

**Berkshire Ornithological Club**

**Minutes of Committee Meeting** held on Tuesday 17th October 2023 via Zoom

**Present:** Sally Wearing (SW, Chair), Debby Reynolds (DR, President), Robert Godden (RG), Jane Campbell (JC, Secretary), Iain Oldcorn (IO), Andy Tomczynski (AT), Marek Walford (MW), Anna Mortimer (AM), Elaine Charlson (EC) and Neil Bucknell (NB)

1. **Young Birders: Introducing Johana Simonova and Raman Nijjar**

**SW** welcomed Raman and Johana and thanked them for taking up their roles as young birders for Berkshire. Raman asked that we share our knowledge and experience to help them engage young people with wildlife. Johana added that they would like to organise events that appeal to younger people and to involve them in surveys. Through her involvement with the BTO and their popular Youth Advisory Group, **DR** has seen the difficulties young people face, one of which is transport. **DR** would like the Berkshire youth reps to connect with the BTO reps in adjoining counties. Raman informed us that a group chat exists for all the UK youth representatives.

**DR will set up a Zoom meeting to include Johanna and Raman plus Sean Murphy, SW, DR and representatives from NDOC.**

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Bob Lyle, Sue Charnley and Edwin Bruce-Gardner (Edwin was unable to join the Zoom session).

# Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 4th July 2023

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

**4. Matters Arising and Review of Actions not covered elsewhere**

**Donated telescope and tripods:** There has been no interest in the donated telescope and tripods. These will be re-advertised, including to the young birder reps. If there is no interest a donation to a suitable charity will be considered.

**Website:** We continue to be unable to edit all parts of our website. These areas are within the administrative structure that only Jason has access to. **MW** offered to investigate and asked that we let him know of where we encounter difficulties. Johana suggested her coder boyfriend may be able to help. Once **MW** has reported back **JC** will contact Johana to take this further if necessary.

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

# None.

1. **Treasurer’s Report**. The report was circulated before the meeting.

**Technical issues meant EB-G** could not join the meeting. **SW** will contact **EB-G** with a few queries about the accounts which need a few minor changes. It was noted the budget includes an assumption that two annual reports will be published next year.

1. **Membership Secretary’s Report.** The report was circulated before the meeting.

**IO** reported that there are 64 members who have not yet renewed and feels our membership is declining. **IO** has passed our programme of events to 12 external organisations which has resulted in interest from some individuals.

**IO** will circulate the list of groups contacted to the committee.

1. **Programme Report**
   1. **Indoor Programme: SW** thanked Sue for this season’s varied and interesting programme. **SC** will organise the 2024/2025 season of lectures and will then retire.

**SW will be absent from some meetings so cover must be organised. EC** may be able to do the Zoom setup tasks as well as hosting the meeting.

**SW** will check that **SC** has asked speakers if their lectures can be recorded and if so whether the recording can be made public. **SW** asked again for a volunteer to edit the backlog of recordings – there was no response, so SW will contact Sue Truby again to see if she is still willing.

Sean Murphy will attend a couple of our meeting for a 5–10 minute slot before the main lecture. **NB will inform Sean what we want him to cover.** If reminded **IO** will add this to the communication sent to members and external groups.

**CF** will create flyers in advance of all meetings.

**IO** raised his concern that the lecture hall is very expensive and suggested a couple of other venues. **NB** responded that Earley St Peter’s Hall and Palmer Park were trialled in the past and found to be unsuitable (because of availability, accessibility and parking). **RG** pointed out that our hybrid lectures require suitable tech which any alternative venue must provide. **IO** suggested we request a smaller and cheaper university room but it was felt Venue Reading would not drop the price. We have investigated alternative rooms at the University with no success. **NB** suggested we become part of a university department’s activities and book a room without using Venue Reading. **CF** informed us that the university is keen to engage with the community on green issues and **AT** suggested we use this point to re-negotiate. **CF** will draft a letter.

