



Berkshire Ornithological Club

Minutes of Committee Meeting

held on Wednesday 12th January 2011 at
63 Hamilton Road, Reading.

Present: Renton Righelato (chair), John Roberts (Treasurer), Mike Turton (Secretary), John Lerpiniere, Neil Bucknell, Ray Reedman, Ted Rogers, Bill Nicoll, Debby Reynolds, Fraser Cottington, Dot Lincoln, Ken White

1. Apologies for absence: Gordon Langsbury, Colin Wilson, Hugh Netley, Ken Moore, Chris Heard, Ruth Angus, Sarah Priest.

2. Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 21st October 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). Agreement now on website – action closed.

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

Item 3 - Kennet Meadows (Mar 2010 meeting): **Action:** CW to organise meeting with all other interested groups. Invitation issued, but no responses received.

Item 13a: MT reported back on Bracknell Biodiversity Day

Item 13b – Display boards: to be included on March 2011 agenda

Indoor programme - Ongoing action: all to continue to look for suitable new premises for meetings.

Mike Dilger meeting on 19th January 2011: Meeting has been well publicised.

- MT to be on door & to find someone else to assist.
- JR to sell raffle tickets.
- TR, KW and one other person to be in nearest car parks to direct people to G10.
- Need tables for entrance money outside G10 and raffle /membership inside.
- Give all non-members a membership form (either marked MD or on different colour paper) with programme insert. **Action:** MT to get supply of membership forms.
- Half-price admission for children & students.
- LCE/Kowa to contact RRI if they want to display anything.
- Need to acknowledge sponsors at meeting.
- RRe liaising with Mike Dilger on final arrangements.
- As many committee members as possible to turn up by 7.15pm.
- Minimise business at the start of the meeting. Include introduction to the Club and publicity for Club meetings.
- Raffle has made a profit of £184 to date.

4. **Treasurer's report**

Report circulated prior to meeting. Balance on General Fund stands at £15,694, Conservation Fund at £5,125 and Atlas Fund at £5,338. Subs to date are £4,459 (last years total was £4,217).

42 members have not changed their standing orders and 34 members have not yet renewed their membership. All have been contacted, but response is slow – DL & JR continue to try and sort this out. Many have opted to change membership category and pay at the lower retired rate, but without taking advantage of the reduction for standing order payments (so that the amount they pay is unchanged). 7 members with incorrect standing orders have paid the outstanding balance and 4 non-payers have renewed. Estimated overall loss will be approx 25-30 members.

Consultation with the auditors continues on the report to go to the Charity Commission. Expect to complete this by the end of January.

As part of integrating the Alliance & Leicester business, Santander will be changing the BOC account number sometime this year.

Action: MT to amend membership leaflet to show new account number when available and request that standing orders be sent to BOC, not to the bank.

5. **Reports circulated for consideration:**

a. **Atlas Group update**

No questions.

b. **Conservation Officer report**

Report from JL circulated.

Basildon Park: RRI has had 2 meetings with ranger and carried out a survey. It has been agreed that the National Trust will erect nest boxes (mostly for tits) for education/conservation purposes with advice from BOC on location. Proposal also to erect barn owl nest box on E. side of park. JL to investigate alternative sites. Walk to be arranged.

Action: RRI to put proposal to Conservation Fund to fund nest boxes.

Action: RRI to discuss idea of a camera box with Basildon Park

Further to the discussion at the last meeting, there is no central recording system for Barn Owl boxes - Barn Owl Trust only collect data for SW England.

6. **Conservation Strategy**

Discussion paper circulated. Key issue is that BOC lacks an explicit conservation programme. In the planning area, the BOC doesn't have resources to lead and should work with BBOWT to provide ornithological input to planning applications in Berks. Proposal discussed with NDOC who are fully stretched at present. The Club could also contribute to the development of Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, working with BBOWT and TVERC.

Need to

- identify bird hot spots where planning applications need to be monitored.
- Ensure that our records have scientific credibility so that they can be used to support planning comments
- Liaise with NDOC if we get involved with projects in W.Berks.
- Develop relationship with BBOWT to provide a window into the planning process.

Action: Conservation Fund Committee to consider output from the discussion and put forward proposals on developing relationships with BBOWT

Proposal that FC to join Conservation Fund Committee was agreed by other Conservation Fund Committee members.

7. **Membership Sub-committee report**

No report circulated – CW away.

Terms of reference for the Sub-committee were circulated & discussed. Need to be expanded to include definition of core members' services and mechanism for reporting back to the main committee (including key reporting points).

Action: MT to include discussion of terms of reference on agenda for next meeting.

