

# THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR AVICULTURE

**Minutes of the National Council for Aviculture Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at the Fieldhead Hotel, Markfield Lane, Markfield, Leics. LE67 9PS.**

1. **Chairman's welcome.** The Chairman, Barry Mills, opened the meeting at 2.05 pm by welcoming and thanking those attending for their support.

2. **Attendees.** The following were in attendance:

**Chairman:** Barry Mills

**British Bird Council:** Robb Brown

**Budgerigar Society:** Ghalib Al-Nasser,

**Canary Council:** Keith Ferry

**Affiliated Societies:** John Gaskin (Newark CBS), Brian Hamilton (Grantham CBS), Steve Hardcastle (Beverley CBS)

## **Apologies Received From:**

**MC:** Saviour Camilleri, John Cosby, Maurice Roberts, Chris Smith, Chris Snell, Dennis Webster, Bernard Williams, Chris Williams and the Aviculture Society.

3. **Minutes of the AGM held on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2024.** The minutes of the 2024 AGM were checked for accuracy, and approved on a motion by Robb Brown, seconded by Keith Ferry and approved by those who were present at the last AGM. The AGM minutes are always uploaded on the NCA website. It was felt that we should pursue the Aviculture Society to become a Parent Body.
4. **Matters Arising.** The Secretary, Ghalib Al-Nasser, informed the meeting that since he wrote to the 7 societies making up the old defunct Foreign Bird Federation (Aviculture Society, International Turaco Society, Foreign Bird League, Northumberland & Durham FBS, National Bengalese Fanciers Association, Zebra Finch Society & Australian Finch Society) only 3 societies affiliated to the NCA namely the AS, ITS and National Cockatiel Association.
5. **Chairman's Report.** The Chairman, Barry Mills, read out his written report as follows:  
"Whilst the Management Committee has not met since the last AGM, a number of significant events have been dealt with during the year by your officers.

The NCA's support of the **three** national exhibitions in England, Scotland and Wales in 2024 was much appreciated and all three events passed off successfully. I would hope we can continue to support them in 2025. Likewise, our support for the Sustainable Users Network has been requested again by Jim Collin who represents us at the CITES meetings at home and abroad.

Our Secretary/Treasurer, Ghalib, worked hard again via our broker, MEAD, to secure a PLI policy in an increasingly difficult insurance market where, inevitably, costs have risen and our premium reached the level feared and anticipated at last year's AGM. Ghalib will give details of all these financial decisions in his report.

The major development of government legislation affecting birdkeeping this year was the introduction of **birdkeeper registration**, at first voluntary and then made compulsory, with **revised guidelines** for organisers of bird gatherings published in February 2025 and placing considerable responsibility upon them for ensuring the guidelines are followed.

In practice, birdkeeper registration on-line has proved to be relatively simple and perhaps even more so by telephone to APHA directly, with, it must be said, some very long delays for some applicants due in part, one could assume, to APHA officials themselves being new to the system or occasionally overwhelmed by the volume of applications.

On the whole, the process is settling down and by the start of the next show season is likely to work as well as it has done in Northern Ireland for the past decade or so. Fanciers who are fearful or skeptical need to be reassured that the process is manageable and should not stop them showing their birds.

Key to its success will be the way organisers of bird gatherings manage the process at show level. Carefully designed entry forms informing exhibitors of their biosecurity obligations and including a properly worded declaration with CPH number to be signed by the exhibitor prior to the show and maintained as a record for 3 months after the show for potential APHA inspection will suffice. An equally well-designed “Sales Birds Record” with details of seller and buyer and an undertaking, where appropriate, by unregistered buyers to become registered within 30 days of the sale, should complete the paperwork to be retained for 3 months for potential APHA inspection.

The Contingency Plan required when a notifiable disease is identified during a show, or, the show’s location is declared to be in a protection area during an outbreak presents more challenges. However, if all the guidelines have been followed, the first case is highly unlikely (and hasn’t happened yet at a non-poultry show) and the second is likely to result in exhibitors being asked to follow the guidelines in packing up their birds and to leave the area as soon as possible.

We have to remember that these are all precautions to prevent the spread of disease for the sake of the poultry industry, of course, but also for all birds, including ours, and ultimately ourselves. On the bright side, we know there has never been an outbreak at a non-poultry show yet and, if the guidelines are followed, there is even less likelihood that there will be one in the future.

I have brought examples of paperwork I produced for my local CBSs and which Cage Birds Magazine featured in early March. You might want to consider or adapt it for your own clubs. We can look at those later in the meeting.

Finally, may I thank my colleague, Ghalib, for his invaluable work on your behalf as NCA Secretary and Treasurer and congratulate him on completing his two-year period of office as NCA President. It is also my pleasure to welcome our new President, Robb Brown of the British Bird Council, and wish him every success in his role at the head of the National Council for Aviculture”.

The Chairman then went on to inform the meeting that the Canary Council (CC) had their AGM in the morning which was attended by 5 members only. The first item on the agenda was if the CC should continue or wind up according to their Rules. Barry Mills, as CC Chairman, said that he has

been asking for his replacement as Chairman for the past 2 years but without success. Eventually the decision was made to wind up the CC with their money (£640) to be donated to the NCA with the proviso that should a new CC body be formed the money will go back to them. It was also agreed that the Secretary will write to the individual Canary societies who made up the body of the CC informing them that they can affiliate individually to the NCA at £20 annually and have a representative on the Management Committee.

All felt that this was a sad day for aviculture, the CC and the NCA.

