



# Berkshire Ornithological Club

## Minutes of Committee Meeting

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024

via Zoom

**Present:** Sally Wearing (SW, Chair), Robert Godden (RG), Jane Campbell (JC, Secretary), Iain Oldcorn (IO), Marek Walford (MW), Elaine Charlson (EC), Neil Bucknell (NB), Sue Charnley (SC), Peter Driver (PD), Edwin Bruce-Gardiner (EB-G, Treasurer), Robin Dryden (RD) and Bob Lyle (BL)

Sally thanked Robin and Peter for joining the committee and welcomed them to their first meeting.

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Debby Reynolds (DR, President), Anna Mortimer (AM)

2. **Matthew Stanton of BBOWT**

Matthew explained what a Local Nature Partnership (LNP) is and gave a brief account of how they, and the Berkshire LNP came into being. With no central government funding, support is needed from local counties and this often falls to volunteers. Therefore, the Berkshire LNP has had no funding and a limited capacity for action. More recently, Matthew has led the revival of the Berks LNP and maps of areas of interest are being prepared and will be available within a couple of months. Matthew will send **NB** a timeline of actions to be shared with the BOC and he will also prepare a short article to be included in our next newsletter which will suggest how our members can become involved. **NB** will liaise with Matthew about the content.

3. **Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

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

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

**Website:** **MW** has investigated some issues and has a solution to allow Mike to edit some of the areas we have no access to. He also explained how to produce archived galleries for the photo competition.

**IO** reported that the online membership form does not collect the same information as the paper form. **MW** will investigate.

**Colin Wilson's** offer to re-write our website will be circulated for a future discussion (**JC**).

**RG** remembers that in the past the website was divided into sections with individual members of the committee responsible for certain sections. This will be re-instated by **JC** creating a site map and assigning sections to committee members. Each person will then need to ensure their area is up to date before each committee meeting.

**Attendance at the Berkshire Show**

After discussion it was agreed the BOC will not attend. Attendance at the Earley Green Fair will be investigated by **EC**.

5. **Formal record of items agreed by email or actioned since the last meeting.**

**Donated optical equipment** has been given to the Berks Young Birders (scope and tripod) and sent to the BTO (tripod).

**Sean Murphy** spoke on BTO surveys at our last indoor meeting.

**6. Treasurer's Report.** The report was circulated before the meeting.

**EB-G** will draft communication to cover membership changes which will be distributed when we next increase our subscriptions. This will include:

- To ask if those claiming the retired member discount (this is no longer available for new members) would be prepared to give it up.

In addition, it was agreed that **EB-G** will soon email all members currently not registered for Gift Aid asking them if they would change their mind if their circumstances allowed. **EB-G** will liaise with **IO** on the wording for this.

**EB-G** will also investigate the use of direct debits as a payment method. He will make a recommendation for the next meeting.

**7. Membership Secretary's Report.** The report was circulated before the meeting.

**QMR Access.** The committee felt the new guidelines to obtain a key to access QMR are worded too strongly. It was agreed access should be solely based on being a club member, the observance of the current rules and perhaps the payment of the £5 cost per key.

It became apparent that we do not know how many keys exist and how many can be made available. **IO** will check this with Peter Newbound, then **SW** will ask him to revise the procedure for obtaining a key.

**IO** will issue new permits to current holders.

An individual issue was discussed and it was agreed to issue a permit and that **SW** would respond directly to Chris Heard and Peter.

**8. Publicity**

IN **CF's** absence the following outstanding actions will be left until the next meeting

- a. Provision of flyers in advance of meetings
- b. Letter to Reading Uni suggesting room hire costs should be waived/decreased for some meetings (Uni's green agenda within the community)
- c. Edits to the Publicity leaflet

**PD** offered to help with our social media accounts and agreed to produce advertising flyers before each meeting. **PD** will contact **CF** to discuss further.

A recent new member indicated they could help with running the Club and **SW** will follow this up.

**9. Strategy and Planning –** a report was circulated before the meeting

- a. **DR** will arrange a meeting with the Berkshire Youth reps.
- b. The Welcome Pack review will be done once we understand what our full offering to members is.
- c. **SW** thanked those who had sent their input to her request for ideas on how to implement our 5-year plan. Others were asked to respond by the end of January.

**10. Programme Report –** reports were circulated before the meeting

- a. **Indoor Programme:** **SC** asked for ideas to fill the next season's indoor programme. **NB** will contact Jane Reid as she may be a suitable speaker for our joint BOC/Uni lecture. **NB** will then pass her contact details to **SC**.

**SC** will retire after she has organised the 2024/2025 programme.

- b. **Outdoor Programme:**

Although not solely his responsibility, **RG** has done most of the organisation of

this season's outdoor programme. The club needs to find someone to take this role in future.

**BL's** latest walks are not on our website. **BL** will pass details to **SW** and **RG**.

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

**NB** had an encouraging response to his suggestion of Coot and Great Crested Grebe surveys.

**BL** informed us that Newbury Racecourse recently completed on the sale of Lower Farm which they intend to use as a buffer between the public and the racecourse. **BL** believes that they will allow NDOC to continue their activities as before.

The fund in memory of Dot Lincoln has increased. **JC** and Fraser Cottington will discuss if a suitable project can be completed for LWT. It would be preferable if a plaque remembering Dot can be included.

**NB** advised that there's not been any progress on looking for a mechanism and resources to improve maintenance of Dorney Wetland on the Jubilee River.

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

**Digitising Peter Standley's bird records:** **RG** suggested we should incorporate these records in our database but recognised the transcription task would be huge. It was agreed to wait until Chris Heard has the records and then decide what can be done. It may be worth investigating how a similar project was completed in Hampshire. **EC** is aware of a suitable tool.

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

**Robert Gillmor's Art:** **PD** has taken responsibility for the sale of the six watercolours. **PD** will have them mounted and they will be auctioned by Dominic Winter at a natural history themed sale on March 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. **PD** has contacted two known enthusiasts to inform them this is happening.

Members must be informed of the sale and **PD** will provide **IO** with details to circulate. **SW** will also add this to the website as a news item.

**Archived reports:** It was agreed to make a £50 donation to BVCT to recognise the donation of many old reports from Molly Tucker. **JC** will contact Colin Wilson.

#### **13. Records Committee**

- a. Adrian Hickman has resigned his position. The proposal to replace him with Nigel Rampton was agreed by the BOC committee and **MW** will now seek agreement from NDOC.
- b. **NB** will attend the Spring recorders' conference on March 16<sup>th</sup> and will investigate whether the Club should have a stand at the conference.

#### **14. Recognition of Peter Standley's contribution to birding in Berkshire**

It was agreed **NB** will produce an obituary to include in the 2020 annual report. It was suggested that Andy Swash and Chris Heard may be able to provide information.

#### **15. AOB**

- a. **IO** asked if **CF** has produced a letter to request reduced hall costs at Reading University.
- b. **EB-G** asked we keep contingency planning via the Google drive on the agenda.

#### **16. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on **Thursday April 4<sup>th</sup> 2024, at 7.30pm**, to be held online via Zoom.  
**Jane Campbell, 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024**