



Berkshire Ornithological Club

Minutes of Committee Meeting

held on Thursday 27th March 2014
at Park House, University of Reading

Present: Neil Bucknell (president), Tim Ball (chair), Mike Turton (Secretary), Bill Nicoll (Treasurer), Chris Foster, John Walker, Martin Sell, Iain Oldcorn, Robin Dryden, Becky Thomas.

1. Apologies for absence: Ted Rogers, Ray Reedman (RRe), Renton Righelato (RRi).

2. **Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 15th January 2014**

The minutes were approved and signed.

3. **Matters Arising**

Item 4 (Membership Secretary's report): further comment from BN is that there are some advantages in Membership Secretary and Treasurer having separate databases, the main one being validation of data.

Item 11 (Archivist): A volunteer has offered to store the archive. It was agreed that we need someone to store and manage it, making sure things are added as they become available. Archive needs to include documents currently held by Secretary and Treasurer.

4. **Record of items agreed by email since last meeting**

- Complaint by BOC member about fly tipping and access at QMR. Response agreed with RRi/Michael McKee and executive officers. Accepted by member concerned.
- Size of print run for annual reports.

5. **Treasurer's Report**

Report circulated prior to meeting.

There continues to be a discrepancy between Treasurer and Membership Secretary in the number of outstanding subscriptions. This is due to the timing of standing orders and should be sorted out for next year.

Amount received in subscriptions is expected to be similar to last year.

The Atlas Fund has been closed and the funds transferred to the BBAG. The surplus will be transferred back to the Conservation Fund.

Level of audit required for 2013/14 will be the same as in previous years as the transfer of funds from BBAG means that turnover will be > £25,000. It is likely that, in future years, our turnover will be less than £25,000 so a reduced level of reporting will be sufficient. To be reviewed in committee in March 2015.

The Asset Register was presented to the meeting.

Membership Secretary's Report

Report circulated prior to meeting.

The number of unpaid memberships stands at 20 with a further 11 members indicating that they will not be renewing. These memberships will be terminated at the end of March.

Recent new members have not been receiving copies of the current Annual Report. IO has addressed the backlog and will now be sending out the current report to any new members.

6. **Membership structure, subscription levels and discounts**

Discussion document circulated prior to the meeting. The discussion was at the request of the Treasurer and Membership Secretary.

It was noted that many people do not take advantage of the Standing Order and retired member discounts. Suggestion that discounts should be removed, but that an amount equivalent to the current discount should be transferred to the Conservation Fund for each eligible membership payment was discussed and rejected. Removal of retired member discount could disadvantage people who are unable to afford the full rate.

Data is not available to show whether there has been a move towards paying by Standing Order in recent years.

It was agreed that there should be no change to the membership structure at present. Both Treasurer and Membership Secretary are prepared to continue with the current structure.

University Ornithological Society

This Society has recently been formed and has approached the BOC to discuss whether a joint membership package could be set up. Their annual subscription is £5.

Students who are not BOC members can currently attend BOC meetings free on production of student card, but do not get the benefits of BOC membership, e.g. newsletter and annual report.

Proposal is that joint membership of BOC and the University Ornithological Society be made available to students as follows:

- Annual subscription rate will be £10 - £5 to University OS and £5 to BOC.
- Members will receive all benefits of full BOC membership.
- The scheme to be administered by the University OS who will provide membership details and payment of £5 per member to the BOC.
- Students who are not joint members will still be able to attend indoor meetings free on production of their student card.

Becky Thomas to be the contact point between the University OS and the BOC.

Concern was expressed that the additional £5 may put students off joining BOC.

Proposal approved: 9 in favour, 1 against.

7. **Programme Sub-committee report**

Report circulated prior to meeting.

Dominic Couzens and Andrew Cleave should attract members to the first meeting and AGM respectively. Andrew is aware of time constraints for the AGM. Blank slots are now being discussed with the local speakers.

Action: All to send any ideas from committee members for future speakers to RRe.

8. **Approval of wording for change to constitution**

The change to constitution was agreed at the previous meeting. The document to be sent to members detailing the change was circulated. Approved *nem com*.

9. **Birdwatchers' Code of Conduct**

A code of conduct, based on the code published by the RSPB, is included in one of the annual reports to be published shortly. TB briefed the meeting on the changes that had been made to tighten up the code. The code was approved *nem com*.

