



## Berkshire Ornithological Club

### Minutes of Committee Meeting

held Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2010 at The Thames Suite, Building 510, Oracle Parkway,  
Thames Valley Park, Reading.

**Present:** Renton Righelato (chair), John Roberts (Treasurer), Mike Turton (Secretary), Neil Bucknell, Gordon Langsbury, Ray Reedman, Colin Wilson, Ted Rogers, Debby Reynolds

1. Apologies for absence: Hugh Netley, Fraser Cottington, Dot Lincoln, Ken Moore, Bill Nicoll, Ken White & Sarah Priest.

It was noted that several members of the Committee were on the Scillies. Consideration should be given to moving this meeting away from mid-October.

2. Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2010 were approved and signed.

3. **Matters Arising**

**Item 3 - Statement to birdwatching fraternity in Berkshire on bird recording arrangements in Berkshire** (Jan 2010 meeting). No progress.

**Action:** RRi to produce abbreviated version of agreement for publication on websites.

**Item 3 - Swift nestbox pole** (Jan 2010 meeting): No progress. To be discussed with Grahame Hawker for installation in 2011.

**Item 3 - Kennet Meadows** (Mar 2010 meeting): **Action:** CW to organise meeting with all other interested groups.

**Item 8a - Indoor programme:** JR reported that, subsequent to the initial agreement with the University, the hire charges for meeting rooms have now changed so that all rooms (apart from the room for the Mike Dilger lecture) are all charged out at £180 per meeting - more expensive than first anticipated. There have also been problems communicating with the booking agents. JR has now also received a single invoice for full year instead of being invoiced monthly.

**Action:** all to continue to look for suitable new premises for meetings.

HUMSS room: concerns were expressed over car parking arrangements, lack of amplification, seating layout (no centre aisle), and lack of space for notice board. It was felt that it might be better to use the door at the front of the room as an entrance rather than the one at the back.

**Item 8a - Mike Dilger meeting** on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2011: RRi summarised arrangements to date. The Committee agreed by email on 15<sup>th</sup> July that this meeting should be moved to Room G10.

**Action:** CW to arrange a further sub-committee meeting to review progress.

Need to push raffle ticket sales.

**Action:** RRi to speak to Jim Burnett, NDOC, regarding publicity and sales of raffle tickets.

It was agreed *nem com* by the Committee at this meeting that John Roberts, Ray Reedman, Colin Wilson and Mike Turton would supervise all aspects of the Lottery draw to be held at the Mike Dilger meeting and that any two could act as necessary in the completion of returns to Wokingham Borough Council.

#### 4. **Committee structure, terms of reference and appointments**

Discussion paper circulated prior to meeting. It is hoped that the new structure will enable new people to get involved in running the Club without extending the, already large, Committee.

Editorial Board established and working well. Proposal to this meeting is to establish membership and programme sub-committees. A proposal to establish a conservation sub-committee will be discussed at the next Committee meeting.

The membership sub-committee will be chaired by CW and include newsletter editor, membership secretary and others as necessary. This group will also look after publicity.

**Action:** CW to convene first meeting of the membership sub-committee and draft terms of reference.

The Programme sub-committee will include TR, DL, BN, RRe, CW and others as necessary. It was suggested that Martin Sell and David Dowling might be asked to join this group.

**Action:** RRe to convene first meeting of the programme sub-committee and draft terms of reference.

The main Committee will consist of officers, elected Committee members and a representative from each sub-committee. Sub-committees will report to the main Committee at each Committee meeting.

**Proposal:** To create two further sub-committees to take responsibility for membership and programmes. Terms of reference to be drafted by the sub-committees and circulated to Committee for approval

**Proposed:** Renton Righelato

**Seconded:** Mike Turton

**Vote:** approved *nem com*

Heidi Bailey has volunteered to take over the membership secretary role from Dot.

**Action:** CW to arrange for Dot and Heidi to liaise on handover.

#### 5. **Treasurer's report**

The accounts for 2009/10 were circulated prior to the meeting. These have been sent to Don Reid for auditing.

JR highlighted the main points from the accounts:

- No reports done this year which accounts for the majority of the surplus. There was some exceptional income this year which also contributed to the surplus.
- No report sponsorship received to date.
- Subs exceeded £4,000 for the first time.
- Concern that expenses are increasing, particularly printing costs as RA is no longer able to offer a printing service. Need to keep all expenses in check.

##### Membership renewals

At least 90 people have not changed their standing orders to reflect new subscription rates.

JR & DL meeting this week to draft letter to go to all members.

**Action:** membership sub-committee to review options for simplifying the renewal process.

The budget for 2010/11 was circulated prior to the meeting and presented by RRi.

