



Kent Ornithological Society
Providing information about Birds and Birdwatching in Kent

Executive Committee

Minutes of a Meeting held on Thursday 16 January 2014 at 7:00pm at Brogdale Farm, Brogdale Road, Faversham, Kent ME13 8XZ

Present: Martin Coath, (Chair), Jack Chantler, Mike Henty, Robin Mace, Norman McCanch, Tony Morris, Geoff Orton, Chris Roome, Mike Roser, Brendan Ryan and Stephen Wood.

1. Chairman's Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from: Keith Privett, Anthea Skiffington and Barry Wright.

The Chairman expressed the warm appreciation of the Committee for the great contribution to the work of KOS made by John Cantelo, former editor of *KOS News*, who has stepped down from the EC. Martin will write to John shortly.

Action: Martin Coath

The Chairman noted, with sadness the recent death of George Shannon, a founder member of KOS. Norman McCanch agreed to make an announcement in *KOS News*, and a full obituary will be published in *KBR 2013*. It is understood that James Fergusson-Lees will be providing an obituary for *British Birds*, and NM agreed to contact the editor, Roger Riddington to seek permission for KOS to reproduce it. He will also ask Chris Cox to write a brief notice for *KOS News*.

Action: Norman McCanch

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2013 (Attachment A) were accepted as an accurate record

3. Promotions and Publicity

Nothing to report.

Action: Brendan Ryan

4. Membership

CR reported that total membership stands at 685. He emphasised the importance of the Website and Forum in recruiting new members. He outlined some continuing anomalies, such as the concessionary rate still available for members over the age of 65, which he suggested should be removed. He also pointed out that some members generously pay more than the prescribed annual subscription. He reminded EC members to distribute application forms whenever possible at suitable meetings.

Action: Chris Roome

5. Kent Bird Report

KP was unable to attend, so MC presented his brief report on progress with *KBR 2012*. Collection and collation of records has been a little slower than anticipated, but is proceeding. Photographs have been selected and forwarded by Mike Gould. It is hoped to include the Nightingale Survey co-ordinated by Andrew Henderson, but the agreement of the BTO is required and has so far not been obtained.

Action: Keith Privett, Jack Chantler

RM reported that there has been satisfactory progress in migrating the COBRA records to a new database, but the task is huge and requires the accurate inputting of data such as OS grid references, which is very time-consuming.

Action: Robin Mace

6. NewBirds of Kent

NM reported correspondence he has had with Andrew Henderson, who has reluctantly concluded that he is at present unable to make progress with this project. The Committee expressed its understanding of the difficulties and expressed its gratitude to Andrew for all the work he has put in so far. It was resolved to put on hold further work on *BoK* until the *Kent Breeding Bird Atlas 2008 – 11* has been completed, when the position can be reviewed. In the meantime MC agreed to discuss with Andrew the transfer of notes and records in order to safeguard their future security.

Action: Martin Coath

7. Kent Breeding Bird Atlas 2008 – 11

RC and SW told the Committee that the great majority of species accounts had now been written and that the editors (RC, SW, NM and Murray Orchard) had met on several occasions.

The difficulties in estimating the numbers of certain species including cliff-nesting sea-birds, was discussed, and helpful suggestions were made by members.

SW raised several points concerned with the publication and distribution of the *Atlas*. The Natural History Book Service is willing to sell copies on our behalf, but require 40 per cent of the cover price. In order to cover our own costs, KOS needs to make a minimum of £10.00 per copy, and this would imply a retail price of £16.50. NHBS are proposing only to take 30 copies in the first instance.

It was agreed that we should offer the *Atlas* at £10 to members and others at KOS events, and make surplus copies available through NHBS at £16.50.

Action: Rob Clements, Stephen Wood

8. KOS News

NM discussed some technical aspects of presentation. The traditional format of the newsletter was as an A5 document, but this does not readily lend itself to reproduction on-line. He proposes to convert to a pdf format which will allow the document to be viewed as a virtual book. At present there are approximately 400 'subscribers' to the online version and 50 adherents to the printed format. In future the printed version will be A4 rather than A5-sized.

Action: Norman McCanch

9. Treasurer's Report

MH reported a surplus of £1,800 in 2013 resulting from savings in postal charges achieved by switching *KOS News* to on-line.

£550 has been spent on the production of maps for the *Atlas*.

£350 was generously donated by Chris Cox from the sale of the late Mr G. Shannon's bird books.

It is understood that Mr Shannon's extensive film archive may be digitised in future, and members expressed their willingness to consider making a donation to the costs if this should go ahead.

Action: Mike Henty

10. Indoor Meetings

In the absence of AS discussion was deferred.

It was agreed that CR would mail all members with details of the 2014 AGM.

Action: Chris Roome, Stephen Wood

11. Outdoor Meetings

MR reported average attendance at recent meetings of 6. Bad weather continues to be a deterrent.

