



Berkshire Ornithological Club

Minutes of Committee Meeting

Held 19.30, Tuesday 24th March 2009 at 63 Hamilton Road, Reading.

1. Apologies for absence: Chris Robinson.
2. The Minutes of the Committee meeting held 21st January 2009 were approved.
3. Matters Arising and review of actions:
 - i. **Membership renewals:** Dot Lincoln reported that there had been 279 renewals and new subscriptions and 12 of members had not replied to her.
 - ii. **QMR arrangements:** Renton Righelato reported that new locks had been installed on the main entry gate of Queen Mother Reservoir and permit holders could now visit from dawn to one hour after sunset seven days a week. 54 permits had been issued so far. The Committee asked him to write to the CEO of Thames Water, thanking him and his staff for their goodwill and effort in providing birdwatching access (**RRi**). Dot Lincoln agreed to send permit application forms with new member packs (**DL, RRi**).
 - iii. **Sandhurst RMI Open Day:** The Committee supported Ruth Angus's proposal to take part in the Sandhurst Open Day on 14th June. Colin Wilson and Gordon Langsbury volunteered to help and Ruth asked for volunteers (**All**).
 - iv. **Garden Bird Survey:** the BTO are progressing Ted Roger's initiative to integrate BOC GBS data with the BTO GBS.
 - v. Bird Reports 2006, 2007: Colin Wilson noted that records had been received from the NDOC for 2006 and work on species accounts could start. Sponsors are required for the 2006 and subsequent reports and members were asked to tell Colin of potential sponsors whom he could approach (**All**).
4. **Treasurer's report:** John Roberts reported that the Club held funds of £13,241 plus £3268 in the Atlas fund and £6124 in the Birds of Berkshire Conservation Fund (before making a grant of £1,000 to the TVERC: see item 8). It was agreed that the Atlas Fund did not require a separate bank account and that the fund balance would not be called on for at least a year and could be put on high interest deposit.
5. **BOC financial forecast model:** Renton Righelato had circulated a financial forecasting model for the Club. He noted that recurrent unrestricted income excluding report-related income was only sufficient for administrative overheads and meetings. The current reserves would fall as outstanding reports were produced and meeting the costs of future reports would be dependent on sponsorship and the income generated by Colin Wilson from the sales of data, reports and advertising.
6. **Recording and Recordship arrangements:** Following the discussion at the last meeting, the Chairman put forward a proposal to set up a task force to propose answers to the questions:
 - i. Should the BOC continue to have in its constitution a requirement for a club recorder (if not the County Recorder)? If so, should the description of the post be rewritten to reflect the current arrangements and the importance of the County Report in the Club's activities?
 - ii. What should be the role of the County Recorder?
 - iii. What should be the arrangements for the appointment of the County recorder and members of the County Records Committee?
 - iv. What changes are desirable to the current process of producing the report to reduce delays in the production of the County Report?

The Committee welcomed the proposal and, in discussion, several members said that the task force should not be constrained by the current arrangements, which had arisen before the establishment of the BOC as a county club.

The Committee felt it important that the NDOC's be invited to take part in this review. The members of the task force will be Chris Heard, Colin Wilson, Andy Tomczynski, Ken Moore and a nominee of the NDOC.

The Chairman asked the task force to report back to the Committee in the Autumn (**CRDH, CW, AT, KM**).

7. **TVERC data exchange agreement renewal:** The Committee agreed that the data exchange agreement with the TVERC, which was executed a year ago subject to a review at the end of the first year, be continued and that annual review would not be necessary (**RRi**).
8. **Conservation issues:** The TVERC had been awarded a grant of £1,000 towards a £150,000 woodland management project from the Birds of Berkshire Conservation Fund. The BBCF grant was ring-fenced for bird conservation work and John Lerpiniere would be an advisor to the project.

The design engineers contracted to prepare a feasibility study on creation of a wetland reserve and angling facility on Fobney Island will report back to the sponsors (Reading Borough Council, EA, Thames Water plus user groups including the BOC) in late April and early May. John Lerpiniere and/or Renton Righelato will represent the BOC.

A researcher at the University of Reading had sought help for a study on predation of garden birds, focussing on cats. She is seeking volunteers to do Breeding Bird Surveys of nine 1 km squares in and around Reading. Ray Reedman and Renton Righelato are doing some squares but further surveyors are urgently needed. It was agreed that this be publicised at the next meeting and on the website.

9. Any other business

- i. **Continuing education:** Ray Reedman noted that, with the closure of the University's continuing education department, the course he gives on birds will close unless another sponsoring organisation is found. He may put a proposal to the BOC to sponsor the course (**RRe**).
- ii. Complimentary reports: The Secretary should be responsible for sending out complimentary copies of reports.
- iii. John Roberts asked that the Chair repeat back members' recent sightings to the audience at indoor meetings.
- iv. John Roberts asked for a volunteer to take over the raffles from the beginning of the next season (**All**).
- v. Gordon Langsbury said that Dave Cromack would give a prize for each category in the photographic competition.
- vi. Colin Wilson reported that Robert Gillmor had offered a Laughing Gull for the cover of the 2005 report.
- vii. Chris Heard asked that the use of abbreviations in the report be reconsidered to improve readability. He would make suggestions to the editor.
- viii. After a discussion of the formats of bird club newsletters, the consensus was that the current format was liked by members and no change was called for. Ted Rogers asked that items for the Spring newsletter be sent to him by first week of April.

10. **Date and venue for next meeting:** The Pavilion, Prospect Park, Liebenrood Road, Reading at 7.30 on 14th July.

Distribution:

Committee Members: Ruth Angus, Neil Bucknell, 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 Chris Robinson, *County Recorder:* Chris Heard.