



Berkshire Ornithological Club

Minutes of Committee Meeting

held on Tuesday 16th October 2012
at 63 Hamilton Road, Reading

Present: Renton Righelato (chair) (RRi), Mike Turton (Secretary), John Roberts (Treasurer) Ray Reedman (RRe), Bill Nicoll, Tim Ball, John Lerpiniere.

1. Apologies for absence: Neil Bucknell (president), Carole White, Heidi Bailey, Ted Rogers, Ken Moore, Fraser Cottington, Martin Sell, Ken & Sarah White.

2. **Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 4th July 2012**

Item 6: "Discuss combining 2009 and 2010 reports at next committee meeting" should read "Discuss simultaneous printing of 2009 and 2010 reports at next committee meeting". The amended minutes were approved and signed.

3. **Matters Arising**

Item 3 (3) (investigate options for communicating with members not on the internet): Item put in newsletter. No requests have been received.

Item 3 (5): Robert Gillmor is happy for the BOC to dispose of the original artwork for previous report covers in aid of Club funds. RRi has 3 prints, Colin Wilson may have others. Sale will be by sealed bids with 1 print being sold each time. Bids will be opened at last meeting before Christmas and last meeting of the season. First sale to be announced at next 2 meetings, with winning bid being announced at meeting on 5th December. Sale to be advertised at indoor meetings, on Berks Birds, the BOC website and by email to BOC members. Reserve price of £200 per print.

Action: RRi to find out which prints Colin has and decide which one is to be sold first.

Item 3 (10): RRe has had further contact with the Biology Dept at the University and MT has had contact with the Zoology Society. A number of students have joined BOC.

4. **Treasurer's Report**

Accounts

Report circulated prior to meeting and copy of draft annual accounts presented at the meeting. Club funds are currently

General	£14,718
Conservation	£4,231
Atlas	£7,953

Excess of expenditure over income for the year is £1,046, with £500 reserved in the accounts for payment to Thames Water for QMR access, £155 due to University for room on 26 Sept and £85 of 12/13 subs in income, giving an overall excess of expenditure over income of £1,786. This is acceptable as the Club spent £6,146 on producing 2 reports in the year.

Income from subscriptions for the year was £5,339 (down £74); this is probably a knock-on effect from the drop in membership in 2010/11 following the increase in subscription rates.

Gift aid of £1,372 is expected to reduce next year as we had donations this year of £700+. Income includes £455 transferred from Berks Bird Index and data sales of £745.

Expenditure includes £260 for Gordon's memorial and a loss of £182 on Bird Fair Coach. Room hire/speaker costs continue to increase. Last 2 member questionnaires showed that members appreciate the facilities offered by Room 109.

Action: JR to explain loss against subs in presentation to AGM.

There is no need to increase subs this year or next. However subs should be reviewed before the next AGM including possibility of reducing the retired members' discount.

Action: MT to include in agenda for October 2013 meeting.

Action: JR presentation to AGM to include encouragement to retired members not to pay reduced rate.

Thames Water has yet to charge BOC the £500 fee for QMR access over the past 12 months. Discussions in progress within Thames Water about waiving the fee. BOC made a policy decision not to charge for permits when these were introduced; this should be reviewed in future if the fee continues to be charged.

No expense claim received for payment for website hosting this year.

Action: BN to check this with Colin Wilson.

Accounts were approved for presentation to the AGM *nem com*.

John Roberts was thanked by the Committee for all his work as treasurer over the past 17 years. Bill Nicoll was thanked for agreeing to take over.

Budget

Budget for 2012/13 is the same as the outcome for 2011/12 without the exceptional items. 2 reports will again be produced.

Income figures may be a little optimistic; they include small projected increase in membership, but with the same ratio of member types as at present. No increase in subs will be required if the budget is adhered to. Could save up to £300 by dropping 1 indoor meeting.

Reserves projected to decrease to fund production of reports, but this is planned and reserves will remain within the BOC Reserves Policy figure of being sufficient to cover 1 year's expenditure.

Budget for the next 3 years approved *nem com*.

Membership Secretary's Report

To be included under treasurer's report on all future agendas.

No membership numbers in the report; each report needs to contain current member numbers and how many have left or joined since the last report.

Need to send copy of current report and a printed copy of the programme card to each new member when they join.

Action: MT to discuss all above with Heidi.

5. **Arrangements for AGM**

Candidates currently proposed for election at the AGM are:

Secretary: Mike Turton

Treasurer: Bill Nicoll

Committee: John Walker and Iain Oldcorn (both for 3 years)

Several people have been approached and asked to consider standing for election as chair; all have declined, mainly due to pressure of time and other commitments. The executive officers are ideally looking for someone who has not been chair before and who will bring a

fresh approach to the post. Neil Bucknell is willing to act as chair for a short period. Any suggestions should be passed to Mike Turton or Neil Bucknell.

There is still a 1-year committee post to be filled.

Action: RRi to approach Becky Thomas.

Action: MT to make announcement at next meeting and approach possible candidates who have already been contacted, but who have not replied.

Action: all officers to pass information for inclusion in chair's report to RRi by 7th November.

Action: MT to pass meeting attendance figures to RRi by 7th November.

Action: MT to ask Ken Moore to produce birding highlights report for AGM.