8. **Programme Sub-committee report**

Terms of reference for the Sub-committee were circulated & discussed. Need to define key reporting points, in particular submitting draft programme to main committee for discussion, normally in March (indoor programme) and June (excursions). Programme Sub-committee doesn't need to report back at every main committee meeting.

9. **Editorial Board report**

Update on 2006/7 report circulated. Critical activity is for CDRH to do editing. Need decision very soon on cover illustration. The Committee was keen to see the 2006/7 report published as soon as possible.

RRi was asked to attend next Editorial Board meeting to go through production process.

Update on reports for 2008 and 2009 circulated. 2008 well under way, but little progress on 2009.

Action: Editorial Board to produce timetable for 2008 and 2009 reports

For both the reports and the Atlas there is a shortage of species writers.

Action: NB to make request for more help at indoor meetings and produce article for newsletter which can also be circulated to Berksbirds group and the Atlas 10Km square coordinators.

Consideration should be given to scanning back numbers of reports available and making them available online.

Need to consolidate stocks of back copies.

Action: All to email MT with numbers and dates of any stocks of reports from 2000 onwards which they have.

10. **Attendance at Club meetings**

Attendance figures for indoor meetings circulated. Membership has doubled over the last 6 years, but indoor meeting attendance has not changed. Some members come on walks, but don't attend meetings; others don't take part in any Club activities. Possible reasons discussed:

- New members not coming to indoor meetings
- Older members not coming out in the dark
- Difficulty parking and walking to the venue
- Higher petrol costs
- Too many meetings with similar groups
- Is meeting content/format seen as 'old-fashioned'?

Need to ask people why they don't come and what we can do to encourage attendance. MT to coordinate the survey.

Action: Programme Sub-committee to produce questions

Action: MT to pick sample of 25 members who don't attend meetings and aren't on email. These will need to be contacted personally to talk through the issues.

Action: TR to email questions to everyone on the email distribution list.

Few figures available for outdoor meetings, but feeling is that more people may be coming.

11. **Encouraging young members**

RA has approached teachers in a number of schools and asked them to put up notices about BOC. The Committee supported the idea of establishing liaison with teachers in as many secondary schools as possible who would be willing to bring children to meetings (entry for school parties accompanied by a teacher could be offered free). Concerns expressed about whether teachers would be willing to take on this additional task and about child protection issues, especially on outdoor meetings.

Action: Membership Sub-committee to help RA develop this. TR to talk to RA.

Action: MT to find previous correspondence on children coming to meetings.

12. **Approval of Autumn Tarifa trip**

KW reported that the workshop in Spain which he attended in the autumn was very useful in providing new contacts, venues, accommodation, etc. Need to plan 2 years ahead and coordinate dates with rest of outdoor programme. Committee agreed that overseas trips are a valuable addition to the programme.

Need standard document to be issued to all participants covering travel, health (including EHIC) and cancellation insurance. Concerns raised over liability of Club for travel arrangements in the event of an incident such as the volcanic ash disruption to flights – would it be better to arrange a travel through an ATOL registered agent rather than direct with the airline? Would the Club or KW be treated as a tour operator in such circumstances?

Action: MT to look at definitions of a tour operator and associated liabilities.

KW proposed that any funds left over from overseas trips should be used to sponsor an Atlas species.

13. **Garden party**

To be held on 3rd July 2011. People to contribute food on same basis as for Christmas social.

14. **Any Other Business**

a. FoLL: FC reported that membership has reached 384. FoLL and acknowledged the support that FoLL receives from groups such as BOC. FC offered to do 2 winter walks a year for BOC.

Proposal: That one raffle in the BOC indoor season be in support of FoLL

Proposed: John Roberts

Seconded: Mike Turton

Vote: approved *nem com*

Abstentions: RRi, RRe and FC (FoLL trustees)

b. ID workshop has been moved forward 1 week to avoid clash with Andalucia trip.

c. Ken White & Sarah Priest have taken on WeBS county coordinator role from Gavin Fisher who has stood down for work reasons.

d. Some members have decided that it is cheaper to pay guest fee at each meeting than it is to pay the annual membership subscription.

Action: MT to include discussion on increasing the guest fee at a committee meeting prior to the AGM.

e. Newsletter to be issued early February.

f. RRi has signed new annual agreement with Thames Water for access to QMR. Permits sent out to people who have paid. TW have informed the Club that the locks will be changed in the next few months and that the Club will be able to issue keys to allow entry outside sailing club hours. There are concerns over how this can be administered. RRi would like to step down from issuing permits – need someone to take over.

g. BOC members do not currently have membership cards

Action: TR to raise question of membership cards with Membership Sub-committee.

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

Tuesday 22nd March 2011 at 7.30pm. Venue to be confirmed.

Action: all to email suggestions for venue to MT