



## **Berkshire Ornithological Club**

### **Minutes of Committee Meeting**

held on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020

via online conference

**Present:** Rob Godden (Chair), Renton Righelato (RRi), Eleanor Pitts (Treasurer), Sally Wearing (Secretary), Jane Campbell, Sue Charnley, Chris Foster.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Iain Oldcorn, Ken Moore, Ray Reedman (RRe).

2. **Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020**

The minutes were approved with one amendment and signed. Under Item 8, Programme Report, RRi and CF (not Neil Bucknell) will find a speaker for the joint talk with the University.

3. **Matters Arising**

**Equipment:** SW had been given a telescope and tripod by a BOC member who wanted them to go to young birders or, if not, to be used to raise funds for the Club. RRe has provisionally booked sessions with Maiden Erlegh School in June, when he hoped to find out whether they want the scope and/or tripod, assuming the sessions go ahead.

**Action:** RRe to find out whether Maiden Erlegh School want the equipment.

**Sale of Artworks:** both the Oystercatchers (2010) and Roseate Terns (2011) had been sold to members, for £250 each. It had been decided to sell the Great Egret (2016) by sealed bid auction again, reserve price £250, to be advertised in the Newsletter and online. SW may wish to bid for the artwork, therefore was not able to run the auction.

**Action:** SW to inform JC about how auctions have been run in the past.

**Action:** JC to auction Great Egret artwork, advertising it in the next Newsletter and online.

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

None.

5. **Treasurer's Report**

The report was circulated before the meeting and was discussed. EP had queried whether the income from selling the two artworks should be in the General or Conservation Funds. RRi said that Robert Gillmor wanted any income from his artworks to benefit the Club, so it should be in the General Funds.

RRi said that, as the funds for Padworth may be required, up to £20,000 of the Conservation Fund should only be invested for one year, not two. This had already been agreed.

**Action:** EP to update investment policy accordingly.

**Review of Reserves Policy:** SW said that the circulated policy had been agreed by the Committee; it was incorrectly marked as a draft. RG asked if the policy was affected by the revision to the investment policy; EP said it was not. RG asked whether policy was still correct and that all the Club's finances were in accordance with the policy. EP confirmed both issues. The policy was approved.

**Review of Asset Register:** This needed to be updated, as JC currently had the projector and CF the laminator. RG now had one of the display stands, while RRi had the other. SC has the Club notice board. RRi said he had also got a large (about 2m x 0.5m), waterproof banner, for use above stands at shows

**Action:** SW to update the Asset Register.

## 6. Membership Secretary's Report

The report was circulated prior to the meeting. RG said he was unsure about the actual number of members currently as lots of new people had been joining. EP said that about the same number of people had left as had joined.

SC reported that people were asking to join the BOC's Facebook page. RRI suggested asking them whether they were interested in joining the Club. JC said that the list of people on Facebook could be compared to the membership list to identify potential new members. CF offered to post an item about joining the Club.

**Action:** CF to put a post on Facebook suggesting that non-members should join the BOC.

EP had asked 12 people who had recently joined online why they had joined. Only two had answered: one was a keen birder who had been looking for a local group to join; the other felt that he should join as he was a member of NDOC who was working with the BOC. Only the paper membership forms ask people why they are joining. SW suggested adding it to the online application form.

**Action:** RRI & JC to revise online application form to ask why people join the BOC.

IO had said that he did not know whether he would be able to get the next newsletter printed, due to the current situation. He therefore asked the committee to consider not sending hard copies of the Newsletter in the future, distributing it only by email or via the website. SW said this was not reasonable. RRI felt it was one of the few things that engages members who do not come to meetings and was seen as an important benefit by many.

EP asked how many people did not give email addresses. SW thought that it was between 30 and 40. EP suggested that the next newsletter could ask people to confirm that they still want to receive paper copies, but it was agreed that the Club should just continue to send hard copies as usual.

SW offered to help IO find someone to print the next newsletter if necessary. JC said she may be able to get them printed at work.

