

County Recorder and Berkshire Records Committee review

A joint working group (including BOC, NDOC, CR, BRC) has reviewed the roles and appointment of the County Recorder (CR) and the Berkshire Records Committee, which the CR chairs. In summary they concluded:

- (a) Chris Heard should continue in his role as County Bird Recorder (CR).
- (b) The CR and Berkshire Records Committee (BRC) should not be directly dependent on or unduly influenced by the bird clubs in the county.
- (c) The CR should nominate members of the BRC, which would normally be endorsed by the clubs unless they wished to propose other candidates.
- (d) The appointment of CR and the BRC should be subject to agreement of the BOC, the NDOC and the wider bird-watching community. It should be subject to a five-yearly review led by the BOC and NDOC, the first being in 2015. Following the 5 year review or if matters were considered unsatisfactory, the clubs may instigate the nomination and election of other candidates for the CR and/or BRC roles through mechanisms to be determined.

This note seeks to provide a consensus view of the BOC and NDOC on the key criteria for review of the CR and BRC and outlines a procedure for making appointments.

As currently constituted, the prime role of the CR and BRC is to provide expert evaluation of records that form the county database and the basis for annual reports (record collection and database management is a responsibility shared with others). The BOC and NDOC produce the annual reports and maintain and use the county database. The clubs' prime interests are therefore in (i) the **scientific integrity of the records** and (ii) the **timeliness of records collection and evaluation** so that the county database provides an up to date resource: review of the CR/BRC should be primarily on those criteria.

Scientific integrity of records: key qualities required of the CR and BRC are a high level of ornithological expertise and the ability to command the co-operation and respect of the bird-watching community.

Timeliness of records collection and evaluation: NDOC and BOC would like to be able to eliminate report backlogs and ideally to publish annual reports within 12-18 months of the year end. Other users of the information such as the Rare Breeding Birds Panel and the BTO are seeking validated data within a few months of the year end. The data collection and evaluation process should be reviewed with the parties involved to enable these targets to be met.

Procedure for reviewing the appointment of the County Recorder and BRC.

Five years after the previous review or earlier if the clubs have serious concerns about the effectiveness of the CR/BRC, or if the CR is unwilling or unable to continue, the clubs will establish an appointment panel¹ that will consult with other interested parties².

The appointment panel will be charged with arriving at consensus recommendations to the clubs' committees for endorsement of the *status quo* or for changes in procedures or appointments (which will normally be nominated by the CR or BRC). This may involve iterative discussion with the Club committees and if consensus cannot then be obtained the matter may be decided by a simple majority vote of the clubs' memberships.

¹ The panel shall consist of the chairs of the clubs' (or their nominees), the CR or another BRC representative, as appropriate, and at least two other interested parties².

² For these purposes "interested parties" would include those involved in the creation, collection, analysis and publication of records, currently for example: representatives of Berksbirds, Berkshire Bird Bulletin, ringing groups, bird conservation, BTO County Representative etc. The consultation process should be open to the whole bird-watching community via the Clubs' websites and berksbirds.co.uk.