6. **Editorial Board Report**

No report submitted; update given verbally by RRi. Ken Moore has been unable to progress these as much as he would like due to pressure of work.

2008 Report

Published in August.

2009 & 2010 Reports

RRi to stand in for Ken Moore to produce the 2009 and 2010 reports, but no others.

Proposal is to produce separate reports, but get them printed at the same time. This will cost approx. £3,000 - £3,500 whereas printing them at different times would cost £2,500 - £3,000 each.

2009 systematic list being written by SAWS - some species still to be allocated. 2010 being written by Derek Barker – about 50% complete. RRi has spoken to Robert Gillmor about cover artwork.

Aim is to have drafts ready by March 2013 with publication in Q2 2013.

7. **Future of Berkshire Bird Index**

Handover to BOC has been agreed by BBI and money transferred. Annual reports will be published on the web and as part of the Birds of Berkshire annual report. No additional expenditure will be incurred by BOC as a result of taking over the running of the BBI.

8. **Conservation**

Conservation Report

Report circulated prior to the meeting. Additional points raised at meeting:

Woolhampton: Karen Davies is looking at the area for Wasing Estates.

Fobney: monitoring report circulated prior to the meeting. Path on eastern end of the island is now open and temporary noticeboards will be going up soon. Official opening is 13th May 2013. BOC should organise some events (e.g. bird walks, publicity) around this. First meeting of Friends of Fobney group is 1st November. RRi to remain on steering group.

Action: RRi to discuss BOC involvement in opening with steering group.

Clearance of land under power lines

Tim Ball raised concern over excessive scrub clearance on land under power lines by the electricity companies resulting in destruction of habitat during or close to the breeding season, particularly on land in West Berks. Tim is in touch with West Berks Council to try and get a meeting with the companies to discuss better practice and consultation. BOC possibly needs to understand the guidelines about land under power lines better so as to avoid siting nest boxes in vulnerable sites.

Action: Tim Ball to keep committee informed of developments.

Winter Wonderland

The application for the proposed development in Swinley Forest has been withdrawn. RRe submitted objection on behalf of BOC and was interviewed on Radio Berkshire.

BNCF/LNP

Change to a LNP should make no difference as far as BOC is concerned.

Need to include updates on conservation issues in the newsletter to raise the profile of this aspect of the Club's work.

Action: those involved in specific projects to produce newsletter articles when appropriate.

9. **Programme Sub-committee report**

Report circulated prior to the meeting.

Agreement needed from committee on dates for talks. Discussion on feasibility of September talks, but difficult to include April talk because of date of Easter. Decision to be taken by email on whether to use September slot to be based on attendance figures for September talks.

Action: MT to check attendance at all September talks compared with October and circulate to committee and ask for decision on whether to schedule talk for September.

It was agreed not to progress with a proposal to ask Nick Baker to give celebrity lecture as his agent is difficult to negotiate with. It was agreed that RRe should contact Mike Clarke instead.

Programme missed out of BBOWT calendar due to admin slip-up at BBOWT. It is on their website.

Iain Oldcorn has offered to help with excursions.

Action: RRe asked all committee members to provide critical feedback on talks to help him with programme planning.

10. **Raffles**

Agreed that raffles should be held at all meetings – good source of income.

Need volunteer to organise raffles – get prizes and arrange for people to sell tickets.

Action: MT to arrange for someone to sell tickets at the next meeting and to put out notice at next meeting asking for donations of prizes.

Action: MT to find someone to organise raffles.

11. **ROC/BOC Archive**

Email circulated giving proposals on what to do with old 'archive' material. All committee members asked to look through boxes and identify anything that should be kept. Rest will be binned.

Reports: 1 copy of each report to be kept as archive; it was proposed that the President be asked to look after this. A maximum stock of 10 reports should be kept for sale; any surplus of reports (apart from the last 3 editions) should be offered free to members with any remaining being recycled at the end of the year.

Minutes archive: this will be held by the Secretary.

12. **Events**

RRe to investigate having metal pegs/feet made for display stand to keep it off wet grass.

Feedback from events attended during the summer

Earley Green Fair: Good day – worth attending. Quite a lot of interest. RRe to organise stand for 2013.

Ascot Retirement Fair: approx. 20 people visited stand with 4-5 possibly seriously interested, but no new members recruited.

County Show: very few visitors to stand, possibly because of position of tent. Probably not worth the effort.

Future events

Better to target events attended by people who already have an interest in birds and conservation.

Possible future opportunities:

- Trips organised in conjunction with other groups are a potential source of new members.
- Opening of Fobney Island.
- Bird ringing/BOC day. Tim Ball agreed to be involved with this.
- A mini Berks Bird fair has been provisionally suggested by FoLL involving other local groups.

13. **Reports for consideration**

a. Atlas Group update

Report circulated prior to the meeting.

Atlas group will be putting in request to BOC for grant when the book goes to print.

Ian Collins still holds some funds from the last Atlas.

Action: RRe to contact Ian to arrange for funds to be transferred back to the BOC.

14. **Any Other Business**

Request from Ted Rogers for articles to be published in the newsletter. Please send in articles in the next 2 weeks – by 26th October at the latest.

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

Wednesday 16th January 2013 at 7.30pm. Venue to be arranged.

Action: RRe to book room at Radstock Lane Community Centre if available.

MT thanked Renton and Pat for hosting BOC committee meetings during Renton's time as chair.