



Berkshire Ornithological Club

Minutes of Committee Meeting

held Tuesday 27th October at The Pavilion, Prospect Park, Reading.

1. **Apologies** for absence: Gordon Langsbury, Ken White/Sarah Priest, Ken Moore, Ray Reedman, Debbie Reynolds.
2. **Minutes** of the Committee meeting held 14th July 2009 were approved.
3. Matters Arising and review of actions:
 - i. **QMR**: The vandalised lock and chain on the main gate has still not been replaced; in view of difficulties with temporary exit passes for the sailing club gate, it would be helpful if the Datchet Water Sailing Club were to provide plastic card passes for permit-holders – **RRi** to approach DWSC. Thames Water have still not cashed the BOC cheque for the license fee for 2009. **RRi** to confirm payment arrangements with Matt Prior.
 - ii. Garden Bird Survey: no progress to report (TR).
 - iii. **Birds of Berkshire Report**: Colin Wilson was complimented on the 2005 report, published in August. The Committee agreed with his proposal that the 2006 and 2007 reports be combined to further reduce the report backlog. Work on the combined report would start in December.
 - iv. **Recording and reporting arrangements**: A meeting of the subgroup to recommend the arrangements for the appointment of the County recorder and members of the County Records Committee had not yet been arranged. The Committee requested that Andy Tomczynski, whose term on the Committee expires at the AGM, remain a member of the subgroup. **CW** to progress.
 - v. **Webmaster**: Mike Taylor had taken on the role of webmaster.
 - vi. **Grant application**: The Club's application for an OPAL grant for a digital projector and publicity support had not been funded. A further opportunity to apply is expected in 2010.

Treasurer's report (JR): The Accounts for 2008/09 have been audited and copies are being prepared; the following is a preliminary summary: Club funds at 30 Sept were £9665 (down £533) with £5300 in the separate Conservation Fund. We also hold funds for Atlas Group work and these stand at £3950. The deficit of £533 is acceptable in the light of around £3000 being spent on a Report, but it cannot be sustained. Subscriptions and Gift Aid income increased, but Interest and Data Sales fell. The cost of Room Hire and Speakers shows a reduction in comparison to 2007/8 which included the hire of a larger hall for a special meeting, but Officers' Expenses rose from £338 to £505.

4. **BOC budget and subscriptions review (JR/RRi):** The proposal on subscriptions and reserves, which had been circulated to the Committee (attached), was discussed and the following decisions made:
 - i. The retirement discount should be reduced from 50% to 25%.
 - ii. The ordinary member rate should be increased to £20, the family membership rate to £25 and the country membership to £15, with a £2 discount for payment by standing order.
 - iii. The Committee resolved that £3,000 should be designated as a reserve to fund publication of the backlog of reports.
 - iv. The Committee agreed with the proposal that the Club should endeavour to maintain an unrestricted reserve approximately equal to one year's expenditure.

5. **Club publicity (RA):** Ruth Angus explained that she would be spending much of her time in Italy in 2010 and that if she were to continue in her role as Publicity Officer, she would need more support from other members. The Committee were keen for her to continue as her work has been central to the Club's visibility and growth. She would prepare a plan of the work that needed to be done and recruit volunteers (who need not be Committee members) and let the Committee know if she needed further help (**RA**). It was agreed that more attractive and readily portable display boards/banners were needed: outline designs and cost estimates would be sought (**RA**).

6. **Situations vacant: Secretary:** a replacement for Renton Righelato had not been found; further soundings would be taken (**NB, RRI**).

7. **AGM arrangements (NB):** Reports would be given by the Treasurer and the Chairman. Officers were asked to send Neil items for the Chairman's report (all officers) by 7th November. A brief report on highlights of the birding year would also be given: as Ken Moore was preparing a summary of 2009, he should be contacted (RRi).
Nominations for the Committee would be Neil Bucknell, Fraser Cottington and Bill Nicoll, whom failing Tim Ball (subject to agreement).
To encourage members to come to the AGM and Gordon Langsbury's talk following it, announcements would be made by email to members (TR), berkbirds yahoo group and on the BOC and (if possible) berkbirds websites (RRi to contact).