**Action:** SW, JC & IO to liaise to organise printing the next Newsletter.

**QMR:** IO not been able to resolve the problems with issuing the permits electronically, although he had got close to doing so. EP had also tried and failed at the same point. JC said she was happy to help, but she had been very busy with work. She hoped to be able to look at it within the next week. RG said he had seen a YouTube video showing how to do it, which he offered to send to JC. He also offered to help if JC did not have enough time.

**Action:** JC to liaise with IO in order to issue the QMR permits, involving RG if necessary.

**Safeguarding:** version 6 of the draft policy had been circulated before the meeting. SW said that RRe wanted the notice period in point 3 to be reduced from one month to two weeks. It was agreed to approve the policy with that amendment.

RG said that the policy needed to show the date that it was last reviewed. SW said that this was standard practice as the date on all the BOC's policies was when it was last reviewed. RRI asked if SW had found any policies issued by other similar clubs, as the BOC's policy appeared to be trying to turn children away. It was stricter than the one issued by the RSPB. It was agreed to issue the policy and to see how it works in practice.

**Action:** SW to revise and issue the safeguarding policy, via the website and newsletter.

**Review of GDPR Documents:** RG pointed out that there was an error in the wording of the Legitimate Interests Assessment. He also asked whether the list of personal data in the Privacy Notice was an exhaustive list or just examples, as the Club would also record the age of any members under 18. It was agreed to change it to make it clear that the data listed were examples. The existing documents were agreed, with these amendments.

**Action:** SW to revise GDPR documents and reissue via the BOC's website.

## 7. Publicity and Advertising

This covers all aspects of promoting the Club, including at non-BOC events and via social media. The report was circulated before the meeting. CF said he had not been able to do much due to lack of time. The following actions are therefore ongoing.

**Action: CF** to review and revise membership leaflet, posters and other publicity material, then circulate for comment.

**Action: CF** to investigate paying Facebook to ensure that posts are visible and to promote the BOC's events.

**Action: CF** to find out if sightings on Berksbirds can be fed to the BOC's Facebook page.

**Action: CF** to put up posters advertising the BOC at the University.

**Action: CF** to provide contact details to IO for at least one person in the University bird club.

There had been a good turn out by students at the talk on shearwaters. CF said he would do more to encourage students to come, including those on other courses.

**Social Media:** There were no BOC events to promote currently. RG said that what CF had done had been very effective. All other social media aspects were dealt with under item 12.

**Non-BOC Events:** RG reported that the Royal Berkshire Show had been cancelled.

## 8. Programme Report

**Indoor Programme:** The report was circulated before the meeting. SC said that the indoor programme had been going well but progress had stopped. Since issuing the report, she had received an offer of a talk on the nest record scheme, which she hoped would fill one of the remaining dates, but she was not sure whether to continue filling the rest. CF said that she should, because it would be possible to reschedule talks if there were still restrictions in October. It was agreed that SC should finish the programme as usual. RG said that the Club would be in a good position for the following year if it was not possible to go ahead.

RRi said that the programme so far looked good. He would like to see more scientific talks, which have always had a good attendance.

**Photographic Competition:** the University had not charged for the cancelled indoor meeting. JC reported that the judges had completed the first round of judging, resulting in the three finalist groups that would have been shown to members. Ashley Grove had spent some time on this, so should be paid for his time. It was agreed to pay him half of his fee.

**Action: SC & EP** to arrange to pay Ashley Grove half of his fee.

A future date for the competition was discussed. RG suggested holding it at on 16<sup>th</sup> December, the Christmas meeting. JC was concerned about whether there would be enough time. RRi suggested that the judges could reduce the finalists to make it fit. JC said she would talk to the judges about doing this. However, some photographers wanted to hear the judges' comments and reducing the number of photographs would remove this for some people. EP thought enough time should be allowed for the usual competition format as well as the longer break for refreshments. If this was not possible on 16<sup>th</sup> December, it should be held on a different evening. December 2<sup>nd</sup> was free, so this was an alternative. After further discussion, it was decided that JC would contact the judges, then she and SC would then decide when to hold it and how.

