

Kent Ornithological Society

Executive Committee – 12th January 2022. (via zoom)

Minutes

Present: Andre Farrar (Chair), Mike Henty, Robin Mace, Murray Orchard, Kieron Palmer, Keith Privett, Chris Roome, Brendan Ryan, Barry Wright

1. Key matters for decision or discussion

1.1 Storage of paper records.

AF provided an update of a meeting earlier in the day with some members of the Executive and a potential document scanner supplier. It was confirmed that the format of the scanning would allow records to be re-ordered at a future date if so required e.g. Records for a given site could be extracted and copied to a new file. There was a consensus that the company provided a good way forward.

The proposal from the company includes the disposal of the paper records after scanning. We need to consider if any documents drawings from well known birdwatchers/artists (e.g. Peter Grant, DIM Wallace)that may be of value, can be retrieved.

It was agreed that:

- i). Files would be saved as JPEGs
- ii). A small task group to be established to review the records to assess how they can be sent the scanners. AF, RM, KP, BW, BR,
- iii). Ben Dale from Allan Webbwill to send some examples of scanning outcomes done for other customers
- iv). The first sample batch will be sent by courier to Allan Webb, to assess how things will work. This batch will be either a box or a species as determined by the task group above.

Action.

MO to assess the samples sent by Ben Dale and circulate as required.

AF/KP to arrange site visit by the task group.

1.2 Sightings database and website

BR updated the meeting on work he had been doing with Chris Dee to complete the transfer of the website to the new Joomla platform and completing the sightings database.

MO thought some issues remained outstanding regarding the database including the breeding codes, which needed to match the BTO codes. MO undertook to provide a note on these issues for

Chris Dee. Other committee members were urged to review the website and prepare notes ahead of the sign off meeting with Chris Dee next week.

The Executive needs to decide how the website is to be managed and where the responsibility will lay within the committee structure. There will be the opportunity for several content editors with specialist responsibilities within the site.

The committee needs to discuss with Chris Dee how the content of the website is displayed on different devices.

It was agreed that a future development for the website should include a site guide and maps for various birding locations in the county.

Over 200 users had already registered on the sightings database and there is some evidence that this has contributed to an increase in membership applications since the New Year. There had been a couple of individuals who were unhappy at non-members having restricted viewing rights.

Action:

All – review the website content and format in preparation for meeting with Chris Dee.

MO to provide a note of remaining issues on the sightings database

BR to organise zoom meeting with Chris Dee 20th Jan at 7.00pm

1.3 On-line members' talks

CR outlined arrangements for the first two talks as part of a new initiative to follow up on the cancelled Conference. Alan Johnson and Hayley Taylor, who had been scheduled to speak at the conference, had been lined up to do talks in the next few weeks. Other conference speakers had yet to respond.

There was a desire to develop a programme of meetings, with a balance between conservation and birding focused topic. The desirability of reverting to having a dedicated meeting organiser was considered and a range of potential speakers and topics were discussed. These issues would be considered by the Membership Committee.

It was agreed that the Society should offer payment to guest speakers or make a donation to the appropriate organisation that they represented.

The capacity of the Society to run online meetings via zoom was discussed. It was agreed that the existing licence for 100 attendees should be kept until there was evidence that demand required moving to a 300 participant licence. There were concerns about our technical ability to facilitate online events and it was agreed that we should have a trial run before the first meeting.

1.4 70th Anniversary plans

No further progress was reported. CR would contact Jim Flegg, one of the founder members to see if he could feature in an article or similar. AF undertook to develop an article he had written about the Society for the Bexley RSPB group.

The Essex Birdwatching Society re-issued their first edition to celebrate their anniversary. There were concerns that about the expense of doing this.

2. Updates

2.1 Treasurer's Report

MH had previously circulated the draft accounts for 2021. These were approved by the committee and will be formally signed off after they have been independently inspected.

2.2 Kent Bird Report

KP reported that work for the 2020 report was underway and publication was anticipated in July.

2.3 Membership Committee

CR reported that the membership now stood at 760. There had been 22 people joining since 1st January, possibly related to the re-launch of the sightings database.

2.4 Surveys and Conservation committee

MO reported that no special winter surveys were taking place. Still waiting to hear about summer surveys. New WeBS organisers had been appointed. BTO has appointed two new youth representatives for the county.

The data from the Turtle Dove Survey is in and the results are awaited. The survey will confirm Kent as the stronghold for the species in the UK.

The committee is considering how to improve the monitoring of farmland birds in order to improve our response to the widespread development threats, including Swanscombe and Old Wives Leas.

AF reported that the Society was now taking a more robust response in responding to development threats and making representations on behalf of the bird watching community to other NGOs that are managing reserves in the county. There was a feeling that the focus of these organisations did not take into account the needs of bird watchers using their reserves.

AF, MO & BR had met with KWT and Wildwoods Trust to discuss the project to introduce Choughs to the county.

2.5 Editorial and Records Committee

BW reported that the committee continues to undertake its routine work and there was nothing outstanding to report.

2.6 Birds of Kent

AF asked what was happening with regarding the Birds of Kent and who was leading this project. MO, BW, BR and Andrew Henderson were involved but no lead had been identified. A similar arrangement to that of the Breeding Atlas was required. Chris Dee was tasked with developing a template for the online Birds of Kent after the database and website was completed. Birds of Kent to be added as a standing agenda item.

3. Administrative matters

3.1 Minutes of previous meeting (15th September 2021)

Approved. It was agreed that given the number of projects underway that three meetings a year was inadequate and another meeting before the AGM was required

Action:

BR to arrange another committee meeting in early April

3.2 Meeting dates for 2022

25th May, 14th September,

AGM 28th April

BR will circulate details of AGM in due course

3.3 Next meeting 20th Jan 2022 7.00pm via zoom