Action: Mike Roser

12. Website and Forum

BR referred to his proposals to modernise the KOS Website, which he had previously circulated to members (Attachment B). The feedback that he has received so-far has been very positive. He explained that although Alex Lister will provide continuing technical support and maintenance for the site, the content of the web pages will be the responsibility of individual page editors drawn from the membership. There will also be direct links to members' blogs.

SW emphasised the great value of the Atlas pages which contain a vast amount of data which may be of value for future research and KOS publications such as the Breeding Bird Atlas in preparation. BR agreed that these pages would remain available.

MH foresaw no difficulty in funding the project.

RM pointed out some potential technical difficulties which page editors might encounter in up-dating content and TM suggested that it might be necessary to provide training for some editors. RM also suggested that it might be better to keep the existing platform in order to avoid difficulties with migrating data to a new platform.

It was agreed that a Website Working Group comprising Robin Mace, Brendan Ryan and Tony Morris should be established to take forward the project. It will report back to the EC at intervals.

Action: Robin Mace, Tony Morris, Brendan Ryan.

13. Editorial and Records Sub-Committee

In the absence of BW, this item was deferred.

Action: Barry Wright

14. Conservation and Surveys Sub-Committee

RC reported that the BTO would be organising a breeding Peregrine survey this summer and that NM had agreed to co-ordinate effort in Kent. Details of the proposed methodology are not yet available.

After this winter's invasion of Common Crossbills, RC asked members to be alert for signs of breeding behaviour, as well as the presence of Parrott Crossbills.

Firecrest numbers are also very high, and RC has found at least 20 singing birds in a small wood in the Faversham area. He estimates that more than 200-300 may be present in the county.

Action: Rob Clements

15. Any Other Business

None.

Action: Executive Committee Members

16. Date and Time of the Next Meeting:

The 63rd Annual General Meeting of the Kent Ornithological Society will take place on Thursday 24th April 2014 at Grove Green Community Centre, Grovewood Drive, Maidstone ME14 5TQ. Doors will open at 7.15pm for a 7.45 start.

The Next Meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Thursday 22nd May 2014 at 7.00pm at Brogdale Farm, Brogdale Road, Faversham, Kent ME13 8XZ.

Attachment A



Executive Committee

Minutes of a Meeting held on Thursday 31 October 2013 at 7:00pm at Brogdale Farm, Brogdale Road, Faversham, Kent ME13 8XZ

Present: Martin Coath, (Chair), Jack Chantler, Mike Henty, Norman McCanch, Keith Privett, Mike Roser, Brendan Ryan, Anthea Skiffington, Stephen Wood.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from: Tony Morris, Geoff Orton, Chris Roome, Barry Wright, and Robin Mace.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2013 were accepted as an accurate record.

The Chairman welcomed Norman McCanch, new editor of *KOS News* to the meeting, and also expressed his thanks via Mike Roser to the Brogdale Trust for allowing the Committee to use its facilities.

3. Promotions and Publicity

BR told the Committee that he had continued in his efforts to find a technical manager to update and maintain the KOS Website, but had so far been unsuccessful. He will keep trying and hopes to meet with Alex Lister from KCC to discuss the project in the next few weeks. BR stated that the website had been built on a platform called 'Contribute', which was now considered to be obsolete, and it needs to be redesigned using a more modern alternative.

KP agreed with this and pointed out that Contribute has compatibility problems with Windows 8 and perhaps other software too.

MH believed that the money saved in the past year from printing costs for *KOS News* should be sufficient to fund the project without having to raise more funds from members.

The chairman thanked BR for his work and asked to report back on further developments as they occur.

NMcC reported that a member had written to him to suggest that KOS should have a schools liaison officer, but drawing on his own long experience in the teaching profession, he could foresee a variety of practical and legal obstacles to such a plan. He agreed to respond appropriately to his correspondent.

Action: Brendan Ryan, Norman McCanch

4. Membership

CR was unable to attend, but had reported the following information:

- As of October 29th 2013 :
- We currently have 30 non-paying members.
- We have 650 fully paid-up ordinary members.
- We have a further 9 paid-up members who are debtors i.e. still pay £9 on a standing order.
- Current membership is therefore 689 [Current mailing list].
- Since the last meeting (July 18th) 6 new members have joined the society
- Membership has contracted slightly since last year. The website does produce a constant stream of new members – let's hope the free Newsletter will also begin to fulfil this function.
- Please could all members ensure that email and home address changes and telephone numbers are notified to the membership secretary.

We now have the facility to email 420 members for whom we hold addresses. Apologies for the clunkiness of the recent emailing over the cancelled indoor meeting. I am still coming to terms with *Mailchimp* – the service we use – and asked another member to send the email and the site proved not as agile and responsive as we had hoped – hence the farcical receipt of an email about a date already past.

Action: Chris Roome

5. Kent Bird Report

KP reported that some of the photographs in the final printed version of *KBR 2011* had been of a poorer quality than the proofs supplied by the printers. He has taken this up with them and it has been agreed that a discount will be applied to the next edition.

KBR 2012 species accounts are now being compiled and it is hoped that they will be complete by the end of the year. A number of detailed comments concerning wader counts and breeding records were made by members of the EC and these will be taken forward to the next E&R Committee.

