



# Berkshire Ornithological Club

## Minutes of Committee Meeting

held on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022

via Zoom

**Present:** Robert Godden (RG, Chair), Eleanor Pitts (EP, Treasurer), Jane Campbell (JC, Secretary), Sally Wearing (SW), Sue Charnley (SC), Iain Oldcorn (IO), Andy Tomczynski (AT), Chris Foster (CF), Marek Walford (MW), Renton Righelato (RRi), Bob Lyle (BL) and Neil Bucknell (NB)

### 1. Apologies for absence:

None

### 2. Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021

The minutes were approved and will be signed by **RG**.

### 3. Matters Arising and Review of Actions not covered elsewhere

**75<sup>th</sup> anniversary event:** RRi has spoken to Robert Gillmor who will write a few words to be read at the meeting, the booklet will not be ready for the event.

**Replacement Treasurer:** JC's contact is unable to take this position.

**Mail Merge for QMR permits:** Help is no longer required

**Revised Safeguarding and Equality Policies:** It was agreed these policies can be posted on the website. **Action: JCC**

**AGM:** There are no actions from the AGM

**Reading University Bird Club:** IO has contacted the club and is now able to send details of our events.

### 4. Formal record of items agreed by email or actioned since the last meeting

**Trustees:** Ray Reedman has retired and has been replaced by Bob Lyle who has been registered as a trustee with the Charity Commission.

### 5. Treasurer's Report

The report and accounts were circulated prior to the meeting.

**EP** noted that the figure reported for total assets is incorrect and should be £68233.33.

**EP** will check details for those registered as CAF Bank signatories but to minimise admin it was agreed to leave signatories as they are.

**RG** will ask for a volunteer to replace **EP** as treasurer during the notices at the start of the next indoor meeting when **EP** will describe the role and its responsibilities.

### 6. Membership Secretary's Report

The report was circulated prior to the meeting.

**IO** noted that fewer members were lost over the last three months than anticipated. He would like the information sent to new members to be reviewed and updated. **RG** will review the documents and **NB** agreed to update the conservation information.

**Action: NB and RG**

**Newsletter:** Items for the next newsletter are needed by 31<sup>st</sup> March. **NB** will provide a conservation report, **JC** will advertise more of Ray Reedman's ID tutorials and Carol White has prepared a report on the Christmas walk.

**QMR:** Peter Newbound is exploring options to widen access. **RG** asked how temporary permits will be managed for a twitch and **MW** and **RRI** reported there are some permits in the hut that can be issued at the site. It is important that current keyholders are informed of the procedure to issue temporary permits.

**The Role of Members in the Charity and our Objects:** **RRI** brought the Charity's Objects to our attention. Our Objects start with this: *'The Club is established to advance public education in the study of wild birds and to promote the conservation of wild birds and their habitats in the County of Berkshire'*.

**RRI** suggested that rather than treating our members as customers buying a service, we should be inviting them to 'subscribe to our cause'.

**RRI** made two proposals:

1. To announce that for the remainder of the season ANYONE can attend our events.
2. To set up a small working group to develop strategies for outreach. **RRI** suggested that **SW** lead this group.

There was much discussion which included the following points.

- **SW** endorsed **RRI's** view that the Club should focus more on its Objects.
- **AT** suggested some paying members may feel it unfair that anyone can participate free.
- **BL** suggested allowing non-members three free events before they are asked to join.
- **EP** asked that if we are considering allowing people to attend all meetings free of charge should we drop the subscription fee and suggest people make a donation instead.
- It was thought insurance would not be a problem.
- **RG** asked how dependent the Club is on regular subscriptions to which **EP** responded that this question is difficult to answer but that the Club has no other income.
- **NB** asked if all indoor event recordings can be made public. **SW** responded that we do ask speakers, and some do not give permission for this.

It was agreed that these and other issues are taken up by the working group led by **SW**. Both **BL** and **CF** offered to join her.

**Action: SW, CF and BL** to meet to take this forward.

For this week's talk, **RRI** will advertise to LWT, **CF** will post on social media and **SW** will add a meeting link to the website.

**Publicity and Advertising:** The report was circulated before the meeting.

**RG** asked **CF** to thank Amanda for her continued efforts on Instagram.

Traditional means of advertising will be investigated to include Get Reading and Berkshire Live plus community papers. Radio Berkshire was also suggested.

**Action:** **CF** to investigate and to produce flyers to be used on social media.

## 7. Programme Report

**Indoor Programme:** The report was circulated before the meeting.

The small number of people attending indoor meetings in person is a concern and **NB** suggested we wait to see what happens after a 'new normal' post Covid is reached. As Zoom allows us to book presenters from further afield it was agreed to focus on good quality speakers who can present via Zoom if they are distant.

**Action:** **SC** will ask all speakers if they will allow us to record their talks and if the recording can be made public.

**Action:** **RRi** will create a new website page to hold links to the publicly available recording and Ray's tutorials.

### **Outdoor Programme:**

This is not yet started. **RG** has found a potential new leader for Woodcock and Nightjar walks.

**AT** informed us that Debby Reynolds has contacted him to ask if NDOC can join the Compton field trip.

## 8. Conservation-Sub-Committee Report: The report was circulated before the meeting.

**NB** thanked **RRi** for his great work during his many years as Chair of this committee. A plea was made for more survey volunteers and for applications to be made for conservation fund projects.

**Action:** **NB** to ask for survey volunteers at indoor meetings.

**IO** asked if there is frustration around slowness of action by local authorities which **NB** explained is due to most planning authorities being under resourced. **RRi** suggested a good tactic would be to seed opportunities by presenting local councils with things they might want to do.

## 9. Editorial Board Report: A report was circulated prior to the meeting by **SW** and **RG**

**2017 Report:** **SW** noted it will be more difficult and probably more costly to distribute this report as previously many were taken by members at indoor events which are no longer well-attended.

**Action:** **SW** to deliver the reports to **JC** who will organise their distribution.

**Covers:** The 2018 report has a cover by Robert Gillmor, but nothing is in place after that.

**Action:** **RRi** will ask if Robert Gillmor has anything available we can use.

**2020 Report:** A start has been made on writing species accounts.

**2021 Report:** This needs to be started soon if we are to make up the backlog. **MW** has some records and suggested a realistic date to start would be in the summer when most other records should have been received though it is doubted that Chris Heard's will be

available then. **AT** proposed that a hard deadline is given, and any records not received by that date are not included.

#### **10. AOB**

A Zoom host is needed for the photo competition on March 16<sup>th</sup> as **SW** is away. **RG** or **CF** may be able to do this.

**IO** asked if any more contact has been made with the US BOC and **RG** replied that we have heard nothing more.

#### **11. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on **Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at 8pm**, to be held online via Zoom.

**Jane Campbell, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2022**

#### ***Suspended Actions***

***Matters arising:*** *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. It had been decided to offer them to Maiden Erlegh School, but this had not yet been possible.*

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

***Publicity and Advertising:*** *the following actions will be continued when the current government restrictions are relaxed.*

***Action:*** *CF to advertise free attendance in the University and to consider how to advertise in other places.*

***Action:*** *RRe to investigate advertising free attendance at meetings in local schools.*

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