



## **Berkshire Ornithological Club**

### **Minutes of Committee Meeting**

held at 19.30, Wednesday 21st January 2009 at 71 Kidmore Road,  
Caversham, Reading.

The Chairman, Neil Bucknell, welcomed the newly elected members: Ken Moore, Hugh Netley and Debby Reynolds

1. **Apologies for absence:** Dot Lincoln, Ray Reedman, Chris Robinson, Rosalind Stanley, Colin Wilson.
2. **Minutes** of the Committee meeting held 21<sup>st</sup> October 2008 were approved.
3. **Matters Arising:** there were no matters arising not covered in the agenda.
4. **Treasurer's report:** John Roberts reported that the Club's unrestricted funds stood at £11,561. Total subscription income was £3,232, a small increase on the same time last year. The Conservation Fund held £6,158. The Atlas sponsorship fund held £1020 Looking forward, he noted that interest income would be much reduced due to the current low interest rates. £7,000 of the Club's reserves were held in a Charities Aid Foundation high interest account, currently at 2.49%. Renton Righelato noted that with anticipated income and expenditure levels, reserves would fall over the next two years as reports were published. He was asked to circulate his financial projections (RRi)
5. **Membership renewals:** John Roberts reported that so far 250 subscription renewals and 5 resignations had been received. The remaining unpaid subscriptions were being chased by Dot Lincoln (DL).
6. **Subscriptions review:** The Committee discussed a proposal to remove or lower the retired members' discount, currently 50%, without coming to a consensus. Subscription levels will be reviewed again prior to the 2009 AGM (JR).
7. **Recording and Recordship:** The Chairman introduced the item by noting that the club had not appointed its own Recorder, and that the recent retirement of Derek Barker as deputy County Recorder left a considerable gap in the team who undertook the collation of records and production of the County Report.

The Chairman outlined the three stage process of handling of records: collection, evaluation and publication. Collection and maintenance of the County database is managed by Colin Wilson and Marek Walford. Evaluation is carried out by the recorders and the Berkshire Records Committee, chaired by Chris Heard. Compilation and publication of the report is done by Colin Wilson. Chris Heard offered to take on the role carried out by Derek Barker in carrying out the editing of the species

accounts for the annual reports. However he did not think he was the best person for collating the information for the Berkshire Rare Birds Breeding Panel.

There was a wide ranging discussion of these issues. As regards the relationship between the County Recorder and the BOC, it was agreed that in future the appointment of any new recorder ought to be carried out after consultation with BOC and other groups in the county. Chris Heard confirmed that he had declined the role of BOC Recorder and said that he regarded the independence of the county recorder from local groups as important in establishing impartiality when assessing records. Several members felt that the procedural issues should be addressed at a subsequent meeting.

8. **Queen Mother Reservoir** access arrangements: Renton Righelato reported that the Club had completed a license with Thames water to issue permits for bird-watching at Queen Mother Reservoir, which would be available to Club members only. An information sheet was distributed to members and he would be able to start issuing permits as soon as Thames Water had changed the lock on the main gate. It would be necessary to establish a volunteer group to manage the BOC room at QMR and control "twitches", when authorised by Thames Water to allow non-permit holders access (RRi).
9. **Fobney Island** proposal: Renton Righelato reported that John Lerpiniere and he had been invited to be part of a steering group for a project between Reading Borough Council, the Environment Agency and Thames Water to establish a wetland reserve and angling facility on Fobney Island. The BOC role would be to advise on plans and subsequently to take part in a trust to be set up to manage the site. A design feasibility study is currently under way. The project was expected to cost in excess of the £300,000 already committed by the participants and it had been made clear that the BOC could not be a funding partner. The Committee agreed to the Club taking part in the steering group.
10. **Digital projector**: Renton Righelato (and Ray Reedman *in absentia*) made an outline proposal that the BOC acquire a digital projector to facilitate talks to other organisations in Berkshire and enable the Club to use lecture halls without their own projection facilities. The Committee invited a detailed proposal and asked that grant sources, second hand purchase and insurance be considered (RRe/RRi).
11. **Gaming license**: in his absence, Colin Wilson was asked to circulate a written proposal.

## 12. Any other business

- i. Through the Secretary, Ray Reedman reported that the 2009/10 programme was progressing well, with many speakers already booked.
- ii. Because of parking problems around the Palmer Building at the University, Ray Reedman had investigated the possibility of

- other sites on the campus. A suitable room at the Earley gate part of the campus would be significantly more expensive.
- iii. 44 people took part in the coach trip to Slimbridge, which had made a small surplus.
  - iv. Ray Reedman suggested that, if Committee numbers were too large for meetings to be held in members' homes, the Earley Community Centre could be available.
  - v. Ruth Angus suggested that the Club take part in the open Day at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, which attracted 15,000 people (RA to follow up).
  - vi. John Lerpiniere reported that the grant given to him by the Conservation Fund for Barn Owl box installation had been used to provide tools and boxes. A training course on box installation had been held and some of the boxes installed.
  - vii. Ted Rogers reported that he was in discussion with the BTO on reciprocal use of each others' Garden Bird survey data (TR).
  - viii. In response to a question from the President on membership trends, Renton Righelato said that numbers of membership units had reached a plateau of around 260 +/-10 over the period 2006-2009.
  - ix. Chris Heard reported that the systematic list for the report for 2005 was complete. Work on the 2006 report was awaiting the NDOC's records.

13. Date and venue for next meeting: 24 March 2009, at 63 Hamilton Road, Reading, RG1 5RA at 7.30 pm.

**Distribution:**

*Committee Members:* 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.

*For information:* BTO rep Chris Robinson, County Recorder: Chris Heard.