



Berkshire Ornithological Club

Minutes of Committee Meeting

held on Thursday 5th July 2018
Park House, University of Reading

Present: Renton Righelato (President) (RRi), Eleanor Pitts (Treasurer), Sally Wearing (Secretary), Sue Charnley, Ken Moore, Adrian Lawson, Jake Bishop, Andy Horscroft, Iain Oldcorn, Ray Reedman (RRe), Richard Burness.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Richard Stansfield (Chair), John Swallow.

2. **Minutes of the Committee meetings held on 15th March 2018**

The minutes were approved and signed.

3. **Matters Arising**

Item 13: Safeguarding. SW had found a safeguarding policy from 2004. It was decided to update it and to circulate it to the rest of the Committee for approval.

Action: SW and IO to revise safeguarding policy.

4. **Formal record of items agreed by email since the last meeting**

The last Committee meeting was not quorate, so a number of issues were agreed by email.

- Review of Reserves Policy: agreed and updated to show it has been reviewed.
- GDPR: Legitimate Interests Assessment (LIA) and Privacy Notice (PN) both approved.
- Birding Sites Booklet: it was decided to commission Rob Still to produce 1,000 copies of a birding site booklet, based on the County Sites chapter of the Birds of Berkshire Atlas.
- Charging members to attend indoor meetings: it was decided not to bring in a £2 charge for members to attend indoor meetings.
- Date of next meeting: it was agreed to hold the next meeting on 5th July 2018.
- Changes to BRC: Richard Burness's proposals were agreed.

5. **Treasurer's Report**

The report was circulated prior to the meeting and discussed. EP reported that she had not received any spam emails since her email address was removed from the website.

RRi said it would be useful to show the amounts of the restricted and unrestricted funds.

Action: EP to include the amounts in restricted and unrestricted funds in future reports.

Status of overpayments: EP asked whether overpayments should always go into the general funds or to the conservation fund, and which fund gift aid should go to. RRi thought gift aid should go into the unrestricted general funds, as in other organisations. In the past, overpayments had usually gone into the restricted conservation fund, although members were not informed of this on membership forms. The renewal form included the option of giving a donation to the conservation fund. It was decided that donations would go into the conservation funds if the donor specified this; all other donations, overpayments and gift aid would go into the general funds.

Action: IO to make the membership forms clearer and to separate donations and overpayments accordingly.

6. Membership Secretary's Report

The report was circulated prior to the meeting. IO said there was little to report; he was surprised that membership had increased slightly over the last year.

IO had also circulated a report summarising the reasons people had given when they had left the BOC. Most people did not explain, but those that did gave straightforward reasons that were not linked to the Club, e.g. they had moved away. RRI asked if there had been any changes in the rate of people leaving or joining, but IO said this was difficult to monitor.

RRe said we needed to concentrate on incoming numbers, rather than leavers. JB asked whether the people who did not give a reason were students, but IO said they were not. He did not have any information on student members. He will continue to monitor leavers.

General Data Protection Regulation: the LIA and PN are on the website and IO had emailed them to members. One member had responded by saying "well done".

SW said that we needed to establish a system to review them regularly.

Action: SW to include reviewing the LIA and PN as a standard item on the agenda at the March Committee Meeting.

It was agreed to contact past Committee Members to ask them to delete all relevant data.

Action: SW to contact everyone who has left the Committee in the last five years to ask them to delete any personal data they hold relating to the BOC.

Currently, IO and EP held personal data about the Club's members. SW also held data relating to distributing annual reports, and Ted Rogers had email addresses so he could send out notices of meetings.

7. Club Membership Review

Subscription levels: although it had been decided to remove the reduction for retired members from 1st October 2018, this was not possible under the Constitution.

RRI asked whether we should propose changing the constitution at the next AGM and whether we should offer those who already took the discount to continue or not. IO said that allowing people to continue would help get the change passed. RRe was concerned that people may leave the Club if the reduction was removed as they might struggle to pay the full subscription, but RRI pointed out that they could keep the discount if they wished to. EP said that the change should be presented positively, with a clear message that we would be delighted if those paying the reduced amount agreed to lose the discount.

It was agreed to propose changing the Constitution to remove the discount but to allow those already paying the reduced amount to continue if they wished.

Action: SW to include the proposed change to the Constitution in the AGM Notice.

Action: IO and RRI to write a short note explaining the need to remove the reduced rate.

Taster membership: RS and JB had been actioned to prepare a proposal about temporary membership, but it was decided that this was no longer required.