**Proposal:** that the Committee adopts the budget for 2010/11 as presented to the meeting

**Proposed:** Neil Bucknell

**Seconded:** Mike Turton

**Vote:** approved *nem com*

6. **Membership Secretary's report**

Currently dealing with renewals - see comments in item 5 on membership renewals. There have been no resignations to date due to the increase in subscriptions.

7. **Arrangements for the AGM**

GL will need 1½hrs for his talk, so keep business as short as possible – finish by 2030.

Presentations: Treasurer's report, combined officers' report (RRi) & birding highlights for 2009/10 (**Action:** RRi to discuss highlights with KM).

**Action:** MT to provide attendance figures to RRi

**Action:** All to provide short report (1-2 lines) to RRI for inclusion in combined report.

Date for 2011 AGM to be discussed at next meeting – should it be on 2<sup>nd</sup> November meeting rather than 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Action:** TR to send reminder of AGM to all members on email.

It was agreed *nem com* that the Committee should propose existing officers for re-election.

8. **Web- based payments**

FC unable to be present at meeting, but proposal circulated beforehand.

Need to consider whether this will solve problems with subscription payments and whether it is worth paying the service charge.

Committee agreed (with 1 against) that membership sub-committee, with the involvement of the Treasurer and Membership Secretary, should investigate further and bring recommendation to the Committee in 6 months time. If approved the mechanism can then be put in place for the 2011 membership renewals.

9. **Editorial Board report**

a. CW updated the Committee on combined 2006/7 report. The Committee was anxious that the editorial process should not delay the completion of the report.

b. KM's note to the meeting indicated that work had been initiated on separate reports for 2008 and 2009.

Weather information for the reports is no longer freely available. Committee approved expenditure of up to £50 for subscription to a website which can provide weather information.

Concern was expressed that members may find 3 reports in one year too much. It was noted that that the report was one of the key membership benefits identified in the last membership survey. It was necessary to eliminate the backlog as soon as possible, particularly as work on preparation of the Atlas will begin in 2011.

10. **NDOC Springwatch Project**

DR updated the Committee on the NDOC Springwatch Project.

Aim is to instil enthusiasm for wildlife in young people with the hope that they may develop an interest and possibly join societies such as NDOC or BOC later in life. Funding obtained from OPAL and the Lottery.

3 schools enrolled in scheme to install 4-6 nestboxes with webcams in school grounds with pictures made available on the internet and pupils being encouraged to watch the progress of the nests. Pupils to help with siting the boxes and take part in associated project work. There will also be links to Barn Owl boxes at Sheepdrove Farm.

There is a possibility for scaling up the project next year with commercial opportunities and use of more technology. There could be an opportunity for BOC to get involved in an expanded project – this will need to be reviewed by the Committee early next year.

The Committee expressed its congratulations on the project to NDOC.

11. **Reports for consideration**

a. Atlas Group update

Report from RRI circulated prior to the meeting.

Request received from Basildon Park (National Trust) for help with surveys. Meeting being held with conservation officer to discuss what assistance can be provided by BOC.

b. Conservation Officer's report

Report from JL circulated prior to the meeting. Information on conservation work which the BOC is involved in needs to be published in the newsletter.

Reading BC has consulted BOC on plans for a Sand Martin bank in the centre of Reading. BOC offered to help with production of an information board.

**Action:** RRI to produce newsletter article.

**Action:** RRI to contact the Barn Owl Trust to find out if there is a coordinated approach to checking the Barn Owl boxes around Berkshire.

CW reported on developments at Moor Green Lakes.

**Action:** MT to include discussion on conservation at the next Committee meeting.

A proposal that BOC offer to part-fund swift and other nesting boxes was discussed.

12. **Tarifa Birdwatching Trip**

Report produced by KW.

**Action:** MT to check that correct wording is used in trip documentation to ensure that all participants are fully covered by their own insurance and that the BOC is absolved from any liability. NB to provide advice.

**Action:** MT to confirm with KW whether the 2<sup>nd</sup> proposed trip is also being run under the BOC banner. If so it needs to be approved by Committee.

13. **Any Other Business**

a. RRI planned to attend Bracknell Forest Biodiversity Day. Other volunteers required. .

b. Report on County Show: there was concern that not many people came to the conservation tent and that the combined NDOC/BOC/Atlas display didn't work well. Need improved display equipment. Structure of display needs to be discussed again prior to next years show.

c. RRe gave update on initial arrangements for 2011/12 season. RRe to circulate dates for key speakers to Committee if decisions needed before next meeting.

d. TR requested articles for the next newsletter which is due out in next 2 weeks.

e. Proposal from RRI to hold a BOC garden party next summer.

14. **Date and venue for next meeting.**

**Action:** MT to write to Oracle to thank them for the use of the meeting room and ask if we can use it again for the next meeting.

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2011 at 7.30pm. Venue to be confirmed.