**DR** suggested we alternate lectures in a hall with fully online events to halve our costs.

* 1. **Outdoor Programme:**

**RG** read his report and **JC will circulate it with the minutes**. Our new programme includes minibus trips and **RG** has had two enquiries from BNHS members who are willing to take any vacant places. **IO** asked if including the ‘Birding for Beginners’ trips in our programme makes them less visible. **SW** said that they were less visible last season, when they were only available on the website as a separate programme.

1. **Conservation-Sub-Committee Report:** The report was circulated before the meeting.

**NB** informed us that work on the Jubilee River site is on hold because of lack of resource.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy will be a framework in which local nature policy is placed. The LNRS strategy must be in place by the end of 2024. **NB** would like to get our representations to the process of formulating it in by the end of the year. The representative **NB** will ask to attend a committee meeting is in relation to the LNP (Local Nature Partnership) is Matthew Stanton of BBOWT, who is leading the revival of the Berks LNP.

There is currently no suitable project to finance in memory of Dot Lincoln. **NB will let us know when something becomes available.**

**NB, SW, DR and Sean Murphy had met to discuss working together to encourage more people to get involved in survey work.** This led to several actions, all except one of which will be covered during the meeting with the BTO youth reps. The other action was to ask Sean to speak at some of our indoor meetings(see item 8a).

1. **Publicity Report:**

Our Instagram report is active again.

**CF** is unsure which traditional media we should be using as it is felt local newspapers are no longer worthwhile and digital versions difficult to read. **AT** suggested we use Berkshire Live’s ‘What’s on’ service. **IO will investigate.**

**CF** requested help with publicity **and will provide SW with suitable text to add to the AGM report.**

The publicity leaflet needs to be edited before it can be printed. **CF will contact the person who produced it and ask for it to be passed to us so we can make changes.**

1. **Strategy and Planning**

**Strategy statement: SW** will request suggestions for actions from the committee.

**SW will review our welcome pack.**

**SC** is welcoming new members when they join the Facebook group.

**SC** will publish reports of outdoor events on FB if leaders send her content.

**SW** and **AM** attended a meeting about Bird Clubs. **SW will document the ideas taken from this and include them in the plan to implement the strategy statement where applicable.**

**Contingency Planning: RG will show IO and SW how to use Google Drive.** There are some access issues to be resolved before access to Google Drive can be passed to committee members.

**IO will send a distribution list to JCC** who will send emails to members in Iain’s absence. Ted Rogers will be thanked for doing this for the past few years.

# Editorial Board Report - The report was circulated before the meeting.

**Report Archives: JCC will distribute the latest archive and stock list.** One member’s old reports are still to be retrieved from his loft and hopefully will fill a few gaps.

**Peter Stanley’s bird records:** Peter’s widow will be asked if Chris Heard can access her loft to retrieve Peter’s extensive records. **NB** believes these records are held on cards and it is hoped one of our members will volunteer to transfer them to Excel.

**Berkshire Birdscapes:** **CF** will draft communication to be sent to Parish Councillors.

**Robert Gillmor’s art: SW** has not had time to contact an auction house regarding the sale of the last six original artworks. She asked for a someone else to take this task but there were no volunteers.

(Post meeting update: **JCC will do this)**

# Arrangements for AGM on November 15th

**SW** will be absent so **DR** will present the report from the Chair and Officers, as well as chairing the AGM.

**SW will produce the presentation, JCC will produce a crib-sheet for DR.**

**AT was asked to provide the birding highlights and he will send suitable photos and text to SW to include in the presentation.** **DR** will present these slides at the AGM.

# AOB

* **RG** asked that we add the Thames Valley Recorders conference to our calendar to ensure we attend in future. There are events in Spring and Autumn.
* Our attendance at the Berkshire Show will be discussed at a later meeting.

**DR** thanked **AT** for his contributions during his term on the committee which ends at the AGM.

# Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on **Tuesday January 9th 2024, at 7.30pm**, to be held online via Zoom.

# Jane Campbell, 29th October 2023