



Berkshire Ornithological Club

Minutes of Committee Meeting

held Monday 18th January 2010 at The Pavilion, Prospect Park Reading

Present: Renton Righelato (chair), John Roberts (Treasurer), Mike Turton (Secretary), Neil Bucknell, Fraser Cottington, Gordon Langsbury, John Lerpiniere, Dot Lincoln, Ken Moore, Hugh Netley, Bill Nicoll, Ray Reedman, Debby Reynolds, Colin Wilson.

Ken White & Sarah Priest (BTO Regional Reps)
Chris Heard (County Bird Recorder)

1. Apologies for absence: Ruth Angus, Ted Rogers
2. Minutes of last committee meeting on 27th October 2009 were approved and signed.

3. **Matters arising**

Item 3(iii): The major contribution made by Derek Barker to the production of Birds of Berkshire was acknowledged by the committee and the chairman was asked to pass on their thanks.

Item 3(iv): it was confirmed that Andy Tomczynski was to remain on the working party as he was already a member, even though he had ceased to be a BOC committee member.

QMR: Thames Water have fixed the gate. The Club will not be charged for 2009 because the scheme was not in operation for a full year and there had been teething problems.

Webmaster: thanks expressed to Mike Taylor for improvements to website.

4. **Treasurer's report**

Club account: £13,899 (balance as at 30th September was £9,665).
Conservation Fund: £5,336. Quarterly interest was £1.30.
Atlas Group: £4314

2009/10 subscriptions received to date (excluding Gift Aid) total £3676.50.
Total for 2008/9 was £3792. 33 people have not currently renewed.

Action: DL to produce list of non-renewals so that these can be followed up by the people who introduced these members to the Club.

Action: RRe noted that the University will not be charging the Club for the meeting which they cancelled in January due to snow.

5. **Appointment of Trustee**

Current trustees are President, Hon. Secretary & Hon. Treasurer. Hon. Secretary is contact point for Charity Commission. A motion to appoint Mike Turton as a trustee was passed *nem con*.

Action: MT to check with Charity Commission whether all elected committee members should be trustees. If so, then MT to check with all committee members that they are all willing to become trustees.

6. **Recording Arrangements in Berkshire**

Summary of working party discussions circulated by CW in addition to papers circulated prior to meeting. The key proposals (attached) in summary were:

- (a) Chris Heard should continue in his role as County Bird Recorder (CBR).
- (b) The CBR and Berkshire Records Committee (BRC) should not be directly dependent on or unduly influenced by the bird clubs in the county.
- (c) The CBR 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 CBR 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 CBR and/or BRC roles through mechanisms to be determined.

CW reported that the proposal had been agreed by working party; though subsequently there was a request from Andy Tomczynski that the process for election of County Bird Recorder (CBR) be worked out as part of initial proposal.

The Committee noted the amount of work that had gone into the proposals and the way that the various parties involved had worked together. It was also noted that, despite the wording in item 1 of the working party report, Peter Standley had not acted improperly in the manner of the appointment of CDRH as CBR.

The Committee approved the outcome of the working party meeting as setting a workable framework and approved the proposal that Chris Heard continue as CBR.

BOC and NDOC need to get together to work on preparations for method of voting.

Action: RRi to contact Jim Burnett. CDRH and CW to be involved if further discussion is required.

Action: CDRH & CW to draft statement to birdwatching fraternity in Berkshire and circulate it to NDOC/ BOC committees for approval prior to publication.

The meeting was informed that Ken Moore has taken on role of assistant CBR.

Action: CDRH to consider whether job title should be assistant or deputy.

The BOC recorder post (defined in the constitution) could be confused with that of County Bird Recorder. Role at present is one of data manager and bird report editor. It was noted that the same confusion is unlikely to arise with the post of NDOC recorder.

The following options were proposed to clarify the post of recorder in the constitution:

- No change to constitution - the Club still has a recorder, even if they do not carry out a normal recorder's role.
- Minor rewording to redefine the role of recorder.
- Restructure section 5.3.2 of the constitution to refer to functions rather than job titles.
- Delete section 5.3.2 of the constitution and reword section 5.3.4 to allow the Club to appoint officers as necessary to carry out the functions of the Club.

Action: MT to review options with CW, RRe & NB and circulate proposals to committee for discussion at a future meeting.

Action: JR to email further suggestions for changes to the constitution to MT.

Action: MT to email copy of the constitution to NB.

The working party was thanked for its work. New working party needs to be formed to look at the detailed implementation of the proposals.

More volunteers are required to write species accounts for the bird report.

7. **Attendance & Venue for Indoor Meetings**

Report circulated by RRe. Postcode analysis showed that there were proportionately more new members from central/East Berkshire, than from the west and south.

It was agreed that the Club continues to use University as there appear to be no practical alternatives. Ideas for more social opportunities discussed:

- Allow people to arrive from 7.30pm onwards for meeting starting at 8.00pm. Café is open at this time if people want refreshments.
- BBQ. Possibly hold joint event with NDOC or FoLL (possibly including guided walks).

Need to publicise meetings more widely.

Action: MT to publicise on BerksBirds Yahoo! group.

Fraser Cottington offered to publicise BOC events whenever he appears on Radio Berkshire.

Action: RRe to talk to RA about publicity, especially for celebrity speakers.

Provisional list of speakers for next year was discussed. Celebrity speakers need to be well-known. Some debate over whether Mike Dilger was well-enough known, but it was agreed to go ahead with him.

Action: RRe/RRe to submit new application for grant to purchase data projector as backup to University facilities.

Action: RRe to carry out poll of membership as proposed in report.

8. **Conservation Officer's Report**

A request from Kennet & Pang Valley Project for a grant of £1000 towards a project to create reedbeds at Hosehill & other sites had been approved by the Conservation sub-committee.

Barn owl boxes: constructed mainly in Kennet & Pang Valley area. 4 people trained on monitoring.

Action: RRe to investigate possible site for swift/house martin nestbox pole.

Reading BC now recommends swift and house martin boxes as mitigation measures. Report requested from Reading BC – may be possible opportunity for monitoring.

Need to discuss including nestbox guidelines in planning guidance with other local authorities.

9. **Any Other Business**

- i. Request from Kelly Thomas (Berks Biodiversity Officer) for permission to put link on Berks Biodiversity website to the distribution maps on the BOC website. Granted, though it was noted that BOC and BTO are still in discussion on which species maps should be withheld.
- ii. Request from Dot Lincoln for help in organising the mid-week walks. JR to attend June planning session in Dot's place.
Action: RRI to raise at indoor meetings.
- iii. Mark Grantham only charged £25 for talk that he gave on bird ringing. A donation of £100 to the BTO Out of Africa appeal was agreed.
- iv. BOC currently have corporate membership of FoLL. These are to be discussed at the FoLL AGM on 19th January. Fraser to feed back outcome to BOC committee.
- v. New QMR permits have been issued to paid-up members.
- vi. Letter received requesting permission to count cormorant roost at Theale Main Pit.
Action: John L to discuss with Ken Moore.
- vii. Fraser Cottington raised the following points:
 - Whether we could get involved with feeding birds beyond gardens.
 - Making Paypal available on the website for subscription payments.
 - Making records database available online to allow members to search.**Action:** MT to note for future discussion by committee.
- x. Gordon Langsbury invited nominations for inclusion in Who's Who in Birdwatching – contact Dave Cromack.

10. **Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 23rd March at The Pavilion.