opportunities to have speakers who would otherwise struggle to attend in person meetings.
- A reminder to give the office sufficient notice (6 weeks) before an event.
- Nigel encourages input from Branches into the policy discussions.
- Contact Nigel if you wish to pass anything on to council (nigel.brown@ed.ac.uk).

7. SPEAK EASY DISCUSSION

Members discussed ideas for a range of activities for 2020-21.

It was decided to have monthly talks in the first half of the year. Caroline reminded us to aim for diversity in our speakers.

Steve Todryk agreed to contact a speaker for February.

Suggestions for talks by student members were discussed and will be followed up.

Committee members were invited to consider giving talks.

Industry involvement in a Panel meeting/Town Hall event was popular. Tom Simpson agreed to take this forward. Industry visits would have to wait until after the pandemic.

A suggestion of having students presenting their research project findings and practicing science-specific interview techniques were suggested.

Joint events with other organisations were suggested.

Proposed visits (if allowed) were:

May 2021 - National Trust Garden or RSPB Saltholme (Teesside)

June 2021 – Durham Botanic Garden

July 2021 – Kirkley Hall

Sept 2021 – Dilston Physic Garden

8. AOB

There was no other business. The Chair thanked everyone for their support and suggestions.