



Berkshire Ornithological Club



2020-21 Chairman's Report for AGM

1. Membership

Iain Oldcorn reports there were 281 members on 30th September this year. We typically lose some members at the start of the season through memberships not being renewed and then we hope to gain new members during the year. 10% of Members have not yet paid for the 2021/22 season. Last year we recruited some from East Berks RSPB Group which had disbanded, but we ask for your help with recruitment – take opportunities to mention the BOC and even invite them as guests to indoor or online meetings. Additionally, if you receive mailings from the club by post and you are on email, please consider providing Iain with your email address – it will save on administrative costs and makes communication easier. A letter has been sent out recently explaining the situation with QMR permits. This is a temporary situation, largely taken out of our hands by the Datchet Water Sailing Club in response to Covid, and we will keep it under review.

2. Programme – Meetings and Field Trips

The 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 our 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 both at the University and online. There has been a varied selection of talks and once again, we had a successful joint Reading University and BOC organised meeting with Campbell Murn talking about the plight of vultures. Thanks are due to Sue Charnley for organising this programme.

The Outdoor Programme

Outdoor meetings started again last summer and we have a full programme this year. Ray Reedman has stepped down as Outdoor Programme Secretary after many years in this role for which the club is most grateful for his dedication. We are looking for a replacement - the main requirement for this role is to plan the programme, not so much to lead any of the outings, as we have a team of leaders, though we could do with a few more.

3. Publicity

Chris Foster reports that the Club has 482 Twitter followers (@BerksBirdClub); 307 Facebook followers (Berkshire Ornithological Club); and 168 Instagram followers (berksbirdclub). Social media has brought the activities of the club to a wider audience. Chris has been helped on Instagram by Amanda Garratt but with many demands on his time, he would welcome more help.

4. Editorial Board

The Scientific Editor is Robert Godden, and the Managing Editor is Sally Wearing. Work is in progress on three annual reports:

2017 correcting publisher's first draft

2018 currently being proof-read

2019 first draft complete

2020 due to start Jan 2022

5. Conservation

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. The Club continued its involvement with Aldermaston and Padworth Lane GPs and discussions over Lower Farm GPs continue.

6. Thanks, and Closing Remarks

This season has been particularly challenging thanks to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, but I think the club has remained active and has offered the membership an interesting programme nevertheless. This was possible thanks to the expertise and hard work of all the club's committee members over this year, for which I am very grateful.

Rob Godden, Chairman

November 2021