



Berkshire Ornithological Club

Minutes of Committee Meeting

held on Thursday 25th October 2018

Park House, University of Reading

Present: Iain Oldcorn (Acting Chair), Eleanor Pitts (Treasurer), Sally Wearing (Secretary), Sue Charnley, Ken Moore, Jake Bishop, John Swallow.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Richard Stansfield (Chair), Renton Righelato (President) (RRi), Andy Horscroft, Adrian Lawson, Ray Reedman (RRe), Richard Burness.

2. **Minutes of the Committee meetings held on 5th July 2018**

The minutes were approved and signed.

3. **Matters Arising**

Item 15: Sponsorship. RRi had suggested that the BOC could seek sponsorship, however no one present at the meeting had identified any suitable companies.

Item 15: Trustees. All of the Committee had signed new declaration forms, except for Richard Stansfield (who will stand down at the AGM as he is in Dubai) and Adrian Lawson.

Action: AL to complete the new disqualification declaration and send it to SW.

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

None.

5. **Treasurer's Report**

The draft AGM report, accounts (2017-18) and budget (2018-19) were circulated prior to the meeting and discussed.

EP said that Phil Caunt had thoroughly reviewed the draft accounts; his comments were in her report. He had recommended that the Reserves Policy should be reviewed as the General Fund reserves were significantly higher than in the policy, which might cause concern to the Charity Commission. EP thought this was unlikely, but suggested that we could consider amending the policy, perhaps by increasing the number of years of reserves we hold or by designating funds. It was decided to consider his comments during the annual review of the Reserves Policy.

Action: EP to raise Phil Caunt's recommendation when the Reserves Policy is reviewed at the Spring committee meeting.

Draft Accounts: EP said that the only significant difference in expenditure this year to the previous one was the cost of the extra report. IO said that RRi had asked whether EP had split the funds into general and restricted funds, as discussed at the last committee meeting. She had done that in the draft accounts and said she would do it in all future reports.

IO expressed his thanks to Phil Caunt. EP said that Phil had said that it would be good practice to find a new reviewer, as he had done it for three years. IO asked if she had considered asking Bill Nicholl. EP thought this might be a little unusual as he is a member, but IO said that many organisations asked members to review their accounts.

Action: EP to ask membership for suggestions for someone new to review the accounts and to contact Colin Wilson, as he had put forward Phil.

EP pointed out that one date (30.09.2016) on the balance sheet was a mistake. The draft accounts were accepted.

Draft Budget: EP pointed out that the planned expenditure was about £1000 more than the income. SW said that the difference was due to the planned site booklet, which would be sold to recover its costs. EP explained that she had doubled the planned stationery costs to cover expenses outstanding from 2017-18. IO said that these were fairly small amounts and that the Club had sufficient funds. The draft budget was accepted.

Overpayments: IO had one outstanding action concerning donations and over payments. He had not revised the membership form as it was likely to need updating after the AGM.

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 that he did not know why Robert Gillmor had not already been made an Honorary Life Member. Robert continued to give the Club artworks and other donations. It was decided to make him an Honorary Life Member.

Action: RRI to inform Robert Gillmor that he was now an Honorary Life Member.

Safeguarding: IO and SW had drafted a safeguarding policy and a letter to send to Family Members to find out whether they had any members under 18, as the Club currently did not know whether they included any children. JB queried why the letter asked for information about family members who were 18, not just under 18. IO said he would remove this.

JB said we should collect the ages and dates of birth when families join, from now on. IO planned to send out the letter initially to existing family members, then to all who applied to be family members in the future. JS said that the Club needed to make sure all members knew about the safeguarding policy, in case they wished to bring children to meetings. IO said that it will be publicised to all members via the website and mailings. EP suggested adding information about safeguarding to the membership application, while JS proposed that there should be a note on the programme card.

Action: IO to revise safeguarding letter to family members and to issue for discussion at the next committee meeting, including how to publicise the policy.

7. Club Membership Review

It was decided to rename this section as Publicity and Advertising at future meetings.

Action: SW to include Publicity & Advertising in future agendas, instead of Club Membership Review.

IO had put an advert for a Publicity Officer in the newsletter and RRI had asked for volunteers at indoor meetings. IO asked if anyone knew anyone experienced in PR or publicity. KM suggested Brian Clews.

Action: All to try to identify a potential Publicity Officer.

Birding site booklet: RRI had provided an update on its status. About two thirds of the sites had been revised, but there were still seven sites in West Berks to be done. He was seeking volunteers who are familiar with these sites to complete the revisions. Various suggestions were made for the sites, including KM who was already doing Woolhampton GPs.

Action: IO to inform RRI of suggested volunteers to revise site information.