**Action: JC & SC** to organise the 2020 photographic competition to be held in December.

**Joint talk with University:** RRi and CF will find a suitable high-profile speaker.

**Outdoor Programme:** the report was circulated prior to the meeting. RG said he had asked some birders specifically to lead walks, and four people had volunteered.

## 9. Conservation Subcommittee report

The report and the minutes from the meeting of the Conservation subcommittee on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020 were circulated before the meeting. RRI said that all practical conservation work and surveys had stopped, and it was not possible to distribute swift boxes.

**Peregrines in Newbury:** a platform had been erected and a webcam installed. SW asked if this was online, but RRI said it was not, due to issues about security.

## 10. Editorial Board Report

The report and minutes of the meeting of the Editorial Board on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020 were circulated prior to the meeting. RRI said that the 2016 report had been distributed, but there were some serious proofing issues. The pdf of the report is currently being corrected and will be available online. The online versions are used by others, such as the BTO.

A more effective proofing protocol is being put in place to make sure this will not happen again. Errors can occur at each stage of the process of creating a report, so several levels of proofing are required. All are being improved.

RRI said that about 80% of the species accounts for the 2017 had been received and that it should be ready for proof reading by Easter. Work will begin on the 2018 straight away, and data will be sent to the species account writers after Easter.

RRI was trying to find someone to take over from him as managing editor. The BOC Committee appoints this role, usually from the group of people producing reports. However, it was primarily project management, so the editor does not necessarily need to understand the data. It was not time consuming, except when each report was published.

**Action:** RRI to write job description for managing editor.

RG updated the meeting on the progress with recruiting a new County Recorder, after the sad loss of Richard Burness. The process is in the BRC's constitution and is being implemented. An ad had been placed on the BOC's website to ask people to apply, by the end of April. RRI pointed out that anyone applying for the post should not be involved in deciding who to appoint, and the BRC needed to be involved in the process. EP asked if it was possible for two people to share the post; RRI said that this approach might be feasible.

## 11. Committee Vacancy

SW said that there was now one vacancy for an Ordinary Committee Member, as Richard Burness had been elected last year. RRI suggested waiting until the new County Recorder is elected, as that person might be willing to stand for election. It was agreed to wait.

## 12. Coronavirus

The Committee discussed how to help members during the current crisis. RG said that IO was due to send a newsletter out soon.

**Action:** All to send ideas to IO for inclusion in the next Newsletter.

RRI suggested that communicating fun ideas to members should be frequent, e.g. every fortnight, on Facebook and the website. RRe had provided a good list of ideas, which could be issued one at a time. JC had already sent some ideas and SW said she also had some. RRI mentioned the daily videos posted by Frazer Cottingham on YouTube. RG said the members should be encouraged to look at other wildlife, as well as birds.

How to disseminate the information was discussed. It was decided to use Facebook and to ask Ted Rogers to email members every two weeks. CF volunteered to gather the information together, but individuals should also post ideas on Facebook.

**Action:** All to post ideas on Facebook and to send them to CF to collate.

**Action:** CF to create fortnightly communications to members, to be emailed.

RG said that after the April newsletter, the next time anything was posted to members without emails would be the usual member's mailing in August. He thought that there should be another newsletter sent out before then. It was agreed to ask IO to do this.

**Action: IO** to consider sending out an extra newsletter between April and August.

EP said that if it was possible to get mail merge to work, it would be easier to send out regular emails. Ted Rogers had to send out multiple emails, as he can only send to a limited number of people at a time. JC said she would try to sort this out, as agreed under QMR Permits above.

**13. Any Other Business**

Sean Murphy had informed the meeting that the Breeding Waders survey planned for 2020 had been cancelled, and that all BTO volunteers were being encouraged to follow the latest advice about surveys on the BTO's website.

**14. Date and Venue of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020. Venue to be confirmed

**Sally Wearing, 7<sup>th</sup> April 2020**