



Kent Ornithological Society

Executive Committee – 23rd March 2023 (via zoom)

Draft Minutes

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

1. Key matters for decision or discussion

1.1 Follow up from Executive Committee away day.

Draft notes from the away day had previously been circulated. AF provided an overview of the day and the key outcomes. Many of the key actions related to extending our appeal to create a more diverse membership and the need for KOS to appeal to people outside our core membership (i.e. white, males over 50). Much of the work in this area falls within the remit of the new Engagement Committee.

The day was deemed a significant step forward for the Society and a similar event should be held next January.

CR had followed up with Norman McCanch on the format and accessibility to the newsletter and changes had been made to the latest edition that had been well received by the membership. BR reported that the new web based format for the newsletter had prompted 26 new registrations on the website during the last day.

BR had been in touch with RO'R about how the outdoor meeting programme might be expanded. Ray had responded positively and BR undertook to follow up with him.

Action.

BR to follow up discussions with RO'R on future format of outdoor meetings

1.2 Follow Up from Engagement Committee

CR reported on a very positive first meeting of the committee. The significant outcomes included agreeing a membership survey and instigating a new more integrated approach to social media including a new Instagram account set up by Heather Mathieson.

KPa provided some feedback on levels engagement with member via e-mail and the website.

The members' survey and resulting analysis by MC had been impressive with about a 30% return. Martin provided some headline results but it was agreed that the next meeting of the Engagement Committee would consider the results more fully and would in turn make recommendations to a future meeting of the Executive Committee.

There was an extensive discussion about following the lead of Hampshire OS and giving free membership to people under 21. This had been discussed at the away day and it was agreed that free membership should be offered to young people, providing access to the members' area of the website. This level of membership would not receive hard copies of the Kent Bird Report.

To make this viable it would be necessary to make the KBR available in the members' area of the website.

KPa would investigate adding the KBR to the website with restricted access to members.

Extending free membership to younger people had a number of administrative obstacles to be overcome. The Engagement Committee would consider and report to the next meeting of the Executive. Any changes in membership structure needed to be included in the information in the KBR, so a decision was reasonably urgent if amendments were to be made in the 2021 Report.

It was suggested that we need a library of photos of people in bird watching to use in our promotional materials and that these photos should seek to reflect a more diverse involvement in the pastime and society.

Action:

CR-Engagement Committee to undertake analysis of members' survey and provide recommendations to next Executive meeting

BW to contact Keith Betton of HOS to see how they have gone about introducing free membership to under 21s.

CR-Engagement Committee to consider the practicalities of introducing free membership to under 21s and report to the next meeting.

KPa to set up a new area on the website to accommodate on line copies of KBR

1.3 Nightingale Survey 2023

MO updated the meeting on progress on the forthcoming survey. Good progress had been made and a high level of coverage was anticipated.

The lack of data on Nightingales from Lodge Hill, a key site in the county for the species was discussed. This data had been absent from most recent Kent Bird Reports and potentially undermines efforts to protect the site from housing developments. The issue would be taken up with BTO and BR would amend the species account in KBR 2021 to express concerns about the lack of data.

There was a discussion on how KOS could use this survey to raise our profile in the local media and develop some engagement with the public by asking them to submit their records.

AF would draft a press release and circulate and seek to identify and contact the journalist who had previously covered related stories for the local BBC

1.4 Birdwatch Magazine survey

BR had circulated a survey of county bird societies. A few amendments to the draft response were agreed. BR to complete and return.

2. Updates

2.1 Cobra replacement

RM reported that good progress continues to be made. The next phase of testing would begin shortly. Still on track to use new database for 2022 KBR but there is a backup plan.

2.2 Treasurer's Report

MH had previously circulated the final accounts for 2022, which were approved subject to the independent inspection.

MH raised the issue of the Society's public liability insurance. It was agreed that cover should include outdoor activities and should be increased to £10m cover. MH to clarify what cover the policy provides for trustees of the Society.

The risks associated with running outdoor meetings were discussed. It was agreed that there should be some kind of generic risk assessment to cover field meetings in general and site specific assessments where required. The leader of the meetings should inform participants of the risks at the beginning of meetings. Some wording may need to be added to the website page on events.

Action: BR to speak to RO'R

2.3 Kent Bird Report

Some species accounts still waited for the 2021 report.

2.4 Editorial and Records Committee

BW reported that David Smith had become eBird reviewer for Kent. Bird Guides has approached KOS for access to the sightings database. The feeling of the meeting was that access is readily available at a cost of £15 pa. BW to liaise with BirdGuides

2.5 Surveys and Conservation committee

MO reported that new threats on the horizon included a new solar farm in the Ash Levels. The Lower Thames crossing has been put back two years.

Woodcock and Nightingale surveys have been promoted on website and in social media. Some evidence that Lesser Spotted Woodpecker numbers are holding up but Marsh Tits seem to be declining quite rapidly. Hampshire doing a Marsh Tit survey this year and KOS to consider a similar survey next year.

3. Administrative matters

3.1 Arrangements for AGM

Agreed to move the date forward to the 25th to accommodate key personnel.

Agreed that BR would pull together an annual report for the event if committee chairs could provide some text summarising activities during the last year.

Potential new members of the committee was discussed. It was agreed that the committee could consider co-options during the year if required.

Action:

BR to draft annual report and arrange publicity for the AGM

3.2 Minutes of previous meeting (14th September 2022)

Approved.

3.3 Future meetings

21st June 2023

20th September 2023

10th January 2024