



Berkshire Ornithological Club

Minutes of Committee Meeting

Thursday 3rd July 2025

via Zoom

Present: Debby Reynolds (DR, President), Sally Wearing (SW, Chair), Jane Campbell (JC, Secretary), Edwin Bruce-Gardner (EB-G, Treasurer), Iain Oldcorn (IO), Elaine Charlson (EC), Neil Bucknell (NB), Robin Dryden (RD), Robert Godden (RG) and Sue Charnley (SC)

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Marek Walford (MW), Peter Driver (PD), and Ken Moore (KM)
2. **Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 3rd April 2025:** The minutes were approved and will be signed by **SW**.
3. **Matters Arising and Review of Actions not covered elsewhere**
 1. **SW** will inform **JCC** of the reports she has so the publications register can be updated.
 2. **SW** thanked **DR** for the recent social event held with NDOC at her house. It was agreed an annual social event will be organised.
4. **Formal record of items agreed by email or actioned since the last meeting:** none
5. **Treasurer's Report.** The report was circulated before the meeting.

EB-G mentioned issues accessing CAF bank since their problematic technical upgrade. This is hoped to be resolved soon and has not created any problems for us as we have had no outstanding payments to make.

 1. **Annual Review of Reserves Policy:** it was agreed no changes will be made for next season.
6. **Membership Secretary's Report.** The report was circulated before the meeting.

IO noted he needs contributions for the next newsletter by the end of July. **RD** offered to send a Hungary trip report, **JCC** mentioned she would provide a short piece about committee nominations, **RG** will send the Somerset trip report and **EC** an article on a new nature reserve. **MW's** Nightjar photos will also be included.

The group agreed to include information about committee vacancies in both the annual mailing and the newsletter.

QMR SW reported on QMR access reports, noting Peter recommends annual rather than 6-monthly reports due to seasonal visit patterns, and shared that 6 people visited over 12 times last year. Peter has requested five additional keys.
7. **Programme Report.** The reports were circulated before the meeting.

Indoor Programme

SC has almost completed the programme for the 2025/2026 season, one evening is still to be filled.

SC provided an update on the indoor program, mentioning she needs to check room availability and is working on getting talk details onto the website. The group discussed adding an event alert system to their website, similar to what **DR's** Horticultural Society uses. **IO** offered to implement a monthly email-based alert system to be sent to all paid up members about forthcoming events rather than a website based mechanism. This would be in addition to the current notification/reminder that is currently sent out about each indoor event, when they are imminent.

JCC will circulate an example of a monthly 'What's On' email used by a local RSPB group as an example for us to consider with **IO** suggesting he may be able to implement this for September.

Outdoor Programme

The group discussed accommodation arrangements for an upcoming trip to Norfolk, with **RG** reporting he had secured a self-catering house for three nights and a hotel for two nights in Hunstanton. Pricing and advertising details need to be established.

DR offered to lead next season's walk on the downs as Andy Tomcynski is standing down. **DR** will contact **PD**.

8. Publicity and Advertising: The report was circulated before the meeting

There has been a lot of progress in many areas.

Options for a new members' event were discussed, with **SW** proposing to make it an annual event following its successful debut. This will be included in the Welcome Pack.

The public event, planned to be held at Dinton was cancelled due to logistical issues and alternative venues were suggested. **JCC** offered to speak with Simon, the countryside ranger, about potentially hosting the event at a Dinton lake location next Spring, while the group also considered Thames Valley Park, Moor Green Lakes and Hosehill Lake as a possible alternative venues.

The group discussed securing a gazebo for future events. They agreed to ask **PD** to investigate purchasing options.

SC offered to book the Earley Green Fair on August 2nd for which **RG** confirmed his availability, while **EC** mentioned she could do half a day.

9. Strategy and Planning

Welcome Pack The committee discussed changes to their welcome pack for new members, with **SW** proposing to replace physical policy documents with links to ensure version control and prevent important information from being overwhelmed by attachments. **IO** will continue to be selective about sending membership renewal forms. **SW** will circulate the revised pack for discussion.

10. Conservation Sub-Committee Report - The report was circulated before the meeting.

NB will produce a leaflet to publicise the conservation fund. **JCC** will send a photo of tern chicks on the raft paid for by this fund to be used if required.

As always, requests for funds for conservation projects are welcomed.

The group discussed a potential partnership with the Canals and Rivers Trust with **NB** proposing this as a less daunting alternative to full ownership. **IO** raised concerns about potential pitfalls and suggested learning from other groups' experiences, which **SW** agreed to explore. The committee agreed **SW** will contact Laura to discuss the partnership further, promising to report back to the committee on any proposals.

11. Editorial Board Report -The report was circulated before the meeting.

MW is investigating how to automate some reporting.

Where to Watch Review: **RD** has started to review the 'Where to Watch Birds in Berkshire' booklet and **SW** asked for the Twyford map so she can update the text.

When completed, this will be reprinted as stocks are low.

12. Administration

1. **JCC** reported the annual return to the Charity Commission is complete.

2. No suggestions to replace **SW** as Chair have been received. **SW** will arrange a subgroup including **DR**, **NB** and **EB-G** to discuss this.
3. **NB** will attend the next TVR conference

13. BRC and County Recorder Review

Some progress has been made. **NB** and **RG** will represent the BOC. NDOC are still to respond.

14. AOB

1. **Merlin** The group discussed the Merlin bird identification app, noting its potential to attract new birdwatchers while also acknowledging its limitations and need for corroboration. **RG** will write an article on the website encouraging its use with appropriate caution, and **NB** offered to arrange a talk about Merlin's development. **SW** will provide leaflets on Merlin for Earley Green fair.

15. Date of Next Meeting

The next committee meeting will be on Thursday October 23rd 2025, at 7.30pm, to be held on Zoom.

The AGM is Wednesday November 19th.

Jane Campbell, 18th July 2025

MEETING REMINDER: acknowledge long-standing members.