



Berkshire Ornithological Club

Minutes of Committee Meeting

held Tuesday 23rd March 2010 at The Pavilion, Prospect Park Reading

Present: Renton Righelato (chair), John Roberts (Treasurer), Mike Turton (Secretary), Neil Bucknell, Fraser Cottingham, Gordon Langsbury, Dot Lincoln, Ken Moore, Bill Nicoll, Ray Reedman, Ruth Angus.

Chris Heard (County Bird Recorder)

1. Apologies for absence John Lerpiniere, Hugh Netley, Debby Reynolds, Colin Wilson, Ken White & Sarah Priest (BTO Regional Reps).

2. Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 18th January 2010 were approved and signed.

3. **Matters Arising**

QMR: gate now blocked because of a break-in. Access is restricted to Sailing Club hours until a new entry system has been installed; likely to take 1-2 months.

Item 4: List circulated by DL. Of the members who had not renewed, 6 have now resigned, 8 have renewed and 9 have failed to respond. KM to contact Jim Reid, RRI to contact Barry Howes and Chris Robinson. Membership for all remaining non-renewals will cease at end of March.

Item 6: RRI in discussion with Jim Burnett on procedure for appointing County Recorder and Berkshire Records Committee members. To be discussed at next committee meeting.

Item 6: no progress on statement to birdwatching fraternity in Berkshire. CDRH to discuss with CW.

Item 6: Ken Moore's job title is to be Assistant County Recorder.

Item 7: meetings now being publicised on BerksBirds website and the berkbirds yahoo group.

Item 7: OPAL grant criteria are different this year and a projector doesn't fit them. Application to be submitted anyway, but Club needs to investigate other sources of finance. Suggestion made to try Lottery funding or putting in request for part funding with BOC providing the remainder.

Item 7: membership poll on hold pending strategy discussion.

Item 8: ongoing. To be discussed with Graham Hawker for installation in 2011.

Item 9(ii): Need suggestions for new places to visit. Losing leaders, but no new ones are volunteering. Unless new leaders come forward, we may have to cut back programme next year.

4. **Treasurer's report**

Club account:	£12,804	(balance as at 30 th September was £9,665).
Conservation Fund:	£4,731.	£1000 to be paid to Pang, Kennet & Lambourne project as agreed at last meeting
Atlas Group:	£4,844	

Raffle income for the year to date is £225. A proposal that raffle income should go to Club general funds instead of the Conservation Fund was passed *nem com*.

Outstanding expenditure – BBOWT, 3x room hire, next speaker, officers' expenses and deposit on next year's room hire – approx. total £900.

Gift Aid: claim with Inland Revenue for £970 (approx. £820 for BOC and £150 for the Atlas which equate to 232 Gift Aid payments, 5 being Atlas sponsors)

A further £225.50 collected in subscriptions since last committee meeting, mainly as a result of letters and phone calls. Subscriptions could total £4,000 this year.

Interest loss this year will be substantial – probably down £450 since 2008.

CW has maintained data sales at last year's total thanks to one major effort that brought in £440.

5. **Atlas Group update**

RRi reported on progress on surveys to date and the gains and losses to the county avifauna. Main problem is getting breeding evidence. It was noted that grid references are as acceptable as tetrad squares for a record.

Action: MT to put out Roving Records forms and breeding evidence codes at indoor meetings.

Action: TR to publicise need for breeding records in newsletter. Include breeding evidence codes.

Action: NB to get cards showing breeding evidence codes from BTO.

It was suggested that the BOC Garden Bird Feeding Survey could be modified to include breeding evidence. TR would then input this to BTO database.

Action: TR to modify Garden Bird Feeding Survey form

Action: RRi/DL to discuss which local RSPB groups needed to be encouraged to submit records.

Output from the Atlas project should be used to identify future major conservation projects and species surveys.

Congratulations were expressed to those responsible for producing the maps on the BOC website showing progress to date.

6. **Amendments to constitution – club/county recorder**

A proposal drafted by MT was discussed to change the constitution to remove all named specified Non-executive Officer posts, whilst retaining the ability of the Club to appoint Non-executive Officers to carry out any roles that may be required.

The wording as circulated was approved *nem com* subject to the amendment agreed at the meeting to clarify that all such appointments would be Non-executive Officers.

