It's a great honour to have been made Chair of the Sheffield Bird Study Group after serving as Honorary Secretary for the past decade and over 32 years as a member. How time flies!

Firstly, I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor David Wood, for his dedication and leadership over the past 12 years, which has put the Group in a very strong position, both in terms of our healthy finances and increasing membership numbers.

With the help of the hard-working SBSG Committee and our loyal membership, I'm sure we can continue to build on this strong position, and keep the SBSG moving forwards, as we head towards our landmark 50th anniversary in just over three years' time.

As new Chair, my primary aims are to streamline the running of the Group, increase our membership still further - particularly amongst younger people, form closer links with other local and regional groups, and perhaps most importantly - expand our recording effort, by embracing both new technologies and maintaining the high standard of fieldwork that has served the Group so well since its inception in December 1972.

With the natural world under an ever-increasing threat, it is up to local organisations like ours to not only record and collate as much ornithological data as possible, but to also raise awareness through education and engagement. By connecting birds and people in both interesting and innovative ways, hopefully we can ignite a passion in others to help protect what we have in this great city of ours and the surrounding area for future generations to enjoy.

The SBSG has played a not insignificant role in my own personal development since I first hesitantly entered the University Arts Tower one blustery night in October 1986, so if I can encourage others in the same way as people like Keith Clarkson, Kevin Gould, David Herringshaw and Tony Morris inspired me all those years ago, then there's no reason why the SBSG can't continue to thrive into the future.

With best birding wishes,

Richard Hill

Chair – Sheffield Bird Study Group