



Kent Ornithological Society

Minutes of the 73th Annual General Meeting

Held 7.30pm on 10th April 2024 (via Zoom). Attended by 22 members of the Society

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Chris Roome and Robin Mace

2. President's address

Chris Cox opened the meeting by suggesting that we were fortunate to live and bird in one of the best ornithological counties in the country. CC went on to thank the contributions made by the officers of KOS and to others who had given their time to support the work of the Society

Chris made special mention of two stalwarts of Kent birding that had sadly passed away during the last year. Don Taylor had served the Society in many capacities including being Chris's predecessor as President. Don was a dedicated and meticulous patch birder at his site at Boughton Monchelsea and wrote books promoting birding in Kent. He had spent his last few years near family in Somerset.

Ian Hodgson had also served the Society in a number of capacities over the years and was a regular at St Margaret's before later becoming the warden at Sandwich Bay. Both Don and Ian will be missed on the Kent birding scene

3. Chairman's report

Andre Farrar endorsed the thanks to all those that had contributed to the work of the Society over the last year including members who had made their records available to KOS and had participated in the more formal surveys run by KOS. The pressures on bird populations meant that these records had never been so important.

Andre described some of the key issues that the committee was currently dealing with. Recognising the important role the Society played in maintaining a record of the county's birds, the committee has been focussed on upgrading the database on which our records and archive is held. This has been a long project led by Robin Mace supported by an external consultant. Having developed a new on line reporting tool for members, we are now close to completing the next phase with a new underlying database. We are keen to complete this part of the project to provide some space to start our next major project in developing a new online Birds of Kent. Andrew Henderson has already done an enormous amount of work in writing the species accounts for this exciting venture.

The Society is keen to develop and expand its membership not only to increase in size to ensure that our membership reflects the diversity of the current crop of birders and society generally. Part of this process requires us to increase awareness of the Society and to this ends we have launched a range of branded clothing with the KOS logo on it. Special thanks are due to Martin Collins for



making this a reality. Other members should be encouraged to support and promote the Society by purchasing our merchandise from the website.

AF also made special mention to Ray O’Rielly for his work in running a very successful programme of field meetings throughout the year, Norman McCanch who continues to produce regular high quality newsletters for members and Brendan Ryan who is stepping down as Secretary after 15 years on the committee.

4. Treasurer’s Report

Mike Henty described some of the key elements of the annual accounts including an increase in income of 16% as a result of the increase in subscriptions and associated increase in gift aid recovery. A one off donation had been received from the estate of a deceased member. On the expenditure side the KBR cost £900 less than anticipated. There was a surplus on the year of around £2,000 largely as a result of the donation and savings on the KBR. The reserves remained healthy with £31,000.

MH thanked Keith Ellis who had once again audited the accounts.

Copies of the accounts can be found on the Society’s website.

The Accounts were unanimously approved by the meeting.

5. Reports from other officers

Barry Wright described the work of the editorial and records committee. The committee meets less regularly these days as many decisions and discussions now take place on WhatsApp. David Smith had joined the committee as the county reviewer for eBird, a reporting tool that is increasingly being used by birders in the field. The status of some once regular species like Shorelark and Smew is such that they have been added to the species now requiring descriptions and review by the committee. BW gave species thanks to Robin Mace, Andrew Henderson, Chris Hindle and Alan Fossey for their contributions to the work of the committee. Barry concluded by saying that Kent was lucky to have a significant number rare breeding birds species and we should continued to careful not to unwittingly disclose the sites of rare breeding birds on social media or elsewhere.

Murray Orchard described the work during the last year of the surveys and conservation committee. Some new people had joined the committee, Emma Waller from KWT, Joe Beale from RSPB, Chas Holt from KWT Consultancy (Adonis Blue) and David Smith who had taken over from Brian Watmough as the Rare Breeding Birds Panel representative for Kent. In this last context Murray thanks Brian for his work in this role in the preceding years. Kent continues to suffer from many development pressures especially housing but increasingly from solar farms. Many threatened sites have limited ornithological data and the committee is looking at ways in which the distribution of farmland birds can be better mapped. Results from last year’s Nightingale survey as still being analysed with some key data being slow to come in. However results from the hotspots suggest that the species is holding its own. The Society/Committee has been engaged with the “making space for nature” initiative. There remains concerns about the ongoing avian flu epidemic and monitoring is



continuing. A survey of Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers is planned for 2025. Murray concluded with a request for observers submitting their records via BirdTrack or eBird to use the breeding codes on these apps.

Brendan Ryan provided an update on behalf of Chris Roome on the work of the Engagement Committee. Membership now stands at 745 and reduction from 800. Some of this reduction related to members who paid by paypal but who hadn't taken action to increase payments to the new rate. Some of these members could come back when they notice that they don't receive the next KBR or when they are denied access to the members' area of the website. 19 new members had joined so far this year. Martin Collins had taken the lead in developing our merchandising offer and in running regular members' surveys. It is hoped that these surveys will give us a better insight into what our members want from their Society. We also hope to set a baseline to assess our progress to improve the diversity of the membership to better reflect people now engaged in some form of bird watching. A new scheme for free membership for under 25s was launched

6. Minutes of the 72nd AGM (26th April 2023)

Minutes- approved.

7. Election of officers.

The meeting confirmed the following as officers of the Society for the next year

Nominations for Officers and Committee Members:	
President:	Chris Cox
Chairman:	Andre Farrar
Vice Chairman:	Chris Roome
Hon. Secretary:	Peter Eerdmans
Hon. Treasurer:	Mike Henty
Membership Secretary:	Chris Roome
Chairman of Editorial & Records Sub-Committee:	Barry Wright
Chairman of Conservation & Survey's Sub-Committee:	Murray Orchard
Editor of Kent Bird Report	Keith Privett
Archivist:	Robin Mace
Ordinary Member:	Keiron Palmer
Ordinary Member:	Gary Howard
Ordinary Member:	Martin Collins
Other Officers	
KOS News Editor	Norman McCanch
Outdoor meeting Organiser	Ray O'Reilly

8. Any other Business



It had been planned to ask members to approve changes to the Society's rules at this meeting. The proposed rule changes seek to enable more of the Society's activities to be conducted online and to give the Executive Committee and General Meetings greater flexibility in the way they organise and conduct business. However because of a technical difficulty we weren't able to get the new rule out to members in sufficient time for appropriate consideration. It is proposed that these will be posted on the website as a consultation document with a view to a future General Meeting being called to consider the changes.