Shores of South Devon (marine life interest association)

Steering Group Minutes

7th Meeting

2nd March 2021 19:30 h, by Zoom

1. Present: Toby Sherwin (co-chair), Mike Puleston (co-chair), Peter Jonas, Anne Gwynn, Rob Morgan (Treasurer), Sue Watson-Bate, Gavin Watson-Bate, Ju Lewis
2. Apologies: none
3. Minutes of last Meeting:
The minutes were accepted.
4. Membership and Chairman’s update report (**TS**):
\* We welcome Sue, Gavin and Ju to the Steering Group. Andrew Burgess and Celia Hadow have resigned although Celia has agreed to continue to support us with the Dawlish Beach Hut Field Station project.
\* We have 9 new members making our total 31
\* Pete Stevens gave a talk on 23rd Feb on “South Devon’s Birds of Coast and Estuary” which is now on the Youtube channel.
5. Treasurer’s report (**RM**):
As of noon on 2 March, the balance of the bank account stood at £171.83, £65 higher than at the time of the last report on 4 February. We also hold £17.85 cash. This brings our total holdings to £189.68. Our chief expense at present is £14.39 per month for Zoom subscription for our on-line talks. In principle, we need three membership payments per month (at £5 each) to maintain our finances which we are easily exceeding at present. Our present financial position is healthy.
6. Safaris and Zoom talks and the Facebook site:
\* There have been no safaris since the last meeting because of Lockdown.
\* John Hepburn from Wembury Marine Centre has been booked to give a Zoom talk on Tuesday 23rd March at 1930. He will be talking about nurse hounds at Wembury.
\* Other planned speakers are Tasmyn Mann who will talk about sea slugs and diving off Babbacombe. Other possible speakers are Stephen Hawkins and Ester Hughes of the MBA. A decision about whether to hold a Zoom talk in June, which will in part depend on the Covid lockdown situation, was delayed till later.
\* **TS** will produce a summary of members interests at the next meeting to help determine which subjects might be of interest for talks
\* All SG members were asked to let **MP** know of any potential speakers that they could contact for future talks
\* At the time of the meeting the Facebook site had 788 members and was still very active. **JL** has agreed to help with administering the site. There have been several suspicious membership applications that have been declined.
7. There was a long discussion about how to take SoSD forward on a more scientific basis. The main topics covered were:
\* **MP** said that he would talk to Nova Mieszkowska about filling in gaps in MarClim’s South Devon coverage of Channelled Wrack and point out we were willing to help in other ‘simple’ ways.
\* Where should we send observations to? Devon Wildlife Trust have run Shoresearch and Shore Thing projects in the past, but unlike other neighbouring trusts that is not happening at the moment. *Nevertheless they have offered to send us copies of their methodology and species cards and for us to send any records on to them\**. The relative merits of iNaturalist and iRecord were considered but there was no consensus on which might be suitable for SoSD members, if either. iNaturalist is an international database and seems more user friendly, but iRecord is used by UK professionals.
\* ***TS*** *omitted to mention this during the meeting and will follow it up (with apologies)*
\* There was a comprehensive discussion about the idea of long term monitoring of the biotopes of specific rock pools. It was agreed that rather than expect the MBA or similar organisation to direct us we should go ahead and trial the idea. After the last meeting **RM** had produced a proposal for a methodology for monitoring a rock pool which had been circulated to SG members. It was agreed that each SG member, where possible given the present Lockdown restrictions, should trial his/her ideas on a few local rock pools and report back their experience at the next meeting.
**Action:** SG members (where feasible).
8. **AG** raised the issue of a seal that has been hauling out at Teignmouth and is subsequently disturbed by sightseers and their dogs. The SG was grateful to **AG** for alerting it of the problem but since the Brixham based Seal Project are taking action it was agreed that the Association should not get involved.
9. Next meeting:
The next Zoom meeting will be held on Tuesday 6th April at 1930 h.
10. The meeting ended at 21:30 h.