



# Berkshire Ornithological Club

## Minutes of Committee Meeting

held on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023

via Zoom

**Present:** Sally Wearing, Chair (SW, Chair), Debby Reynolds (DR, President), Robert Godden (RG), Edwin Bruce-Gardner (EB-G, Treasurer), Jane Campbell (JCC, Secretary), Iain Oldcorn (IO), Andy Tomczynski (AT), Sue Charnley (SC) Neil Bucknell (NB) Bob Lyle (BL), Elaine Charlson (EC) and Chris Foster (CF)

**1. Apologies for absence:** Marek Walford (MW) and Anna Mortimer (AM)

**2. Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

The date of the previous meeting will be corrected. The minutes were approved and will be **signed by SW**.

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

No further action will be taken to source a farm to hold a feeding station and information board.

**Suspended Actions:**

**JC will contact Maiden Erlegh School** to ask if they would like the donated telescope and tripod.

**CF will investigate advertising our events at Reading University.** He suggested placing flyers in suitable places would be better than posters. **CF will also investigate if the university bird club is still active.** This action is important as our talk with the university is soon. It was suggested we communicate with Silwood park and **RG will follow this up.**

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

None.

**5. First Thoughts from Incoming President**

SW welcomed DR to her second committee meeting and her first as President.

DR paid tribute to Renton with whom she had in depth discussions before accepting the role. DR's vision for her presidency is to advocate for local ornithology and to follow on from Renton's legacy, she suggested we all have a duty to honour and continue Renton's work.

She presented these challenge questions for discussion:

- What is the point of a President?
- What can she offer and what does the committee want from her?
- How can we develop these themes?

To enable DR to better know the committee and to discuss these questions, she invited us to her home in Upper Bucklebury for a social occasion where we can discuss what she can offer in her role and what we want from her. The invitation was gratefully accepted and **DR will forward possible dates**. This is now agreed to be Saturday March 18<sup>th</sup>.

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

EB-G informed the committee that there was nothing of note that was not included in his written report. He noted we have yet to pay some university hall fees and that IO is chasing outstanding memberships. NB expects further consultancy fees at Padworth to be approx. £1200-£1500, this was agreed in principle by the committee and **NB will contact three executive officers when the funds are required**.

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

IO reported we have 270 members with around 30 subscriptions outstanding. It is expected not all will pay so a reduction in membership to fewer than 250 is likely. CF suggested fewer people want to join groups than in the past, DR agreed and mentioned the BTO pinpointed the need for younger members and appointed a youth advisory group with much success. **SW suggested we discuss this at the social get-together and pick it up in the next committee meeting**.

IO had asked if the Club is required to retain historical data concerning QMR permits.

IO and EC have discussed advertising our events to other local groups and are unsure they have correct contact details and that their messages are passed on.

IO has a workaround for the BT Internet email problem he mentioned in his report, he may consider changing his membership email provider from MS.

**8. Publicity and Advertising.** No report was received. It was agreed that this item will be included in the Strategy Group's report in future.

**9. Programme Report**

**Indoor Programme:** The report was circulated before the meeting.

SC is booking speakers for next season and asked for suggestions from the committee. Renton's input is missed, and she particularly asked for help with the next joint BOC/University lecture.

SC is disappointed and embarrassed by the low turnout at the university.

SC wishes to retire after the 2023/2024 season but offered to continue if no replacement is found. SW thanked SC for the excellent lecture programmes she has organised and noted we need replacement Indoor and Outdoor programme secretaries.

After some discussion it was agreed our season will start later in mid-October as many people are away at the start of the month.

The sound quality issues experienced at the talk on 18<sup>th</sup> Jan resulted in the on-line audience dropping away. SW suggested perhaps it was her laptop, it was also suggested we purchase a plug-in microphone or that we connect the hall's sound system to the laptop. **CF agreed to do some trials in the space and report back.**

The photo competition should be advertised. **JC will send text to IO to inform our members** of this. Brian Winter has the trophy; **RG will obtain it from him.**

**Outdoor Programme:** The report was circulated before the meeting. RG suggested holding three visits to QMR next season. CF mentioned midweek events tend to be local and weekend events further afield and for some who work, attending local weekend events may be preferable. **RG agreed to mix-up the walks with some local trips scheduled at weekends.**

**10. Conservation-Sub-Committee Report:** The report was circulated before the meeting. Neil had nothing to add to his report.

**11. Strategy Group:** The report and other documents were circulated before the meeting.

**Meeting Start Time:** It was agreed to start indoor events at 7.30 for the next season. **SC will inform speakers already booked.**

**Publicity leaflet:** A few revisions are being made. It was agreed to retain cheques as a method of payment and to ensure our web pages and forms are consistent with payment methods shown. **SW will complete the revisions then circulate the leaflet.**

BL suggested a monthly walk around sites in Reading may attract local birders and it was noted this would require a leader. How our meetings are advertised to local groups and organisations was discussed and it was noted **that IO needs to update his list of contacts. AT will give SW a contact for the Reading RSPB group.**

Changing our name to the less formal 'Berkshire Birders' was discussed and to avoid difficult administrative changes (to the bank account etc) DR suggested the name is changed in some visible places only.

**SW will arrange another sub-group meeting** to discuss various points raised.

**BTO Survey:** SW thanked those who had sent her their views, which she will collate then complete the survey.

**12. Editorial Board Report:** A report was circulated prior to the meeting

The 2018 report is now with **JC who will distribute it with input from RG and SW.**

The 2019 report is now the focus and Ken Moore has agreed to provide the birding highlights.

DR asked if there will be an event to launch Berkshire Birdscapes. RG suggested BirdGuides are asked to review it. Other suggestions included local newspapers, Calluna Books, the BTO magazine and Waterstones.

**Robert Gillmor's Original Art:** Four originals are with SW and two may be at Renton's. **JC will contact Renton's son Jason** to ask how we can check this. It was agreed to

sell or auction these works to raise funds for the club. Various suggestions were made to help establish their value including contacting Cley galleries, Peter Driver (a local artist) and the Society of Wildlife Artists. **SW and JC will action this.**

**Club Archives:** The committee was asked to inform JC of the publications they hold; this is required to update the asset list. **SW is searching for the BOC's archive** of bird reports.

### **13. AOB**

- a. IO expressed concern that we have no-one with the knowledge required to update parts of our website. SW and JC have discussed this, and **JC will ask advice from Jason Righelato.**

### **14. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on **Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2023 at 7.30pm**, to be held online via Zoom.

**NOTE THE EARLIER START TIME!**

**Jane Campbell, 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023**