

NOTICE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING OF THE WADER STUDY GROUP

An Extraordinary General Meeting of the Group will be held at 10.30am on Saturday 13 October 1979 at Nottingham University during the autumn meeting of the Wader Study Group. Two main items are to be considered:

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND THE FUTURE OF THE BULLETIN

In his report to the Annual General Meeting, the Chairman pointed out how the Group has produced the Bulletin "on the cheap" for years and that, if Bulletin production was to be satisfactory and regular, more of the real cost would have to be met. The Editors have tried to make this painful process more acceptable (we hope) by improving the appearance, size and content of the Bulletin. At the AGM the Officers also pointed out that, to date, we had paid virtually nothing for printing the Bulletin and that if we had to pay for printing the subscription would probably have to be doubled. With impeccable timing and due to unforeseeable circumstances totally outside his control a few days after the AGM we heard from Paul Pratley that he would no longer be able to print the Bulletin. He was, however, able to help us with some final items and for this and his help over the last two years the Group is greatly in his debt.

Commercial printing is expensive. After many possibilities had been explored, with considerable help from John McMeeking, Bulletin 25 was printed by Lake Shore Graphics at very short notice and they will also print the issue you are reading. We have explored further ways of minimizing costs and readers may notice that more words have been fitted on to each page of this issue, hopefully without loss of legibility.

Members should appreciate that they are still getting a lot for nothing! Considerable unpaid effort is responsible for editing, compiling the Bulletin into proof sheets, collecting the printed material, collating and stapling the pages, packaging and addressing. Costs largely concern printing and postage.

However, there is no way round the fact that, now we have to pay full printing costs, the Group is faced with a choice of three main alternatives:-

(a) To leave the subscription as it is and reduce the size of the Bulletin to, at most, half of that at present by much slimmer issues or by producing only two smaller numbers per year. Essentially we could either omit all the articles and revert to a newsletter or omit the notices, the communication service, co-operative projects, recent publications, etc. and become a sort of mini-journal. This would mean turning away a great deal of material: we already have to hold over some articles to later issues.

(b) To increase the annual subscription to £4-00 (plus £1-50 for airmail delivery outside Europe). This would just cover costs at 1979 prices but would not allow for inflation (e.g. at the time of writing an increase in postal charges in July has just been announced) nor for any loss of membership resulting from the subscription increase. This would mean that we would probably have to ask for a further increase in 1980 for 1981. Also we should not be following the wishes expressed at the last AGM which directed the Officers to prepare estimates to establish the Group's future.

(c) To increase the annual subscription to £5-00 (plus £1-50 for airmail outside Europe). This would allow some margin for inflation and resignations and should enable us to avoid further increases for some time.

The Officers have discussed the situation with a number of members and do not recommend alternative (a); we feel that after all the recent effort, such a move would be very retrogressive. We recommend alternative (c), a basic subscription of £5 per year. As outlined in Bulletin 24, such a subscription would equate to the original subscription of £0-50 in 1970 after allowance for inflation and the increased size of the Bulletin. With 150 large pages per year, a subscription of £5-00 still compares favourable with many other publications in terms of number of words. In times of inflation, we know all too well that ideas of values become somewhat illogical so here are a few every-day comparisons. At £5, the annual subscription would be considerably less than the cost of a tank-full of petrol; of the same order as a month's subscription to a daily news-paper; and far less than the cost of a bottle of scotch whisky.

If you still feel that, for you, £5 would be too much, then why not combine your membership with someone else and pay half each to receive one bulletin between you? This is perfectly acceptable to the Group (provided one of you acts as addressee) and we would rather lose half of each of your subscriptions than lose both memberships. (Of course, it would be even better if you could persuade a non-member to join you on this basis - and then the unit cost to the Group would not increase).

Finally, we are still trying to economise and this will continue; members will have seen the space saving achieved since Bulletin 23. There are, of course, limits and we are nearing them. Large additional savings could only be achieved by preparing special typescript - but this would cost several hundred pounds and is impracticable. The Editors are, however, attempting to obtain a grant to aid publication in the current year but we will not know the outcome of this for some time. Even if successful, this would only delay the need for the increase by up to a year. It is essential that, in the long run, the Group and the Bulletin are placed on a sensible financial footing if they are to continue.

The Officers of the WSG therefore announce that a proposal to raise the subscription will be made at the extraordinary general meeting in October 1979. In order to allow members unable to attend the meeting to vote, a ballot paper is enclosed with this issue. If your vote is to be included, the completed paper must be received by the Administrative Secretary by 30 September 1979. There is also space for any additional comments members may wish to make.