



## Berkshire Ornithological Club

### Minutes of Committee Meeting

held on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2011 at  
63 Hamilton Road, Reading.

**Present:** Renton Righelato (chair), John Roberts (Treasurer), Mike Turton (Secretary), Neil Bucknell, Ray Reedman, Ted Rogers, Bill Nicoll, Debby Reynolds, Colin Wilson, Hugh Netley, Ken Moore, Chris Heard, Heidi Bailey

1. Apologies for absence: Gordon Langsbury, John Lerpiniere, Ken White, Sarah Priest.
2. Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2011 were approved and signed.
3. **Matters Arising**

**Item 3 - Swift nestbox pole** (Jan 2010 meeting): No progress. To be included in conservation report in future.

**Item 3 - Kennet Meadows** (Mar 2010 meeting): No progress. To be included in conservation report in future. Concern over condition of meadows west of the A33 – needs to be raised with Reading BC.

**Item 6 – Conservation Strategy:** No progress – NB to look at output from discussion before the next meeting.

**Item 12 – Overseas trips:** MT reported that the feedback from our insurance brokers was that the clubs public liability policy plus individuals' own travel insurance + EHIC cards (both of which have been made a condition of booking on the trips) is sufficient cover. However all future bookings should be made via registered travel agents rather than direct with the airlines. Concern expressed by CW that this cover may not be sufficient to absolve the Club of all liabilities; however, in view of the advice from the insurers the trustees approved the insurance requirements for overseas trips in the Club programme.

**Item 14f – QMR permits: Action:** RRi to discuss future arrangements for issue of permits with CW/HB.

4. **Treasurer's report**

Report circulated prior to meeting. Balance on Conservation Fund stands at £4,867 after expenditure of £145 on nest boxes at Basildon Park. Balance on Atlas Group stands at £5,838 and General Fund at £15,138 (was £12,033 at end of financial year). A balance of income and expenditure in rest of year is forecast as there is Gift Aid in excess of £1000 to claim.

The Committee expressed their thanks to John and Dot for sorting out all the issues with subscriptions this year.

Guest fees: a proposal from JR to increase guest fees from £2 to £4 was circulated prior to the meeting. It was also proposed that the name be changed from guest fees to visitor fees. It was noted that there are normally only 2-3 visitors at each meeting. If a visitor joins at the meeting, the visitor fee will be refunded through their subscription. Approved *nem com*. Change to take effect from the start of the 2011/12 season.

5. **Reports circulated for consideration:**

a. **Atlas Group update**

No questions were raised.

b. **Conservation Officer report**

Report from JL circulated.

Basildon Park interested in idea of a nest box camera. DR has seen similar setup at Mottisfont Abbey with a screen next to the ticket desk. Newbury Springwatch has experience of setting these up with links to the web. Could be good publicity for BOC.

**Action:** RRI to pursue the proposal.

BeWild nestboxes: need clarification of what is required.

**Action:** RRI to discuss with JL. Possibly look at involving student members with the monitoring.

Searles Farm Lane: KM updated meeting on issues that RDAA have with birdwatchers visiting the site. This is also affecting arrangements that the Theale group have for access to Moatlands. Jeremy Davy (West Berks DC) is mediating with RDAA and trying to arrange a meeting with all parties. BOC needs to work with the Theale group to build trust and confidence with RDAA. Suggestion from Jeremy Davy that BOC could get involved with habitat management alongside RDAA.

**Action:** RRI, KM, NB to try and arrange meeting with RDAA.

Hosehill: 10 ringed Black-headed Gulls have returned to the site so far this year.

Caversham Quarry: invitation from Lafarge for a BOC representative to have a look round the site before it is open to the public. The site is just over the border in Oxfordshire (Lafarge have also contact OOS), but is local to many members. Agreed that BOC was happy to provide advice on future management to Lafarge and make the site more widely know, but there may be a problem with any practical/financial involvement as it is outside the county.

**Action:** HN to contact Lafarge about visiting the site.

6. **Membership Sub-committee report**

CW reported back on first sub-committee meeting.

- Ruth Angus investigating membership cards. Possibility of using these for site access and discounts.
- Lifts to indoor meetings: TR to organise and include note on programme.
- Cost of publicity: purchase of a colour laser printer is being investigated.
- Personal contact with new members was felt to be important. Personalised welcome letter now included with membership pack.
- Reminders now being issued by email for all indoor meetings.
- Paypal: Mike Taylor investigating Paypal system which could be used for subs, donations and purchasing reports.
- The Committee expressed their thanks to Dot for all her hard work. There will be a presentation to Dot at the AGM.  
**Action:** TR to produce certificate of appreciation.  
**Action:** RRI to discuss presentation with Dot.
- Many other ideas being considered by the Sub-committee.