Birding site booklet: this would be an A5 booklet, with a double page spread on each site in the Atlas. It was primarily intended to promote the Club. Waterstones expected it to sell well, at £6-7 a copy. RRe suggested asking BBOWT, RSPB groups and other local organisations to take some to sell on. RRI asked for two or three volunteers to edit the text in the Atlas to about half its present size, and to check that the information is still up-to-date. AL, KM and AH volunteered to help; IO said he could help if needed.

Action: RRI to organise the production of the booklet, including the volunteers.

Selling Robert Gillmor's pictures: a report was circulated before the meeting; the options for selling the four cover paintings currently available were discussed. These were a sealed bid auction (as held previously), an open auction at an indoor meeting, online via eBay, via a

raffle (e.g. selling 60 tickets at £10 each) or via an auction house. Reserves were also discussed; the reserve price for the last auction was £200.

It was decided to auction the two oldest paintings (Oystercatchers 2010 and Roseate Tern 2011) via a sealed bid auction, advertising them widely (including in the newsletter and at indoor meetings) and finishing at the AGM. The reserve for each painting will be £250, which will be publicised. If they fail to sell, they would be advertised on eBay.

Action: SW to organise auctioning the two report paintings.

Action: RRe to send high quality soft versions of the paintings to SW.

Distributing leaflets: it had been decided to take copies of leaflets to indoor meetings to ask members to distribute them. RRe said there was no overall list of places to put them.

Action: SW to get 100 copies of the current leaflet to bring to indoor meetings and to find out whether there are any old lists of places to distribute them.

Action: RRe to ask members at indoor meetings to distribute leaflets.

JB had volunteered to redesign the membership leaflet.

Action: JB to redesign leaflet then circulate for comment.

8. Programme Sub-committee report

Indoor meetings - the report was circulated prior to the meeting and was discussed. The programme was almost complete, but the speaker for 10th April was now unavailable.

Action: SC to book a new speaker for 10th April 2019.

It had been decided not to hold the Christmas Social, resulting in a long gap between the AGM at the end of November and the first talk in January. It was decided that there should be a meeting, at the University, on 12th December and that this should be a forum for local groups (e.g. LOLL, Theale, Fobney) to present information on their conservation projects.

Action: SC to organise local group forum for 12th December.

A speaker for after the AGM was needed. SC suggested asking one of the BOC's members, but it was agreed that it should be a more high profile speaker to encourage people to come to the AGM. KM suggested asking Andrew Cleave, who was a good speaker.

Action SC to organise high profile speaker for after the AGM.

Photographic competition: Ted Rogers had agreed to take over organising it. KM had not yet asked Paul Sterry whether he would like to be involved.

Action: KM to ask Paul Sterry about helping organise the photo competition.

Alternative venues: the University could not offer a cheaper venue, as they charged the same for all lecture theatres that are big enough for indoor meetings. The Nike Theatre was more expensive due to an additional charge for porters to keep the building open. The only alternative to Palmer 109 was the Van Emden Lecture Theatre in Edith Morley, which has brand new AV facilities. It was bigger than Palmer 109 but would cost the same.

Action: SW to organise a visit to see the Van Emden Lecture Theatre.

Action: SC and SW to continue to search for alternative venues.

The Events Team at the University said that they had informed the building manager of Palmer and the AV team about the AV problems in Palmer 109.

Action: SW to follow up whether AV in Palmer 109 has been improved.

Outdoor programme: the report was circulated and discussed. RRe said that Colin Wilson had stood down after 30 years of leading trips. He gave a formal vote of thanks to Colin.

AL had volunteered to lead some local walks.

Action: AL to liaise with RRe about leading local walks as soon as possible.

The programme included a variety of sites, with a few novel ideas. RRe had obtained a quote for a coach to Ham Wall, but it was over £1,000, so he had asked East Berks RSPB about the coach company they use. The alternative was to do it as a car trip.

RRe said he needed someone to take over from him. RRi said that RRe's work was greatly appreciated. Several members had said to RRi that RRe's trips had brought them to the Club and birding. He expressed the Committee's thanks to RRe.

Action: RRi and RRe to discuss finding a successor to take over the outdoor programme.

Action: All to inform RRi and RRe if they have any ideas for a successor to RRe.

9. Conservation Sub-committee report

The minutes from the last meeting of the Conservation subcommittee (9th May 2018) were circulated before the meeting.

RRi reported that the swift nest box project had started, with the first batch of boxes made and allocated. Ken White had volunteered to install boxes if necessary in mid-Berkshire and Bob Keene in the Maidenhead area.

