

# ***FOREIGN BIRD FEDERATION***

## ***“ELECTRONIC AGM”***

### ➤ **GENERAL**

You will recall that it was necessary to cancel the 2012 AGM because several of the usual delegates were either ill, or recovering from illness. This would have meant a *maximum* of 4 – 5 delegates attending (less than a quorum). Attempts to sort out a new date were unsuccessful for a number of reasons.

Many of the delegates (myself included!) are getting to an age when travelling long distances for short meetings is becoming unattractive, and the cost of travel is also a significant factor. It is also the case that most of my contacts in the member Societies are on e-mail. As a result I circulated an e-mail suggesting that we might try an “electronic AGM” in which any papers be sent by e-mail rather than hold an actual meeting; almost all those who responded agreed that we should try it – so here it is!

### ➤ **Secretary’s Report.**

While the FBF have held no meetings in the past year, I have been fortunate to meet most of the delegates at shows and other events during the year. The main role of the FBF has been in support of the NCA. After several years when the anti-birdkeeping activists have been very quiet, there are signs that they are stirring into life again (see NCA Report below) so we need to be vigilant.

I have been *acting* Secretary since the 2010 AGM until another suitable candidate comes forward. Due to other commitments I would be very happy if someone else would take on the job!

### ➤ **Treasurer’s Report.**

The FBF is in a good financial position. The total funds held by the Federation at the end of 2013 (accounts run January – December) was just short of £670. A copy of the (unaudited) accounts is attached to this e-mail. This includes £200 in a low interest-bearing Deposit Account.

Chief item of expenditure in the year is our affiliation to the NCA. Under the new rules, this is currently £100 p.a. (down from £200 previously), and as a result we made a small “profit” on the year. Please note that there are no expenses claimed by me as Secretary/Treasurer, or by our delegates attending meetings at the NCA.

Completion of the accounts was delayed because we originally banked with the TSB, then with Lloyds/TSB when they merged, and now back with TSB as a result of their de-merger. Many thanks to Bryan Reed for getting this sorted out for me!

I think I have been Treasurer since 2009, and while it does not take up a lot of time, again I would be very happy for somebody to take this over.

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### ➤ **NCA Report.**

- There were three meetings of the NCA Management Committee between April 2013 and April 2014. FBF Delegates Dennis Webster and Dave Paine attended all three meetings (and the 2013 and 2014 NCA AGM's), Peter Collins one meeting.
- Dennis Webster has been made NCA President for 2014 as an FBF representative.
- At the most recent NCA Management Committee meeting, well known Zebra and Bengalese fanciers George and Jill Lewsey were put onto the NCA Roll of Honour on a joint proposal of the NBFA and ZFS, supported by Kent ZFC and East Anglian ZFC. The proposal was put forward by the FBF representatives on the NCA, and accepted unanimously.
- FBF delegate Dave Paine has been elected as an NCA delegate to the UK branch of COM (COM-UK). Members from both the NCA and IOA – as COM-UK- supported the 2014 World Show in Bari, Italy, in January, and won a number of medals.
- The NCA Secretary is trying to get the written standards applying to the judging of various types of Foreign birds at COM shows; so far with limited success.
- The NCA booklet “Welcome to Birdkeeping” has been reprinted with updated contact details etc. Free copies are available for distribution at shows, Pet fairs etc. An estimated 1,200 were given out at the successful 2013 Pet fair in London, which attracted an estimated 13-14,000 people. The NCA will also attend the 2014 event, as will the ZFS. The NCA stand was taken to a number of other events in 2013 in promotion of Birdkeeping.
- NCA/Sustainable Users Network{SUN} met with new AHVLA Licensing officials on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2013 following a meeting with DEFRA, JNCC and AHLVA at the end of November. SUN delegates of all persuasions have become increasingly frustrated in the last couple of years at the lack of answers from DEFRA to their questions. These recent meetings enabled SUN to discuss these frustrations with a new team at AHLVA, who seemed more responsive than their immediate predecessors. Many past meetings with DEFRA have led to a frustrating lack of action on their part. However recent changes in DEFRA staff have led to recent more positive discussions. The advantage of being part of SUN is that it represents a number of bird, animal, fish and plant groups, which often have similar problems including those involving CITES. It been strong in getting the slimmed-down DEFRA to continue to have meetings.
- Dutch and Belgian Governments are still understood to be developing the concept of Positive List for livestock. This will make it clear which species

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will be considered as “suitable” pets, and therefore may be kept privately. Birds will be considered later in 2014. The situation is being monitored by the NCA through SUN, but the situation is complicated by a Pan-European Vets organization report, recently issued, which states that positive lists are already the Law in these two Countries, which in fact they are not. It is felt that this is deliberate misinformation.

- Natural England are running a Consultation, part of which is a review of the amount of time birds can be put into show-type cages for training (currently one hour in each 24 hours). This might be increased to 3 or even 6 hours/24. The object is to reduce stress by longer, fewer training sessions.
- Section 27 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, defines a wild bird as “ any bird of a species which is ordinarily resident in a wild state”; one interpretation of this might be that if, say, a group of escapee Zebra Finches formed a small breeding colony in say Portugal or Greece, then it could be considered a “wild bird” and would be subject to the same rules as currently applicable to native wild bird species anywhere in Europe, ie, it could eventually end up being illegal to sell *any* unrunng birds
- The threats to our hobby have never been so acute, as David Alderton reports in a recent issue Cage and Aviary Birds. Eurogroup for Animals (based in Brussels) is rallying MEPs just prior to the elections to sign pledges to curb the exotic pet trade, this means your budgies, your canaries and your foreign birds are all at risk. One of the SUN member groups, OATA urges us to contact our MEPs and tell them how we feel. Join up to the #handsoff myhobby campaign. Each of the parent bodies and affiliated Societies of the NCA should make representation. This could prove to be critical for the future of our hobby if this Eurogroup for Animals makes any significant progress.

### **5. Well Done!**

- Congratulations to the Avicultural Society on setting up the Raymond Sawyer Scholarship.
- Congratulations to the National Bengalese Fanciers Association (founded 1954) on their Diamond Jubilee.

**Dennis Webster**

24.04.2014