



# Berkshire Ornithological Club



## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting for 2021

8.00 pm 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021, held at Reading University and on Zoom

The Chairman, Robert Godden (RG), in the chair and 74 members present both in person and on Zoom.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Peter Hutchins, Carole White.
2. **Minutes of the AGM held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020:** the minutes were approved via a show of hands and a poll and will be signed by the Chairman.
3. **Matters arising:** None.
4. **Honorary Treasurer's Report and the Club Accounts:** these were presented by Eleanor Pitts (EP). The accounts and Treasurer's report had been circulated before the meeting and are available on the Club's website.

EP noted that the accounts are straightforward and healthy but still impacted by Covid. Two grants were given from the Conservation fund, one for swift boxes and the other to support a landowner with nesting Little Ringed Plover. EP explained that our level of income does not require a full audit and for the third year, the necessary review has been meticulously carried out by Bill Nicholl. The Club is grateful to Bill who wishes to retire. EP noted that a new Treasurer and a new reviewer are required. EP explained that although she had investigated options to invest club funds it was decided that the current financial climate does not make this worthwhile.

Iain Oldcorn proposed a vote of thanks for EP's work, and this was seconded by RG who said the club is indebted to EP for her work as Treasurer.

The accounts were accepted via a show of hands and an online poll.

5. **Election of Executive Officers:** The Committee proposed the following:  
Chair – Robert Godden      Treasurer – Eleanor Pitts      Secretary – Jane Campbell

They were all elected via a show of hands and an online poll.

6. **Election of Ordinary Members of the Committee:** there are six elected Ordinary Members. This year there was one vacancy, due to the retirement of Ray Reedman, RG thanked Ray for his work for the Club.

The nomination from the Committee was Bob Lyle. Bob was elected via a show of hands and an online poll

7. **Report of Chairman and Officers:** this was presented by the Chairman, RG. The full written report will be published via the Club's website.
  - **Membership:** there was still a slow decline in numbers. RG reported that the Club recruited some members from the East Berks RSPB Group which had disbanded, and he asked for members to help with recruitment by taking opportunities to mention the BOC and even invite contacts as guests to indoor or online meetings. RG asked members receiving mailings by post to consider providing an email address as this saves administrative costs. The access restrictions remaining at QMR were explained.

- **Indoor Programme:** Last year most meetings were held online, with around 50 people attending many of the talks, and many people watching the recordings of these meetings subsequently. Whereas holding meetings online was not to everyone's liking, it was the only option available and enabled many people to hear the talks who would not, even in the best of times, have ventured out to an evening meeting. Meetings are now held at the University and online. Once again, there was a successful joint Reading University and BOC organised meeting with Campbell Murn talking about the plight of vultures. Thanks were given to Sue Charnley for organising this programme.
  - **Outdoor Programme:** This restarted last summer and there is a full programme this year. Ray Reedman has stepped down as Outdoor Programme Secretary after many years in this role. The Club is most grateful to Ray for his dedication and input. The Club is now seeking someone to plan the outdoor programme, please note this does not require them to lead the events.
  - **Publicity:** Chris Foster (CF) publicises the Club on social media, and this has brought its activities to a wider audience. CF has been helped on Instagram by Amanda Garratt and asked for more volunteers to assist him.
  - **Editorial Board:** Three reports are in progress as follows:
    - 2017 correcting publisher's first draft
    - 2018 currently being proof-read
    - 2019 first draft complete
    - 2020 due to start Jan 2022
  - **Conservation:** RG explained that the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership is a grouping of Natural England, Environment Agency, BBOWT, TVERC, local authority biodiversity officers, BOC and Butterfly Conservation to establish Nature Recovery Networks. Moves are afoot to re-invigorate the organisation and get local authorities to commit to funding. Surveys of farmland birds including Turtle Doves have resumed; Little Ringed Plovers have nested successfully again at a site where the BOC assisted last year with a grant to the landowner; BOC have contributed towards a boat for use at Berkshire BBOWT reserves; continues its involvement with Aldermaston and Padworth Lane gravel pits; and is in discussions over Lower Farm gravel pits.
  - **Thanks:** RG thanked the committee for their work during the year.
  - **Closing Remarks:** RG reported this has been a challenging season because of restrictions due to the Pandemic. The Club has been active and the hard work by the committee provided a varied programme.
8. **Birding highlights for 2021:** the full version of the birding highlights will be published in the next Newsletter and on the Club's website. A selection of photos of the most notable birds for each month of the year was shown. RG thanked Ken Moore for his suggestions and the photographers for allowing their photos to be used.
9. **Any other business**  
There were no questions. One member thanked the committee for keeping things going during the Pandemic.

The Chairman closed the AGM at 20:40. It was followed by a talk from Hugh Hamner of the BTO on "Project Owl: Secrets of the Night".