Terms of reference for the Sub-committee have been left open on the basis that the role will evolve and should not be constrained.

There should be a report from the Sub-committee to every Committee meeting.

7. **Newbury Springwatch**

DR gave a demonstration of the Newbury Springwatch website and the link to one of the nestbox cameras.

**Action:** DR was invited to create a news item for the BOC website which would link to the Newbury Springwatch site (DR).

8. **Programme Sub-committee report**

RRe has received a request from University to move 4 meetings in 2011/12 to the HUMSS building. It was agreed that BOC would have to reluctantly accept to the move but request reduction in fees as the HUMSS facilities are less satisfactory.

2011/12 programme circulated. It was felt that there was a lack of talks with a scientific content, but these are difficult to arrange. Arrangements for Committee input to the programme were discussed. Suggestions need to be passed to RRe early on in the cycle – once discussions have taken place with a speaker it is difficult to withdraw the invitation to speak.

**Action:** MT to include discussion of programme content on autumn committee meeting agenda.

Possibility of making the Stephen Moss talk a celebrity lecture was discussed. Proposal from RRe is that we should have a celebrity lecture every 2 years. Agreed to have more publicity for the Stephen Moss talk, but not as much effort as for the Mike Dilger talk.

AGM will be 2 weeks later this year than in 2010.

Questionnaire: need to have results for the autumn committee meeting. Need to look at last questionnaire, see what, if anything needs to be changed. Need to find out what attracts people to the Club if they don't come to indoor meetings.

**Action:** MT to find previous questionnaire and circulate to the Committee.

Draft outdoor programme circulated. There are 3 overseas trips. Any volunteers to lead trips to contact BN. HN volunteered to lead winter walk round Caversham Lakes.

9. **Editorial Board report**

2006/7 report: CDRH well advanced with 2006. Species accounts for 2007 done except for escapes/hybrids. 2007 accounts currently being reformatted and should be with CDRH by this weekend. CW was uncertain whether the report would be ready for the August mailing. It was requested that every effort was made to achieve this as no report was published last year.

2008 onwards: progress report circulated.

It was agreed that the 2006/7 report should ideally be published before the 2008 report.

Suggestions made on saving distribution costs:

- Bring reports to first few indoor meetings before posting.
- Deliver by hand where possible.

10. **Lifts to field meetings**

Already covered by existing arrangements and note on outdoor programme.

**Action:** RRe to remind people about the arrangements at the next indoor meeting.

11. **Display Boards**

Not yet discussed by Membership Sub-committee. Membership Sub-committee to produce proposal and a quote for purchase of new display and pass to JR. To be passed round Committee by email for approval.

**Action:** CW to discuss with Ruth Angus.

12. **Venue for Committee meetings**

RRe happy to continue to host meetings provided that attendance does not get any higher. Suggestion made that we consider St Peter's Rooms, Maiden Place and Earley CresCent

Centre.

**Action:** RRe to find out costs for these venues and pass to MT.

13. **Any Other Business**

a. Request from Bertie Gregory for sites suitable for bird photography in an urban environment.

**Action:** MT to circulate email and collate responses.

b. MT publicised BNCF conference on 11<sup>th</sup> June.

**Action:** MT to ask Mike Taylor to include this on the website.

**Action:** RRI to publicise at next indoor meeting.

**Action:** TR to include in next newsletter.

c. Items for newsletter to be with TR by mid-April. More trip reports and newsletter items need to be made available on the website.

d. Complaint received about publication of photographs from the BOC Photographic competition without the photographer's permission in a year book published by Dave Cromack last year. Competition rules include agreement for publication by the BOC, but not other bodies.

**Action:** CW to talk to Dave Cromack.

Suggestion made that TR publish previous photographic competition winners in the newsletter.

e. Brian Uttley has offered 4 Tunncliffe and 4 Gillmor prints which he would like sold for the Conservation Fund. Need to offer to Club members first – item in newsletter? Need to agree reserve price.

**Action:** all to send suggestions for best way to sell these to RRI.

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

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2011 at 7.30pm at 63 Hamilton Road, Reading.