



## Berkshire Ornithological Club

### Minutes of Committee Meeting

held on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2013  
at Park House, University of Reading

**Present:** Neil Bucknell (president & acting chair), Mike Turton (Secretary), Bill Nicoll (Treasurer) Ray Reedman (RRe), Tim Ball, Becky Thomas, Iain Oldcorn, John Walker, Renton Righelato (RRi).

1. Apologies for absence: Carole White, Martin Sell
2. **Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2013**

The minutes were approved and signed.

3. **Matters Arising**

**Item 3(14 - data projector):** Purchase is in progress. Purchase of spare bulb (£100) approved *nem com*.

**Action:** RRe to check colour fidelity of proposed model.

4. **Treasurer's Report**

Accounts and budget circulated prior to meeting.

BN asked for plenty of notice when major expenditure is planned. He wishes to minimise the number of withdrawals from the Santander high interest account to avoid losing interest.

#### Accounts

Accounts sent to examiners last week. BN highlighted £48 discrepancy in the accounts. Action on this is to be discussed with examiners.

Accounts for 2012/13 were discussed and approved *nem com*.

**Action:** MT to provide updates to the narrative section of the Trustees report to BN to be forwarded to the examiners.

#### Budget

Additional costs budgeted for mailing to allow for distribution of the annual reports to be published in 2013/14.

Club currently has only a 2% operating margin. This would disappear if 6 members left. However reserves are in good order, but only hold sufficient funds to publish all outstanding reports.

The budget deficit shown for 2013/14 is due to the publication of annual reports.

Budget discussed and approved *nem com*.

#### Membership Secretary's Report

Report circulated prior to meeting. Correction: 133 in para 2 should be 144.

IO concerned that many members who pay by cheque have not paid yet this year.

There has been a steady trickle of members over the past few months.

Options for changing membership structure, subscription levels and discounts discussed, including possible removal of standing order discount and change in level of retired member discount. Committee needs to discuss and make decisions before July 2014.

Changes to subscription rates and standing order discount do not require change to constitution; any changes to membership structure will do.

Warning that, as subscriptions were only raised 3 years ago and that the previous increase was 7 years before that, members might think it too soon to be raising them again. Any such changes will not raise much additional revenue and could result in loss of members and therefore revenue.

Options for increasing membership and revenue discussed:

- More effort to be put into publicity and fundraising
- Encourage members to bring friends to meetings
- Another celebrity lecture
- Merchandise
- Seeking sponsorship of future bird reports
- Ask other local groups to publicise our meetings if we publicise theirs.

**Action:** RRe to investigate asking head of RSPB to come and talk on Nature's Voice.

**Action:** TB to pass Berks Wildlife website address to MT

**Action:** MT to contact E Berks and Wokingham RSPB groups

**Action:** MT to include discussions on subs/membership structure and publicity/fundraising in agendas for committee meetings during 2013/14 season

## 5. **Editorial Board Report**

The 2009 & 2010 Reports should be published in January/February 2014. Awaiting Berks Records Committee report and amendments. Thanks expressed to JW for editing the reports. RRi would still like some photos for inclusion in the report.

RRi discussing production of future reports with key individuals and NDOC. The former Editorial Board to meet and produce a proposal for discussion by the BOC Committee.

**Action:** MT to include discussion in agenda for January committee meeting.

## 6. **Programme Sub-committee report**

Report circulated prior to the meeting.

Attendance of both BOC membership and the public at the museum talk was disappointing. The timing and type of event were discussed. Both RRe and the museum felt that the event was worth doing and should be repeated, but possibly in a different format. Thanks were expressed to Angela Houghton and the museum. The speaker enjoyed the event and has thanked both BOC and the museum for inviting her.

RRe noted that he will need a replacement to lead a couple of mid-week walks in place of Martin Sell.

## 7. **Conservation**

The Folly (Inkpen): Breeding season survey done & recommendations discussed with owner. Several Firecrest territories found, possibly also Redpoll. Owner keen to work on proposals and wants to put up nestboxes.

Pingewood GPs: Now almost completely filled in. Ken Moore discussing plans to return the site to pasture with managers, who are very helpful. Hoping to achieve tussocky marshy pasture pockets, together with a larger area of marsh. Ongoing habitat management is a possible TABCG/BOC joint project.

Bucklebury: request for advice on management for birds received from owner via TVERC. Survey to be carried out next year.

Conservation Fund: grant request received from Pang Valley for nest box material. No grants made in the last 12 months; the Fund has not been publicised due to pressure of Atlas work.

The Conservation Sub-committee will be discussing possible future BOC-led projects.

BOC have not been charging for conservation advice and guidance as the initiative generally comes from the Club.

8. **AGM**

MT updated the meeting on possible candidates for election to committee.

NB to give brief plug at the AGM for the new book by Robert Gillmor showing the covers for the Birds of Berkshire reports. 50% of royalties will be coming to the Club.

9. **Award for Chris Robinson**

A possible award to Chris Robinson to recognise his contribution to birding in Berkshire was discussed. It was agreed that this should be in line with previous awards given to other people. Proposal that Chris should be presented with a copy of Robert Gillmor's book of the covers of the Birds of Berkshire, inscribed by Robert with a suitable message was agreed *nem com*. This could be presented at the Atlas launch if Chris is attending.

**Action:** RRI to contact Robert asking him to write a suitable inscription.

10. **Social Media Update**

BT reported that the BOC Facebook group was now live and had 24 members. She has also been promoting the BOC on Twitter. All material is welcome – reports on BOC events (particularly trips) and photos particularly welcome.

**Action:** MT to ask Mike Taylor to put a link to the Facebook group on the BOC website.

**Action:** BT to provide further update at the next meeting

11. **Publicity Leaflets**

New publicity leaflets and inserts available. MT has organised distribution – committee members to collect leaflets at the end of the meeting.

12. **Reports for consideration:**

Atlas Group update

Copy should be going to the printers at the end of October. Launch at Reading Museum set for 3<sup>rd</sup> December. All species are now sponsored, which has raised £9,000. Thanks go to Brian Clews for his work on the sponsorship.

Project costs are now all covered and there is currently a surplus of £8,000.

National marketing is in progress with flyers in birdwatching magazines. Copies of the Atlas will be available to BOC members at a reduced rate of £30.

Work on the website needs to be completed prior to the launch.

There are still a few copies of the original avifauna available.

13. **Any Other Business**

NB is not available to chair the indoor meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> November. RRe agreed to chair it in his place.

TB reminded members that there is a ringing demo at Padworth on 3<sup>rd</sup> November (weather permitting).

IO willing to help with publicity (until a new publicity person/team is in place) by sending details of events to the local press.

14. **Date and venue for next meeting.**

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January at 7.30pm, Park House, University of Reading.