Action: TB to produce newsletter article to explain the changes and to point to the full version of the code in the annual report and on the BOC website.

Consideration could be given to producing a pocket-sized version.

10. **Publicity**

A briefing document on current publicity activity was circulated prior to the meeting.

Thanks were expressed to everyone currently involved in publicising the Club.

Coordination of effort would best be served by a group incorporating the people currently involved in publicity, together with volunteers to fill the gaps and a person to coordinate publicity effort. There is no need for the group to meet regularly.

The coordinator will make sure that all publicity areas are covered (recruiting new helpers if needed), develop Club publicity, and ensure momentum is maintained.

The current blue leaflet is more of a membership application than a publicity leaflet. Need something (poster and leaflet?) which is more colourful & eye-catching which doesn't become out of date. These will need to be professionally printed. Also possibly have an application form which can be inserted in the leaflet; this can be produced in-house and replaced as necessary.

Need volunteers to design leaflet/poster, to maintain the leaflet and application form and to coordinate the distribution.

Action: MT to produce description of coordinator's role.

Action: MT to ask for volunteers from membership for coordinator, leaflet design and leaflet maintenance/distribution roles.

Events are more for public education (one of the objectives of the BOC) than recruiting new members.

Need activity to draw people (especially children) in. RD willing to help develop suitable activities.

If the location of an event is suitable, then TB could do ringing demo.

Action: MT to update briefing document to reflect discussion.

11. **QMR Swipe Cards**

Briefing document circulated prior to the meeting.

The committee expressed its thanks to Datchet Water Sailing Club for their generous offer and to Michael McKee for organising the swipe cards.

The following points need to be made in the conditions of having a swipe card:

- Make clear to members that this facility is provided at the discretion of the sailing club.
- Members must still sign in on entering the site. This is a condition of the agreement with Thames Water.
- Members with swipe cards cannot use them to let other members out.

Concern over how easy it will be to process new members and lost/stolen cards. These parts of the process need further definition.

Action: MT to pass the above points on to Michael McKee

Making a charge for uncollected cards is cumbersome, but members who don't collect cards should not be allowed to have cards again.

Action: IO/Michael McKee need to work out how to do this.

Proposal approved *nem com* subject to items discussed above.

12. **Events**

Langley Academy

RD attended events at Langley Academy with BOC stand. Useful morning, Year 7s particularly interested. School very supportive and interested in what educational support

BOC can offer them. Need to work out what we can offer and get back to the school with proposals. RD and BT willing to help develop suitable activities, but will need assistance on curriculum content from someone involved in secondary education.

Action: MT to ask if there are any members who can help

Other events

Known future events are Bracknell Recorders Day on 17th May, University Bioblitz on 6th June and Earley Green Fair on 2nd August.

Action: any volunteers to help at these events to contact MT

It was agreed that volunteers should be sought from the membership to help committee members at events.

Action: MT to circulate membership asking for volunteers to help at events.

13. **Reports for consideration:**

Social Media Update

The BOC Facebook group now has 64 members, and is still growing. BOC now also has a Twitter group with 132 followers. Both are very active. Responsibility for managing and updating the groups is shared between BT and CF.

Conservation

Minutes of the March Conservation Committee meeting circulated prior to this meeting.

Little Ringed Plover now present at Padworth Lane – warning signs have been put up. Good progress on site management discussions with Canal & River Trust. Opportunities for future site management are being explored with BBOWT.

Little Ringed Plover also present at Burnthouse Lane – may cause access problems as a potential nest site is on path along the embankment. BOC, in conjunction with TABCG, are in discussions about development of a reserve area on the site

Editorial Board Report

Report circulated prior to the meeting.

A number of committee members volunteered to help deliver the 2009 & 2010 reports.

Proposal to make reports issued more than 2 years ago available on the website was approved *nem com*.

14. **Any Other Business**

TR requested articles for next newsletter by the end of the week.

Start time for indoor meetings: suggestion that meetings could start earlier than 8pm was discussed. It was decided to keep the start time at 8pm to allow members who commute to work to attend.

MT reminded the meeting that he would be standing down as Secretary at the AGM.

Action: All to pass names of any suitable candidates for Secretary to MT, NB or TB.

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

Thursday 5th June at 7.30pm, Park House, University of Reading.

Tuesday 4th November at 7.30pm, Park House, University of Reading.