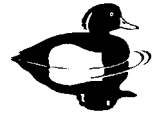




# Berkshire Ornithological Club



## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting for 2012

Held in Room 109, Palmer Building, University of Reading on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2012 at 8 pm; the President, Neil Bucknell, in the chair and 53 members present.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Bill Nicoll, Carole White, Heidi Bailey, Gordon & Jean Newport.
2. **Minutes of meeting held on 23rd November 2011:** the minutes were approved and signed by the President.
3. **Matters arising:** there were no matters arising.
4. **Honorary Treasurer's Report and the Club Accounts:** John Roberts presented the audited accounts for 2011/12.

General Fund: At the end of the accounting period, the General Fund stood at £14,718. There was an excess of expenditure over income of £1,046, which increased to £1,786 when outstanding costs were taken into account. The Committee regards this as acceptable in the light of expenditure during the year of £6,146 on the production of two reports. The situation will become clearer as the backlog of reports is cleared and the Club moves to issuing one report per year. Some specific points on the income are the continued income from Gift Aid, the sale of a painting generously donated by Tony Knight, good returns from sales of data (thanks to Colin Wilson) and a disappointingly low amount of interest. Subs income was down £74, probably due to some confusion over standing order payments by people who resigned following the last subs increase. The income in 2012/13 (currently up £1000 over 2009) should better reflect the position.

Expenditure shows a steady increase in the cost of the room and speakers; the charge for room hire is currently £193 per meeting. The Committee believe that the membership would wish to retain the high standard of our speakers and members have expressed the view that the cost of the room is worthwhile. There was a loss of £182 on the Bird Fair coach, but this was offset by a surplus on some other recent trips. John noted that some Officers do not claim for expenditure relevant to their Club duties.

Basic income currently exceeds basic costs and the aim is to maintain that balance. John expressed a view that there are an increasing number of members who opt to pay the retired members subscription (at a generous discount of 25%) and that, if some of these opted to pay full rate, the Club's finances would be much improved. The level of reduction should be included in the next review of subscriptions, probably in October 2014.

The Atlas Fund currently stands at £7,953 and the Conservation Fund at £4,231. There has been very little activity on these restricted funds over the past year. The Committee would welcome any suggestions for use of the Conservation Fund for local projects.

There were no questions on the accounts which were approved unanimously. The meeting expressed appreciation to John for all his work as Treasurer over the past 18 years.

5. **Changes to the Constitution:** Mike Turton summarised the changes to the Constitution, which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting. There were no questions. The proposal to accept the changes as circulated was proposed by Mike Turton, seconded by Ray Reedman and carried unanimously.
6. **Election of Officers:** Renton Righelato stood down as Chairman after 3 years (as required by the constitution). Neil Bucknell thanked Renton for the work that he done for the Club in various roles since 2001. There was no nomination for the vacant post of Chairman. The Committee proposed that Bill Nicoll be elected as Hon. Treasurer and Mike Turton be re-elected as Hon. Secretary. This was approved unanimously.

7. **Election of Ordinary Members of the Committee:** There were 3 vacancies on the Committee, two for three years and one for one year. The Committee's proposal that John Walker, Iain Oldcorn and Becky Thomas be elected to the Committee was approved unanimously.

8. **Report of Chairman and Officers:**

Renton Righelato presented the report of the Chairman and officers.

**Membership:** The upward trend on membership continues, which is unusual for a bird club. A continuing worry is that attendance at meetings represents a small proportion of the membership and remains static. The Club therefore needs to ensure that those members who do not attend meetings continue to benefit from their membership. The membership survey last year shows that the main reason for being a member was receiving the publications (newsletters and reports) produced by the Club.

We have had a very full and varied programme with 13 indoor meetings, 28 excursions, a ringing demonstration and social events. Thanks to Ray Reedman for the indoor meeting planning; Bill Nicoll and all the trip leaders, especial thanks to Ken White for the very popular visits to Spain, Tim Ball for the ringing demo and Dot Lincoln, John Roberts and all those who have set up the social events.

**Records, Publications and Science:** Work on the new Atlas and Avifauna is well under way with three-quarters of the species accounts written, but there is still a lot to do with publication anticipated in 2013. Club members contributed to the BTO's Nightingale survey last year and many are now engaged with the Winter Thrushes survey. The county records database is pretty good and largely up to date thanks to many people, especially the Berkshire Bird Bulletin team and Marek Walford, who manages the database and provides the input from his berkbirds website. However there is still some way to go to bring the review and reporting processes up to date. Progress has been made in tackling the backlog of annual reports with 2006/7 and 2008 published this year. The plan is to publish 2009 and 2010 in 2013; if reports for 2011 and 2012 can then be produced in 2014, then production will be back on schedule. The Club has also taken on the responsibility for producing the Berkshire Birds Index and publishing the results on the website and in the reports.

**Conservation:** John Lerpiniere represents the Club at several conservation forums in the county and makes sure the Club's voice is heard. The Conservation Fund made only one grant last year – to BBOWT to start up a ringing programme at Woolley Firs. The Club is involved in several collaborations with landowners on management plans and access arrangements – thanks to Ken Moore, Ken White, Hugh Netley and Adrian Lawson for their involvement. This year the reconstruction of Fobney Island, just south of Reading centre was completed and it is now open to the public. The Club is part of the Steering Group and taking the lead in wildlife monitoring and conservation management.

Renton expressed his thanks to the Officers, Committee and all others who have contributed to the work of the Club, especially John Roberts and Mike Turton. He issued a plea for people to help with leading or organising excursions, looking after the membership service, organising promotional events, looking after the QMR link with Thames Water, writing species accounts etc. Anyone who is interested should talk to Mike Turton.

9. **Birding highlights of 2011/12**

The Chairman's report was followed by a summary of the birding highlights of 2011/12, prepared by Ken Moore and delivered by Colin Wilson.

10. **Any other business:** none was raised.

The President closed the AGM at 8.42pm; it was followed by a talk from Ted Rogers, illustrated with photos by Brian Winter, Colin Wilson and others, on a bird-watching trip by Ted, Brian and Colin to Catalonia in 2011.