



Berkshire Ornithological Club

Minutes of a Committee Meeting

held at 19.30, Tuesday 14th July at The Pavilion, Prospect Park, Reading.

The Chairman welcomed Sarah Priest and Ken White, the new BTO County Representatives.

1. Apologies for absence: Debbie Reynolds, Hugh Netley, Ruth Angus
2. Minutes of the Committee meeting held 24th March 2009, with the removal of "(subscriptions and raffles)" from item 5, were approved and signed by the Chairman.
3. **Matters Arising:**
 - i. **Sandhurst RMI Open Day:** the day attracted 2-3000 visitors, though there were few stands other than in the conservation section. It is too early to say whether any new members were recruited (DL).
 - ii. **QMR** One of the BOC locks on a pedestrian gate was missing, presumed stolen, and had been replaced (RRi).
 - iii. Garden Bird Survey: discussions with BTO not yet completed (TR).
 - iv. **Birds of Berkshire Report:** Colin Wilson reported that the 2005 issue was close to being ready for publication, but may not be available for the August mailing to members. It was agreed that the price to non-members should be set at £7.50. The Committee agreed with his proposal that, if possible, the 2006 and 2007 reports should be combined in a single issue, to help clear the backlog. Colin noted that direct income from advertising, report sponsorship and data sales had fallen and that there would be a net cost to the club for the current reports. The Treasurer confirmed that the club has reserves intended to cover report production. The Committee reaffirmed that the report is a key service to members that should be supported from subscriptions.
 - v. **Recording and report arrangements:** The subgroup will meet shortly and report back in the autumn.
4. **Treasurer's report (JR)**

The Conservation Fund balance is £5,190 after grants in the current year of £1185 and income from raffles of £372 and bank interest of £51. The Atlas Fund stands at £3,328, with further gift aid to be claimed.

Subscription income has increased by 9% on 2008, to £3,699, and the Club currently holds £11,649 of unrestricted cash, £729 of which is prepaid fares for the Bird Fair. Despite the healthy reserve, it was noted that core income (subscriptions, gift aid) is likely to fall below core costs (meetings, report, overheads) in the near future. The Treasurer said that it would be necessary to review subscription levels at the next committee meeting, so that a proposal could be put to the AGM in November.

Don Reid would continue as auditor for the next year.
5. **BOC Webmaster:** Marek Walford has resigned as the BOC's webmaster because of the pressure of his other work. The Committee asked the chair to thank him for the excellent work he has done to transform the site and keep it up to date. Potential volunteers had been identified by Colin Wilson and Renton Righelato, who were asked to liaise to confirm an appointment. The Committee approved Colin Wilson's request that the Club purchases a broadband website management link at £48/year: Marek would set this up prior to the handover.
6. **2009/10 Season**
 - i. **2009/10 Programme:** Ray Reedman was thanked for completing the 2009/10 indoor meetings programme and Bill Nicoll was complimented on the excursions

programme. With the addition of a few details, the programmes would be ready for publication in the Programme card.

- ii. **Committee and officers appointments:** Three of the elected Committee members retire after three years' service at the AGM: Rosalind Standley, Andy Tomczynski and Colin Wilson. Neil Bucknell is required to stand down as Chair at the AGM after three years' service and Renton Righelato would be standing down as Secretary after eight years. After discussion of potential replacements and new members, it was agreed that some candidates be approached and that the Chairman would put together a shortlist for the next meeting.
- iii. **New season pack preparation:** Ted Rogers and Renton Righelato will liaise to get the Programme card, Membership form, Notice of AGM and Newsletter ready for packing and posting by 10th August (**TR/RRi**). If the 2005 Report is available for inclusion, posting may be delayed up to 30th August (**CW**).

7. **Berkshire BTO Region** Sarah Priestley and Ken White introduced themselves as the new BTO rep partnership. They noted that the Berks and Oxon BTO regional meeting would be held at Didcot on 6 March 2010. They will be emphasising survey work and it was agreed that the Club would promote surveys to help fill gaps in atlas data identified by the Berkshire Atlas Group, which meets later in July.

8. **A.O.B.**

- i. **Bird Fair (RRe):** only 10 more seats need to be sold for costs to breakeven.
- ii. **Ornithology courses:** developments: with the closure of the University of Reading's Department of Continuing Education, their ornithology courses will close. The Committee confirmed that the BOC would like to see such courses continue as they fit the club's charitable objectives and are a source of new members. Other avenues for offering courses should be explored: both the WEA and University of Oxford Extra-mural department are looking at course provision in the Reading area. The Club could "go it alone", though it may be difficult to match the reputation and advertising capacity of these established providers. Ray Reedman volunteered to investigate the options and circulate a proposal before the next meeting.
- iii. **Breeding season site disturbance:** Andy Tomczynski drew the Committee's attention to the problem of site disturbance by, in particular, dogs and the work done in 2009 by West Berkshire Council and BBOWT volunteers. He agreed to prepare a letter of support to West Berks and promotional material that could be used on the website and elsewhere before the next breeding season.
- iv. **OPAL grant application:** A grant application was being developed for promotional material and presentational equipment (**RRi/RRe/RA**).
- v. **Membership:** Dot Lincoln reported that membership stood at 277 units (approximately 400 people).
- vi. **Fairs and Shows:** Ruth Angus had said that she would be taking a stand at the Earley Green Fair (1st August). The Committee supported the proposal to take a stand at the Swallowfield show (30-31 August), including having a skittle alley: volunteers were CW, TR, RRe, RRi, GL. It was agreed that the Club could take a stand at the Berkshire Show (19-20 September), if free spaces were available; John Lerpiniere agreed to book a stand and JR and RRe volunteers to help at the event.
- vii. **Newsletter:** Copy for the Autumn Newsletter to Ted Rogers by the end of July.
- viii. **Kennet Valley Park:** Colin Wilson reported that the KVP proposal had not been included in the new South east Plan and the committee thanked Colin for his work on this. However, it was anticipated that the developers would make further proposals and there would be a need for data to back up objections from the Club and support designation of parts of the area as Local Nature Reserve.

9. **Next meeting:** 27th October at 7.30 pm at the Pavilion, Prospect Park, Reading.

Distribution: *Committee Members:* Neil Bucknell (Chair), Ruth Angus, Gordon Langsbury, John Lerpiniere, Dot Lincoln, Ken Moore, Hugh Netley, Ray Reedman, Debby Reynolds, Renton Righelato, John Roberts, Ted Rogers, Rosalind Stanley, Andy Tomczynski, Marek Walford, Colin Wilson. BTO rep Sarah Priest/Ken White, County Recorder: Chris Heard.