

Nelson Rock and Mineral Club

President's Report, 2022

Club Events

Because of concerns about Covid, and various weather extremes, 2022 has been a somewhat restricted and frustrating year for the Club, with a number of events needing to be cancelled or rearranged at short notice. Probably because of these uncertainties, attendance at the events that were organised was also somewhat reduced compared to previous years. Over the year, we managed to run only five Club meetings (average attendance 20, min 19, max 22), and nine field trips/workshops (average attendance 12, 7-20).

We thank all those who acted as speakers and/or field trip leaders during the year amidst all these disruptions. Special thanks are due to our invited external speakers: Prof Mark Stirling, Dr Alison Dean and Dr Mike Harvey. Thanks are also due to the core of 20 or so members who have continued to support the Club by their regular engagement with our activities. It's you who make it worthwhile!

Committee Matters

Committee membership

At last year's AGM a committee of six members was elected: David Briggs (President), Jean Gorman (Vice-President), Tom Brown (Secretary), Steve Cross (Treasurer), Tez Hardwick and Hubertus Op den Buysch. Over the year, Tez Hardwick and Hubertus Op den Buysch resigned. We thank both of them for their long-standing commitment to the committee. The other four members have expressed their willingness to continue in post, if requested, for the coming year.

It also needs to be noted that we have struggled to find members willing to take responsibility for some of the 'services' that the Club has run, usually as non-committee functions. Because of this, both the library and sales table have been in a state of suspension over the last year. Ways of resolving this dilemma will be discussed at the AGM.

Club membership and finances

The Treasurer's report provides details of income and expenditure over the year, and the current number of paid-up members. It should be noted, however, that because of the very restricted programme this year, the Committee agreed to suspend subscriptions. Members who have paid will be invited to have their subscriptions carried forward into 2023 (but will also be invited to pay again, if they wish). Because of this decision, the financial reserves of the Club remained more-or-less steady over the year and total reserves as at 30 September 2022 were \$21,285.06, compared with \$21,301.46 at 30 September 2021.

Club premises and collection

At last year's AGM, the Club agreed to try and resolve the long-running issue of premises, and the storage of its rock and mineral collection and equipment. This has been a major focus of attention for the committee during the year, though sadly I have to report that progress has been limited. Despite repeated indications that we would be offered space at Higgins Heritage Park to locate a fitted-out container-shed, this never materialised. Over the year, also, our existing shed, housed in the Heritage Park, became damaged and dilapidated. Effort was put into finding alternative premises (including sites at Robson Reserve and Willowbank in Wakefield, and rented storage space in Nelson or Richmond) but all these drew a blank. However, after a plea to members for help, it is pleasing to report that storage facilities have been offered on a temporary basis by Murray Dawson, in Hill Street, Richmond. We are extremely grateful for this offer, and the rock and mineral collection and equipment have accordingly been moved into his garage.

A permanent solution nevertheless still needs to be found. The available options, and a plan of action, will be discussed at the AGM.

Constitution

The intention was also declared at last year's AGM to revise the Club's constitution. This is needed both to streamline operation of the Club and to meet the new regulations for incorporated societies that come into force in 2023. Because of the uncertainties raised by Covid, no progress was made on this matter, but it will be a priority for the new committee in 2023.

Collecting licence

Another issue that has yet to be resolved is the collecting licence. As noted last year, the terms of this have changed substantially, with new restrictions being introduced. The necessity for these restrictions has been emphasised by several recent, widely-publicised events, when geological sites have been damaged by collectors. The committee will need to pursue this further during 2023 - but we should expect to find our freedom to collect come under much closer scrutiny. It is therefore vital that we all behave responsibly when visiting geological sites, and in collecting specimens.

Thank you!

Finally, and personally, I want to thank everyone who has been involved in helping us survive the year, and enjoy at least a few Club events. This includes all members of the committee, the non-committee members who have come forward with help in various forms, our external speakers, and, of course, our Patron Dr. Mike Johnson.