



Berkshire Ornithological Club

Minutes of Committee Meeting

held on Thursday 12th January 2017
at Park United Reformed Church, Reading

Present: Neil Bucknell (President and Acting Chairman), Eleanor Pitts (Treasurer), Sue Charnley, Adrian Lawson, John Swallow, Jake Bishop, Ray Reedman (RRe), Renton Righelato (RRi).

1. **Apologies for absence:** Sally Wearing, Becky Thomas, Andy Horscroft, Ted Rogers, Iain Oldcorn.

2. **Minutes of the Committee meetings held on 7th July and 13th October 2016**

The minutes of 7th July 2016 were signed. They had been approved by email after the committee meeting on 13th October, which was inquorate.

The minutes of 13th October 2016 were approved and signed with no amendments.

3. **Matters Arising**

Item 3 (Retirement of Jeremy Davy, WBC Biodiversity Officer): Richard Stansfield had not contacted WBC, but matters had moved on so RRi had not written. WBC will not recruit to fill the vacancy created by retirement of Jeremy Davy.

Item 14: (Retaining information about past events on the website): RRi said that information is retained in the Archives and is therefore available on the website.

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

As the last committee meeting on 13th October was inquorate, three issues were decided by email after the meeting. They were all agreed unanimously and recorded in the minutes of that meeting:

- to approve the minutes of 7th July 2016 without amendment
- to close the CAF Conservation Fund Account
- to accept the draft budget for 2016-17.

5. **Treasurer's Report**

It was agreed to wait until we have a formal Chairman before changing bank mandates.

Increasing income was discussed by increasing the number of members. This will need a recruitment drive. NB asked if SC could give a brochure to all non-members who attend indoor meetings.

Action: SC to give a BOC brochure to all non-members who attend indoor meetings.

RRe suggested that as we have two BTO speakers in the pipeline, the BTO might publicise their talks.

Action: RRe to contact Ken and Sarah White about the BTO publicising talks.

NB wondered if Roger Riddington might nominate BOC as the bird group of the month.

Action: NB to contact Roger Riddington.

JB said that the University is teaching a Bird Module again.

Action: JB to email students informing them about the BOC.

6. Membership Secretary's Report

The report was circulated prior to this meeting and discussed.

Honorary life membership: There was unanimous agreement that G E Wilson should be given Honorary Life Membership of the BOC and T E Guyatt should be given Honorary Life Membership when he also reaches 50 years of membership.

Action: NB to write to GE Wilson and TE Guyatt about Honorary Life Membership.

Publicity Sub-committee

This has not been set up. It was decided to postpone this topic until the next meeting.

Action: SW to include Publicity in the agenda for the next meeting.

7. Programme Sub-committee report

The report was circulated prior to this meeting and discussed.

Venue for indoor meetings: RRe had researched St Joseph's College as an alternative venue for BOC meetings. NB suggested leaving this discussion till the next committee meeting as the weather was treacherous, but RRe explained that it will be necessary to make a decision soon so that bookings can be made. NB suggested booking the university for next year and looking at alternatives after that. He felt that we should only consider venues with space for at least 80 participants, and that the university is an excellent venue and enhances the image of BOC. There was discussion that average attendances have been around 40, however yesterday's star speaker encouraged an attendance of 65. RRe said that parking at the Park United Reformed Church was going to be compromised when extension work took place at Palmer Park Stadium.

RRe will inform the University that we are considering alternative venues and see what options they might be able to offer following the refurbishment of other buildings. NB requested that RR should also ask the University to clarify when they intend to upgrade the equipment in Room 109.

Action: RRe to inform the University about alternative accommodation and the equipment in Room 109.

It was agreed that we should stay at the University for 2017-18 and then explore alternatives after that.

Action: RRe to book University of Reading for indoor meetings in 2017-2018.

JS asked if the geographical distribution of membership was known and how this correlates with the geographical distribution of members who attend the indoor meetings. RRe said that he had undertaken this research.

RRe asked for suggestions for speakers. He has already contacted Andy Swash to speak about humming birds.

Action: All to give any suggestions for speakers for 2017-18 to RRe.

8. Conservation Sub-committee report

The minutes from the meeting on 14th November here circulated before the meeting and discussed.

