



Berkshire Ornithological Club

Minutes of Committee Meeting

held on Tuesday 16th January 2013
at Park House, University of Reading

Present: Neil Bucknell (president & acting chair), Mike Turton (Secretary), Bill Nicoll (Treasurer) Ray Reedman (RRe), Carole White, Ted Rogers, Martin Sell, Tim Ball, John Walker, Becky Thomas, Iain Oldcorn

Renton Righelato (RRi) (observer)

1. Apologies for absence: John Lerpiniere, Heidi Bailey, Ken & Sarah White.

2. **Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 16th October 2012**

The minutes were approved and signed.

3. **Matters Arising**

Item 3 (5): Prints not offered for sale. MT to progress.

Item 3 (8): Date for official opening still not set. RRi to provide update after steering group meeting on 29th January.

Item 8 (Clearance of land under power lines): TB to keep committee informed. Item closed.

Item 8 (BNCF/LNP): TB has received plan from West Berks on how they intend to interface with the LNP.

4. **Treasurer's Report**

Report circulated prior to meeting.

Boost to funds from the Buff-bellied Pipit twitch.

BN chasing non-payment of subscriptions. Some outstanding payments already received.

BN investigating possibilities of earning more interest on Club funds.

Proposal to invest £5,000 in a 1-year bond if the funds are available was approved *nem com*.

Action: BN to check projected income and expenditure for the year and decide whether £5,000 can be invested in a 1-year bond.

5. **Editorial Board Report**

Report circulated prior to meeting.

2009 & 2010 Reports

Progress on 2009 report not as good as hoped due to a delay in the species accounts – more account writers needed. If species accounts are completed by end February, then reports could be published in late spring.

2010 report on track.

BRC still needs to review records for both years – CDRH/KM both know the timescales.

Total cost for producing both reports estimated £3,000 - £4,000.

Need to review arrangements for producing future reports,.

Action: MT to include on agenda for meeting later in the year.

6. Twitches

Buff-bellied Pipit at QMR

Marshalling and day permits organised within 1 day of the Pipit being found. There were some initial teething problems, but management got better. 1300 people came over the 6 days raising nearly £2,600 for the Club with more to come. Most people were very well behaved with only one complaint – of people running – and there were many positive comments about the organisation. Thames Water were extremely helpful throughout. The Committee expressed their gratitude to Mike McKee for coordinating the twitch, Renton Righelato, Andy Tomczynski and Thames Water, and all those involved in marshalling the twitch.

It was proposed that the money raised should be split, with £1,000 going to general Club funds to help cover the cost of managing access to QMR with the balance going to the Conservation Fund. Approved *nem com*.

Organisation of future twitches

QMR twitch procedure and guidance for marshals has been revised in conjunction with Thames Water and in the light of experience. Need to set up a team of about 20 people who can be called on at short notice to help at any future twitches.

RRi proposed purchase of hi-viz jackets, 2 collecting buckets and 2 permanent limited access signs for QMR. Expenditure approved.

Suggestion that Club should have a team which can help local groups/landowners manage twitches in the county was discussed. This will need someone to coordinate the team. There need to be discussions with NDOC about arrangements for twitches in the west of the county.

The Club's public liability insurance covers the Club for twitches where the Club manages access. Any landowners involved in a twitch should be asked to check their public liability insurance.

Action: MT to check that BOC insurance applies if the Club are managing the access, even if we are not selling day permits.

Action: RRi to produce account of the twitch and a plea for help both for QMR twitches and a county-wide team for the next newsletter.

7. Conservation Officer Report

Nothing to report

8. Conservation Strategy

Discussion document circulated prior to the meeting. Conservation work currently has a low profile in the Club. If profile is raised, the Club may get more opportunities to be involved in conservation in the county.

No definitive list of projects that the Club is involved. All projects being done by individuals. Put list together to display on Club notice board and website.

Action: MT to produce list.

Action: Executive Officers to discuss possible candidates who could head up a conservation sub-committee and develop the conservation work in the Club.

9. Programme Sub-committee report

Report circulated prior to the meeting.

Proposal to cancel indoor meeting on 28th September and replace it with a Saturday event in conjunction with Reading Museum was agreed. BOC Club members will need to book so that Museum knows how many members of the public can attend. Need to make sure that

publicity is better than it was for the Robert Gillmor events. May be further opportunities for BOC to be involved in museum education events.

Suggestions for talks:

- Offer from Keith Betton to do talk.
- Debbie Payne (WWT) on Spoon-billed Sandpiper.
- BTO to be asked if they can do presentation on the national Atlas project.

Action: RRi to pass Keith Betton contact details to RRe

BN to organise group to put together outdoor programme.

Christmas social was poorly attended, possibly due to very bad weather. Possible changes to format discussed including replacing quiz with 'brains trust' in a main indoor meeting, making the quiz more general, reducing/removing the ID section of the quiz.

It was agreed that the social should continue in its present format for another year, but with a more general quiz.

Action: All to send suggestions for future format to RRe.

10. **Volunteer Vacancies**

List of vacancies circulated prior to the meeting. No progress was made in filling the gaps.

Action: Executive Officers to discuss vacant chair position and try to identify further candidates

Action: All committee members to consider whether they could volunteer for any of these posts or whether they know anyone who would be a suitable candidate. All offers to MT.

11. **Reports for consideration:**

Membership Secretary's report

Report circulated prior to meeting. It is estimated that about 15 members who have not yet paid their subscription will not renew.

Heidi to start handover to Iain next week.

Atlas Group update

Progress as reported in talk at last indoor meeting. Pre-publication offer launched with publication forecast for Q3 2013. Pre-publication leaflets to be sent to sponsors. NDOC will circulate them with their next newsletter. Need to include copies with next BOC newsletter (both printed and email copies) and make them available on the website.

12. **Club Insurance**

MT reported that the Club's public liability policy had been moved from Hiscox to Lloyds of London by the brokers as a result of Hiscox increasing their premiums. Policy is similar, except that cover now only appears to be for the UK rather than worldwide.

Action: MT to check

- Whether £5m cover is sufficient or whether cover should be increased to £10M
- Whether cover needs to be extended to Europe to cover trips
- Whether cover is provided for practical workparties, especially those using specialist equipment such as chainsaws where training is required.

13. **Any Other Business**

Request from Ted Rogers for articles to be published in the newsletter. Please send in articles by end February at the latest.

Developing contacts with the University:

- Possible opportunities for BOC to get involved with Zoology, Agriculture and Environmental Science departments.

- Students not aware of BOC. MT to provide BT with leaflets.
- BT to advertise meetings to students
- Investigate speakers from the University who could give talks to BOC.

The BOC Committee sent best wishes to Jim Burnett, chair of NDOC, for his recovery from a heart attack.

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

Tuesday 9th April 2013 at 7.30pm, Park House University of Reading.