8. **A.O.B.**
 - i. Items for the New Year newsletter should be sent to Ted Rogers by 25th December 2009. This would include AGM reports.

9. Date and venue for next meeting: 7.30 pm Monday 18th January 2010 at Prospect Park.

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, Mike Taylor, Colin Wilson.

BTO rep Sarah Priest/Ken White, *County Recorder:* Chris Heard.

To: BOC Committee 27th October 2009

Subscription Review

The Club's core expenditure, on meetings, publications and administration was £6,076 in 2008/9; is expected to be around £6,100 in 2009/10 rising with inflation in subsequent years assuming no significant changes in our activities. Core income (subscriptions, gift aid, meetings entrance and other donations) was £5,891 in 2008/9 and is predicted to be £5,700-5,800 in 2009/10. Currently then, income does not meet expenditure and we are drawing on reserves.

It is recommended that subscriptions, which have been held constant since 2003, be increased from October 2010 by an amount sufficient to fully cover the core expenditure and allow for cost inflation of 3%/year. Assuming modest continued growth in membership (c 10/yr), this implies a subscription increase of around 17%. The proposals below, which make provision for a loss of some members (equivalent to 20% of the retired category) during the transition, match this requirement.

The Club's unrestricted reserve at the year end (the low spot in the annual cycle) is currently approximately £9,400. It is considered prudent to maintain a reserve equal to at least one year's expenditure, around £6,000. A further part of this reserve is required to enable publication of the backlog of reports (2006, 2007, 2008). For clarity and to help the report publication team to plan, **it is recommended that the Committee designates £3,000 for this purpose.** After designation the remaining unrestricted reserve would be approximately equal to one year's expenditure and the proposed subscription increase should enable it to be maintained.

Historically Committees have been reluctant to increase subs when we hold good capital reserves. The proposal to designate £3,000 for Reports is made on the assumption that the backlog will be cleared and this reserve used in the near future.

Subscription proposal

- 1. It is proposed that subscriptions be increased from 1 October 2010:**

Ordinary	at least £17.50 perhaps £20 (from £15)
Family	at least £22.50 perhaps £25
Junior/Student	£10
Country	£15
- 2. We should declare our intent to remove the 50% rate by applying a lesser discount from 1 October 2010 and removing it at the next increase:**

Optional Pension Rate	
Ordinary	£12.50 perhaps £15 (from £7.50)
Family	£17.50 perhaps £20 (from £10)

At the AGM we offer the Committee's views on subs and ask for Members comments by 1 March 2010. Notification of our final decision will be in the Spring Newsletter. A previous proposal to remove the 50% rate had support at an AGM but subsequent Committee discussions were not supportive. We need to consider Life Membership rates, or abandon them.

John Roberts, Renton Righelato, 21 October 2009

Budget estimates

The following figures are based on provisional year end data for 2008/9 and estimates for future years. Scenarios 1 and 2 refer to a more cautious and a more probable scenario for the effects of a subscription increase. The rates used are the minima in the proposal above.

Core income	2008/9	2009/10	Scenario	Scenario
			1	2
			2010/11	
<i>Member units</i>	270	280	280	300
Subscriptions	3792	3900	4300	4750
Gift Aid	822	840	900	1000
Interest	167	150	150	150
Entry donations	50	50	50	50
Report and data sales	1060	800	800	1200
	5891	5740	6200	7150
 Core expenditure				
	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2010/11
Meetings	2379	2500	2750	3000
Report	2700	2600	2400	2600
Newsletter	241	250	250	250
Administrative	505	520	540	540
Miscellaneous	251	255	260	260
	6076	6125	6200	6650
 Net surplus/deficit				
	-185	-385	0	500
 Reserves				
Unrestricted	9400	6015	6015	6515
Report reserve*		3000		

It is assumed that the reserve set aside for completing the report backlog is used in 2009/10 – the expenditure associated with the backlog is assumed to be £3000 and is not shown.