



Kent Ornithological Society

Executive Committee – 10th January 2024 (via zoom)

Draft Minutes

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

Apologies: Robin Mace Kieron Palmer (KPa)

1. Key matters for decision or discussion

1.1 Draft Accounts 2023

MH had previously circulated to the Committee the accounts and associated notes. He highlighted lower than expected costs for producing the KBR but anticipated rising costs in future years. The number of members had reduced as a result of issues related to the increase in subscriptions. (See Membership Secretary's report below)

The annual accounts were approved by the Committee subject to independent examination.

1.2 Update from Membership Secretary

Membership now stood at 810, however a number of members had been lost because they had not renewed their PayPal payments following the increase in subscriptions. 85 non payers had been deleted in the last three weeks. 132 new members had joined in 2023 but 10 existing members had sadly died. The use of member mojo had encouraged people to gift aid their subscriptions increasing income to the Society.

There were no restrictions on people declaring they were KOS members when registering on the website. BR said that he checked new registrations against the membership database when he received an update from CR. It was agreed that notifications for website registrations should be redirected to CR. KPa to be asked if he could amend the system to redirect e-mail notifications

KOS's venture into merchandising had gone very well. Full credit to Martin Collins who had arranged and set up the process. MC reported that there had been 22 transactions in the first month (Oct) yielding £48 to the Society. There will be a small additional cost for creating a new logo for the hats.

The second round of the members' survey had taken place but MC had not had a chance to do the analysis. It was agreed that it was important for feedback on the surveys should be provided in the newsletter.

CR and AF were now engaged with other societies via a discussion group set up by Keith Betton from Hampshire OS. This was proving to be useful.

Action: KPa to be asked to change website registration notifications from BR to CR

1.3 Revised rules

BR apologised for the late distribution of the new draft rules. Most committee members had not had time to examine in detail and it was agreed that the item should be taken forward to the strategy day on 3rd Feb.

BR explained that the existing rules were highly prescriptive and going forward we needed greater flexibility to decide how we might want to operate and make decisions. More importantly the rules need to be revised to reflect the realities of working in a digital age.

A number of areas of the rules cannot be changed without the consent of the Charity Commissioners, so the relevant clauses have been left unchanged.

Action: Proposed changes to the rules be deferred to the strategy day

1.4 Executive Strategy Day

The strategy day was now set for 3rd February, 10:00am at Dungeness RSPB.

After some discussion it was agreed that the day should be structured around four key areas

- A risk mapping exercise
- The new Birds of Kent and conclusion of Cobra update
- Revised rules
- Safe birding- mentoring – migration event – Don Taylor legacy

1.5 Cobra renewal update

RM had given his apologies but had provided an update, suggesting that work on KBR 2022 had taken priority and limited progress had been made on the Cobra update.

MH reported that he had been in contact with Chris Dee over payments for his work and suggested that CD was unclear as what was required of him going forward but his offer to undertake some data management work for the Society remained open.

It was agreed that BR would respond to RM saying that we would like to take stock of the Cobra project at the away day as a prerequisite to pushing ahead with the new Birds of Kent. BR would ask RM if any further support was required from Chris Dee or others to bring the cobra replacement to a conclusion.

Action: BR to clarify with RM the position on Cobra and offer further support

2. Updates

2.1 Kent Bird Report

Data sheets are currently with the writers for the 2022 report with a deadline for completion by the end of January. However reports from Sandwich Bay and Dungeness still awaited. A draft of Sandwich Bay's report was imminent. Articles were restricted to accounts for four new birds for the county that had appeared in 2022.

2.2 Editorial and records committee

There was a discussion as to whether the Society should recognise the contribution of the late Don Taylor to the Society and birding in Kent. To be discussed at the away day

Meetings had been set up between the county recorder and representatives from BBRC.

Progress was being made on improving and verifying eBird records and misreporting on that platform. A similar review process was apparently in place for BirdTrack

2.3 Surveys and Conservation Committee

The Nightingale survey results were in but the analysis was still to happen. Records from one or two hotspots including Lodge Hill were still missing. Pressure to be brought to bear on BTO and Homes England to release data for Lodge Hill.

Joe Beal from RSPB had joined the committee, there had also been a change in representation from KWT and the website needs to be amended to reflect this.

A wintering gulls survey was underway but no other surveys were planned for 2024. The possible Marsh Tit survey previously discussed would not be happening unless a volunteer could be found to organise it.

3. Any other Business

Kent Wildlife Trust had asked to use data from the KOS breeding bird surveys. The committee didn't think this was a problem but it may need an information sharing agreement. MO to pursue with support and advice from MC.

Norman had expressed concerns about delays in publication of the newsletter once it had been produced. CR to liaise with NMc.

4. Administrative matters

4.1 Minutes of previous meeting (20th Sept 2023)

Minutes agreed.

4.2 Provisional dates for Executive Committee meetings 2024

1st May, 10th Jul, 18th Sept, 4th Dec

4.3 Arrangements for AGM

Date set for 10th April subject to availability of Chris Cox, President

Revised update of rules to be included on the agenda

BR informed the committee that he would be stepping down from the committee and his role as Honorary Secretary at the AGM as the role was becoming increasingly difficult to fit around his travel commitments. The process to find a replacement would start immediately.

The AGM offered an opportunity to strengthen the committee and increase its diversity. A couple of names as potential recruits were discussed.