The Times had reported a cull of ravens, including in Berkshire. RRi had talked to Natural England, and then put information on the BOC's website. There was only one active licence in England, which was not in Berkshire. Ravens are a rare breeding species in Berkshire, but licences are only issued to target specific birds causing problems in one location.

10. Editorial Board Report

The 2014 and 2015 reports were reading for printing. They were with Rob Still, who needs consent to send them to the printers. The quote for printing was £3,489. It was decided to print 350 copies of each report.

RB said that he had now been involved with producing three reports and had found that they were very labour intensive. Before producing any more reports, the overall approach needed to be considered, especially as there was now the online database. RRi agreed and said this was an opportunity to rethink the systematic list.

Action: Editorial Board to review structure of future annual reports.

11. Other Events

AL said that there was a dragonfly and butterfly walk at Fobney on 14th July, organised by the Friends of Fobney. RRi asked whether the BOC should notify members about events other than those relating to birds. It was decided that the Club should do this, especially events involving dragonflies and butterflies. RRi said that if anyone wanted to promote an event, they should contact him so he could put it on the website. RRe suggested that the Club should promote events run by other organisations, such as the local RSPB groups.

12. Reports for Consideration

Social media: JB said there had been four posts on Facebook in June and one so far in July. There are 202 members, and a recent request of information about servicing binoculars had got a good response. RRi asked if there was a link to the BOC website.

Action: RRi to ask Jane Campbell to link the BOC's Facebook page to the website.

Promoting events on Facebook was discussed. AL said all the events should be put on when the programme is published. It is possible to pay Facebook to promote events. This was not expensive.

Action: AL and JB to investigate paying Facebook to promote the BOC's events.

County Recorder: RB reported that he had received some requests for data. One was from the environmental consultants assessing the impact of the third Heathrow runway, which could affect sites with locally and nationally scarce breeding species. RRi said that mitigation measures may be developed, giving the BOC an opportunity to suggest what could be done.

TVERC had asked why they had not received any data since 2012. RRi said that this was because they had asked us to stop sending them data. RB has now sent the data they have requested. TVERC had a page on their website where people could enter wildlife sightings, and are considering RB's request to share bird sightings.

13. Election of Officers

RS was eligible to stand again as Chairman, but it was not known whether he was willing to.

Action: RRi to ask RS whether he was willing to stand again.

RRe said that it was possible to co-opt someone as an extra committee member e.g. to deal with publicity or recruitment. RRi agreed but only if we could find a volunteer. A few individuals were discussed but none had been willing to join the Committee. It was agreed to try again to find someone to take on a PR role.

Action: IO to ask in the August Newsletter for volunteers to take on PR for the BOC.

One elected member, SC, has to stand down at the AGM. It was agreed that the Committee should co-opt her as a Non-executive Officer so she could continue as Indoor Programme.

There will be one vacancy at the AGM for an Ordinary Committee Member. The possibility of finding a student to stand was discussed, but JB said this was likely to be too short term.

Action: All to consider ideas of who could fill the vacancy.

14. Annual Members Mailing

The proposed deadlines were agreed: contents 11th August, mailing 17th August.

Ted Rogers will continue to layout the programme card. IO pointed out that the mailing needed to include the LIA and PN for people not on email. As last year, IO would send the membership renewal notice out separately to the members on email.

Action: SW to include the LIA, PN and membership renewal notice in the posted mailing.

15. Any Other Business

RRe said that it had been announced in British Birds that Keith Betton (Hants) has obtained sponsorship for free membership for anyone under 21. RRi suggested that the BOC could seek sponsorship from companies who wished to promote themselves in this way. Thames Water had sponsored annual reports in the past.

Action: All to identify suitable companies to ask for sponsorship.

IO reported that someone at QMR had been asked to leave by Security, but they were a member of the Sailing Club, not the BOC. Peter Newbound had dealt with this effectively.

IO asked for more material for the newsletter. RRe offered more reports on trips. RB had prepared his contribution and RRi will provide something on conservation. IO said he had intended to issue four newsletters a year, but this was too many so will stay with three.

Trustees: SW said that the reasons for disqualifying Trustees are being extended from 1st August, so all the elected members needed to complete a new form to confirm that they were not disqualified. It was decided to include the non-elected members as well.

Action: SW to issue new disqualification declaration forms to everyone on the Committee.

16. Dates and venue for next meetings

Thursday 25th October 2018 at 8 pm. RRi was unable to attend so he suggested that IO should chair the meeting.

Action: JB to book Park House.

Sally Wearing
15th July 2018