Distributing leaflets: at the last meeting, it had been decided to take copies of leaflets to indoor meetings to ask members to distribute them. As the current membership leaflet may need to be revised after the AGM, SW had provided copies of the programme leaflet and members at the first two indoor meetings had taken about 170 copies to distribute.

JB had volunteered to redesign the membership leaflet.

Action: JB to redesign leaflet then circulate for comment, before the AGM.

8. Programme Sub-committee report

Both the 2018-19 indoor and outdoor programmes had started; everything was going well so far. It was not yet time to start working on the 2019-20 programmes.

Indoor Meeting 12th December: this will be a different format to previous years, i.e. a Conservation 'catch-up', at the University. RRI had included ideas for who could present talks in the Conservation Committee Minutes. It was planned to hold about three talks, and someone had asked to read his bird poems to break up the talks.

Action: SC & RRI to organise Conservation Indoor Meeting on 12th December.

Photographic competition: a new organiser is required. Ted Rogers was happy to continue helping run the competition but did not want to organise it. KM had asked Paul Sterry, but he was unable to help. EP said it would help to know what was entailed. IO had received an email from Colin Wilson listing what he did. He suggested expanding the information and publicising it. He was concerned that it might be too late to get judges.

Action: IO to ask Colin Wilson if any potential judges had been approached yet, then to publicise what the role entailed.

Action: All to inform IO or SW if they have any ideas for who could be judges.

Alternative venues: following the decision at the last meeting to visit the Van Emden Lecture Theatre, SW had obtained more information about this venue. It was further from any car parks, and the audio visual equipment in Palmer 109 had been updated. It was not likely to be better than Palmer 109, so there was therefore no suitable alternative accommodation at the University.

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

Outdoor Programme Secretary: a successor to take over from RRe was still required. It was decided to advertise this at indoor meetings.

Action: RRI & SW to seek volunteers at indoor meetings.

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

9. Conservation Sub-committee report

RRI's report and the minutes from the last meeting of the Conservation subcommittee (8th August 2018) were circulated before the meeting. There were no questions.

10. Editorial Board Report

The report was circulated prior to the meeting. SW was currently distributing the 2014 & 2015 reports. Work on the 2016 report was due to start soon. IO asked about the structure of future reports, which SW said was due to be considered by the Editorial Board. RRI was seeking a new managing editor.

11. Other Events

SW explained that this section covered non-BOC events which BOC might be involved in, e.g. giving talks, providing a stand, etc. JS said that Brian Clews gives talks to Rotary Clubs and we could ask him to publicise the BOC at these events. KM thought that RRI had already done this, but that it could be done again.

Action: IO to ask RRI whether he had approached Brian Clews to advertise the BOC when giving talks.

12. Reports for Consideration

Social media: JB said there had been fourteen posts on Facebook in October. RSPB groups were posting adverts for their meetings, with photos. JB had added all the BOC indoor talks to Christmas, but still needed to add the outdoor events; AL had advertised today's walk at Fobney, but that was only because he was leading it. KM suggested asking Marek Walford whether the BOC could use some photos from Berksbirds. Auto-alerts from

Facebook were discussed. People could receive these on Facebook or via their phones. JS said it was possible to turn notifications off.

Action: JB to advertise all BOC events on Facebook.

At the last meeting, it had been decided to investigate whether it was worth paying Facebook to promote events, as this was not expensive. JB said that this was mainly aimed at businesses but he thought there must be a way for charities to do it. It was decided to continue the action.

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

13. Election of Officers

The report had been circulated prior to the meeting and was discussed.

A few people felt that some potential candidates for Chair might be too polarising. EP asked whether anyone knew anyone suitable where this wouldn't be a problem.

Action: IO to seek volunteers by email.

Action: SW to post news item about vacancies on the website.

EP asked how much work the role of Chair involved. IO said it was up to the Chair to decide and varied; RRi had done a lot. The Chair could decide to just chair meetings or to be someone who could really stir up the community. EP said it would be possible to start with just being chair then to grow into the role. IO said he was willing if it just entailed running meetings, but he thought that the Club needed a figurehead, with standing in the local community. The role could be split, i.e. he could chair meetings and someone else could 'wave the flag'. It was decided to discuss the role of the Chair at the next committee meeting.

Action: SW to include the role of the Chair in the agenda for the next meeting.

14. Any Other Business

SW said that she would be seeking input for the AGM earlier than usual as she was away on holiday before the AGM. It was agreed that she should send the Chair's report from last year so that everyone knew what to include. KM asked her to include RB when requesting the annual bird report.

Action: SW to send last year's Chair's report when asking for input to the AGM, and to include RB.

15. Date and venue for next meeting

Thursday 24th January at 8 pm.

Action: JB to book Park House.

Sally Wearing
1st November 2018