Padworth Lane GP: RRi anticipates a Letter of Intent by March 2017. JS asked about length of lease. RRi responded that the lease would be for 25 years. The BOC would need a rolling renewal. EP asked about when BOC should set up a separate charity to administer the nature reserve. RRi said it will probably be 2.5 to 3 years before BOC would need to take the lead in setting up a management trust which would take on the responsibility for the project. There will be repercussions for the BOC's insurance. Nosterfield in Yorkshire has been through this process recently and could be contacted for advice about establishing the management trust, including insurance.

Burghfield Park development: Cathy McEwan was filmed for television today about the nightingales on this site. There is a suggestion that WBC might reject this development without going to committee. On the other hand, there has been an article in the Reading Chronicle stating that the Sailing Club has 'almost' secured a new home.

Farm Surveys: requests for more surveyors have yielded no response. More farms have asked for surveys, including some in the West. EP asked if students might be involved. RRe suggested funds from the Conservation Fund might be used to pay for students to undertake BTO training courses. RRi said it is essential that people who undertake surveys are capable and can recognise bird calls; training students is different.

9. Editorial Board Report

RRi gave a verbal report on the current status of the annual reports. The 2013 report is now complete and is being distributed.

Work is now ongoing in parallel on the 2014 and 2015 reports. Derek Barker has volunteered to do 2014 by himself. Richard Burness will take on the systemic list for 2015. It is planned to publish the two years together. Under the direction of Richard Burness, the BRC is starting the 2014 work before the 2014 report has been prepared.

10. Recording and Reporting Working Group

The draft notes from the first meeting of the group, held on 5th December, were circulated before the meeting and discussed.

The aim was to get the information online, which may remove the need to have a written annual report. Marek Walford has already produced a basic format for this. The biggest issues are site definition and reducing the number of sites to clearly searchable areas. RRi said that there should be a decent online database by the end of the year and that this will allow consideration of what it might be useful to publish in the future e.g. more analytical or discursive reports.

11. County Recorder

This was retained from the minutes of the meeting of 13th October as it relates to the next committee meeting.

Action: RRi to invite CR to BOC Committee meeting in March to report progress.

12. Other Events

None.

13. Reports for consideration

Social Media Update: no report was available as BT was unable to attend the meeting.

Websites and social media were discussed. JS suggested that websites are good for bringing in new members and Facebook good for facilitating exchanges between existing members. AL asked if there was a link to the BOC website on the BOC Facebook page. NB wondered if having a Twitter feed and links to Facebook might make the BOC website more appealing to younger people.

Action: RRi to investigate links between BOC's Facebook page and website, and including Twitter feed on the website.

JB offered to help with social media. This offer was accepted with alacrity.

14. Any Other Business

RRi has tentatively discussed with Mike Turton the possibility of Mike becoming Acting Chair of the club. He is interested, and it was agreed to ask him formally.

Action: NB to ask Mike Turton formally about taking on the role of Chairman.

RRe suggested that Robin Dryden is co-opted back on to the committee and asked to take on RRe's role.

EP asked if the committee were interested in completing a survey on how people select their optical equipment. The survey had been sent to a number of committee members.

Action: EP to send JB the link.

Action: JB to put the link on the BOC's Facebook page.

EP asked on behalf of IO what was happening with the University Bird Group now and who is linking with this group. RRi gave a talk to students recently and two approached him to say that they were resurrecting the group. NB said that it is important to build a link with students and encourage their interest. JB informed the meeting that students have an assessment towards the end of the Spring term on bird identification and might be interested in sessions that supported this learning. RR volunteered to run sessions for them.

Action: JB to liaise with RRe to provide bird identification sessions to University students if required.

EP asked on behalf of IO if any steps have been taken to let members know that if they have problems with transport to events or meetings they can ask for help with transport. It was agreed that leaders of walks will be encouraged to check out transport details with possible attendees and that people should be encouraged to offer to share transport and offer lifts.

Action: RRe to ask people leading walks to check transport details with people going on walks and to encourage sharing transport.

15. Dates and venue for next meetings

JB was eligible to book the usual room Park House.

The dates for the next two meetings are:

Thursday 30th March at 8pm, Park House.

Thursday 6th July at 8 pm, Park House.

Eleanor Pitts and Sally Wearing
20th January 2017