Action: MT to collate all changes into a single document to be circulated prior to the AGM.

A proposal that the Membership Secretary become an elected Executive Officer instead of a Non-executive Officer was put forward by John Roberts. The proposal was not seconded and was therefore rejected.

7. **Life, corporate and honorary membership**

There are currently 5 life members.

Proposal: That the constitution be amended to remove the life membership option

Proposed: John Roberts

Seconded: Bill Nicoll

Vote: Unanimous

Existing life memberships will not be affected. Honorary Life Membership to be retained, but not promoted. The future of corporate membership to be included in strategy discussion.

Action: MT to include amendment to constitution in proposal to go before AGM.

8. Trustees

All elected committee members are Trustees by law, so no requirement to change the constitution. All committee members to read Charity Commission leaflet and raise any questions with RRI or MT. It was noted that Trustees need to attend a certain number of committee meetings each year.

Action: MT to produce explanatory leaflet for new Trustees prior to AGM.

Action: MT to circulate Charity Commission leaflet to all elected committee members.

Action: MT to update Charity Commission website with new Trustee details.

9. Publicity

RA produced designs for banner to go along front of display table. Approximate costs are £30-£45 for making the banner + £10-£20 for artwork +VAT/delivery. Design and price estimates approved.

Committee agreed that RA should also purchase a set of full-length display boards to improve the display. It was noted that there should be more photos on display boards.

10. OS licence

The Executive Officers have approved the purchase of an OS licence by the Club at a cost of £47.50 plus VAT to allow redrawn OS maps to be published by the Atlas Group. It was proposed that this be charged to the Atlas Group.

It was proposed by John Roberts that, as the maps were appearing on the Club website and the licence could be used for future reports, the cost of the licence should be borne by the Club. Passed *nem com*.

11. Discussion on mid-term strategy & big objectives

Membership development:

- Meeting location – Reading is central, though some people find this too far. If the Club puts on meetings in other parts of the county we need to be careful about not upsetting East Berks RSPB and NDOC.
- Berkshire Birding Conference – possible event with other local bird groups at a venue away from Reading.
- Possibility of putting display stand up at garden centres.
- Workshops in other parts of the county
- Field event with London Camera Exchange

Action: all committee members to think of other ideas

Action: MT to include this item on agenda for next meeting to set actions.

Surveying, recording and reporting

It was agreed that a working group should be set up involving key people (including Chris Heard, Ken Moore and Marek Walford) to discuss this and report back to the Committee.

Action: RRI to set up working group.

Business management and conservation to be discussed at a future meeting.

12. **Any Other Business**

- i. Membership leaflet.
Action: MT to edit leaflet to change subscription levels and include £2 discount for paying by direct debit. To be done by the end of March.
- ii. Kennet Meadows: Note from John Lerpiniere regarding future plans for the Kennet Meadows site was discussed. Potential for conflicts of interests between different user groups was noted. Subgroup comprising Neil Bucknell, Colin Wilson, John Lerpiniere & Fraser Cottington to review options for protecting the critical areas.
- iii. Venue for 2010/11 meetings: Room 109 not available for 1st and last meetings, alternative proposed by University is similar size, but IT facilities are older: these and the possibility of disturbance from other building users should be checked. Cost is £50-£60 less. A proposal that this room be used for all 2010/11 meetings was rejected on the chair's casting vote (the vote was 4 in favour and 4 against). The room will therefore be used for 1st and last meetings. If the room proves suitable, then a permanent move should be discussed by the Committee.
Action: RRe to check AV facilities, parking and which other groups use the building.
- iv. **Action** : RA to return species sponsorship board to Brian Clews
- v. Vote of thanks recorded to Colin Wilson and Ted Rogers for their work on the photographic competition.
- vi. Newsletter: to come out early April. RA no longer able to do printing, so TR to organise this.
- vii. Bird Fair trip: needs to be publicised more. Bill Nicoll to help with bookings.
- viii. FC reported that PayPal has been set up on FoLL website to allow subscriptions and donations to be paid online and is proving very successful. Incorporation onto BOC website to be discussed at future Committee meeting.
- ix. It was noted that BOC is now an affiliate of FoLL rather than a member, so payment of a regular subscription is no longer required.

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

Monday 12th July, 7.30 at The Pavilion. RA to provide biscuits.