- 6. Treasurers Report and Approval of the Appended Balance Sheet.** The Treasurer, Ghalib Al-Nasser, presented the Balance Sheet, which showed a profit (£1,455.62) compared to the loss in 2023 (£3,976.26). The closing account for end of year was £43,518.52.

The Treasurer felt that we are accumulating too much money in the account for our needs. A discussion took place about helping the 3 National shows as well as SUN and eventually on a proposal from Steve Hardcastle, seconded by Keith Ferry, and passed, to increase the current donation to the 4 mentioned bodies by £100 each.

The Balance Sheet is still strong, and it was approved unanimously following a motion by Robb Brown, seconded by Keith Ferry.

- 7. Secretary's Report.** Ghalib Al-Nasser read out his report as follows:

“We are all aware of the new law that came into effect with regard to the **registration of all bird keepers**. I was surprised how easy it was to register. I left that task till February and eventually I phoned APHA and within 3 minutes of conversation answering a few simple questions I was registered and 4 minutes later I received my certificate with my CPH number by email and 5 days later by post. Of course, now you cannot show your birds unless you quote your CPH number on the show entry form and on the day of the show you may well be asked to produce that certificate.

The downside of the registration, if it is a downside, is that you will be getting regular updates of the areas that are affected by the Bird Flu and shows may well be cancelled if the show hall falls within an affected area. Such is life!

Our purchase of the Public Liability Insurance from MGAM through our Broker MEAD has gone up again this year from £5,768 for the 80 societies to £6,932; considering we paid £4,256 in 2023 making it an increase of £2,676 within 2 years. We anticipate an annual increase in the future so the decision to charge societies £100 for the insurance was justified.

I was honoured to be invited for the third time to judge the budgerigars at the COM World Show in Portugal in January. There were 870 budgerigars to judge between 3 judges. The show received an entry of 21,147 from 2,556 exhibitors coming from 21 countries. I spent a week there and met with many fanciers from the U.K. and manned the COM-UK stand with Simon Tammam.

Two U.K. candidates, namely David Allen & Simon Meredith, took the OMJ Judges Test and passed making us, COM-UK, 14 judges strong now; but unfortunately, the presentation about the Stafford Canary did not get through on this occasion so better luck next year.

The COM Congress was well attended with delegates from 36 countries present. There was only one contested election at the Congress and that was for the President of the OMJ and Joao Liberado (Switzerland) was the successful candidate. The Gala Dinner was great and entertaining with 400 guests in attendance.

We had our COM-UK annual meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> March and it was the 3-year changeover of officials so my term as President ended and I am now the secretary with the president being Richard Lumley. Our Vice President is Robb Brown and our committee member from the NCA is Saviour Camilleri”.

The Secretary then read out a letter that he received from Donald Skinner-Reid as follows “I've appended below the email I received yesterday which resolves the issues in Scotland where we've just had yet another Licence which has finally removed the prospect of criminal liability on show organisers who couldn't verify (from a non-searchable register) the truth of anyone's registration status. That's been removed in Scotland as it was unenforceable in criminal law. England has the provision that can still see criminal prosecutions with no available defence.

The email below gets to the nub of the problem. DEFRA alleges - for England - that the exemption from registration doesn't apply if you take exempt birds to a bird gathering. The words in the Scottish and English SIs are the same. The Scottish Government accepts - see below - that DEFRA's interpretation is wrong in law - which it is. But all of England seems happy to roll over and accept what is palpably an erroneous interpretation of the law. I don't understand why that it is but as a lawyer, I can't stand seeing the state lie about the law.

Perhaps the NCA needs to do what I have spent the last year doing - discussing the issue with my MPs, MSP and directly with civil servants and wider community. If Parliament wishes to change the law to reflect DEFRA's erroneous interpretation of the existing law, so be it. But heaven's me, surely, we need the state to be telling the truth and not colluding with the nonsense.

To be clear, while not legally obliged to register, I have done so in Scotland. What the hobby's institutions want to do about this is their decision but I'll keep plugging away to try to achieve some truth”.

The Chairman also handed out 2 sheets about show registrations. It was agreed to have the NCA logo on those sheets and send out to all affiliated societies.

- 8. President for 2025** – The current President, Ghalib Al-Nasser, then handed over the Presidential Chain of Office to the new President Robb Brown from the BBC. In his acceptance speech Mr. Brown said that he was honoured to be the new President and will do his utmost to promote the NCA where ever he can.
- 9. President-Elect** – Keith Ferry from the old Canary Council was already nominated last year but the nomination was held over till this year.
- 10. To Appoint Honorary Life Vice-Presidents.** This position will be filled by Ghalib as the immediate past President.

**11. To Receive the Names of the Management Committee.** The following names were put forward:

**BBC:** Robb Brown, Bernard Williams, Chris Williams

**BS:** Ghalib Al-Nasser, John Cosby, Maurice Roberts, Chris Snell.

**CC:** Up to the meeting they were Saviour Camilleri & Keith Ferry.

**FBF:** The current 3 affiliated societies; AS, ITC & NCA

**12. To Elect the Auditors.** Paul Tiller FCCA was again elected to be auditor for the NCA.

**13. To Determine the Rate of Subscription for 2026.** It was agreed that subscriptions would remain the same as for 2025.

**14. To Consider any Resolution in Accordance with Rule 14x.** None.

**15. To Consider any Matter Referred to the AGM by the Management Committee.** None.

**16. To Consider any other Relevant Business notified to the Secretary at least 14 days Before the Meeting.** None.

**17. Date and Venue of the 2026 Annual General Meeting.** It was proposed to hold the 2026 AGM on **Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2026** at a suitable venue and time, now that we do not share the day with the Canary Council.

**The Chairman closed the meeting at 3.45 pm**