The issue of the inclusion or non-inclusion of obituaries in *KBR* was discussed. A senior member of the Society had contacted the President to complain that the obituary of a recently deceased distinguished founder member of KOS had not been included in *KBR 2011*, published earlier this year. In fact, the death had occurred in 2012 and it had therefore been decided that it would be more appropriate to publish the obituary in *KBR 2012*. This will appear in 2014.

In view of the inevitable recent increase in the number of deaths of senior members, which is expected to continue for some years to come, it was agreed that those to be included in future *KBR*s would need to be carefully and sensitively selected and this would best be done by the EC itself.

Action: Keith Privett, Martin Coath

6. *NewBirds of Kent*

There was nothing to report.

Action: Martin Coath

7. *Kent Breeding Bird Atlas 2008 – 11*

RC and SW told the Committee of progress on this project. Most of the species accounts have been written and an editorial panel consisting of RC, SW and Murray Orchard has begun to revise the text. After a meeting with the publishers in London, 135 distribution maps have been prepared and some examples were demonstrated to the Committee. Introductory essays covering aspects of change in the environment of Kent have been commissioned from several local experts.

The question of expected production costs and retail pricing and distribution was discussed by the EC. A production run of 1,000 copies is planned and has been provisionally priced at £10 each. The total cost of the project has been estimated at £8k – 9k, which is expected to be recouped by sales over several years.

MC suggested that the book might be offered to KOS members at a pre-publication discount price, but MH believed that the proposed margins would not allow for this.

It was agreed that the reserve set aside for the *New Birds of Kent* could be used for the *Atlas*.

RC and SW for their work and asked that they keep the EC up to date with progress.

Action: Rob Clements, Stephen Wood

8. KOS News

NMcC reported that he had taken over the editorship from John Cantelo. He discussed his plans for future issues and how *KOS News* might best be promoted to members. He noted that the 'recent sightings' report had not been available for one issue, but that this had been incorporated retrospectively.

He raised the issue of ownership of copyright of photographs, and it was agreed that this required further exploration.

Action: Norman McCanch

9. Treasurer's Report

MH told the EC that he does not anticipate that there will be any need to raise the subscription rate during 2014.

Action: Mike Henty

10. Indoor Meetings

AS outlined the programme for the winter 2013-14. The December meeting has had to be brought forward because of the double-booking of the hall.

The date of the AGM was discussed and April 24th 2014 was considered to be most convenient.

Action: AntheaSkiffington

11. Outdoor Meetings

MR reported that the meetings in the current cycle had attracted 65 members, averaging 10 per trip. He thanked Rob Clements for his contribution to the Kent Field Club conference, which had been a great success.

MR asked for clarification of the Society's legal liability for injury and loss during outdoor meetings. MH replied that KOS has public liability insurance, but he agreed to check the position and inform MR. SW pointed out that Criminal Record Bureau checks might be required for KOS officers if under-sixteen's or 'vulnerable' adults were regularly to be included in outdoor meetings.

Action: Mike Henty, Mike Roser

12. Website and Forum

Item 3 refers.

13. Editorial and Records Sub-Committee

In the absence of BW, this item was deferred.

Action: Barry Wright

14. Conservation and Surveys Sub-Committee

Nothing to report.

Action: Rob Clements

15. Any Other Business

SW raised the issue of the practice of making a present to long-serving members of the EC upon retirement. He suggested that the value of any such gift should be modest in order to comply with the Society's charitable status. Members supported the proposal, but felt that some flexibility should be allowed to take account of exceptional service. It was agreed that any such gifts proposed in the future should be authorised by the EC and made public in the annual accounts,

Action: Executive Committee Members

16. Date and Time of the Next Meeting:

The Next Meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Thursday 16th January 2014 at 7.00pm at Brogdale Farm, Brogdale Road, Faversham, Kent ME13 8XZ.

Attachment B

31 Dec 2013

As reported to the last executive meeting, I met with Alex Lister to discuss refreshing the KOS website. Alex works for KCC doing communications and promotions in adult education. We have previously used him in my own organisation to support promotional events, although I don't think that he has actually worked on our website. He was recommended to me by my Communications Manager.

Our website is clearly in need of a refresh. It is built on an old platform and is difficult to manage. Not that I know about these things.

- It seems that we should move off contribute to word press. (I think that the advice that Chris e-mailed to us suggested something similar).
- There are many pages on the site that are redundant and not maintained
- Many pages have become cluttered and need a spring clean
- The site affords little opportunity to promote the Society's events (e.g. the meeting programme) but does a great job promoting the county's photographers!
- There are some fantastic opportunities to integrate the site with social media like twitter and Facebook. (e.g. we could display all KOS tweets on the title page, as well as tweets involving bird news in Kent)
- The forum and data bases are both external functions and don't need to be messed around with and can remain as they are

I attach a proposal from Alex following my meeting with him earlier this month.

Are we happy to make this decision off line or do we need to consider at an exec meeting?

I am happy to lead on this project and work with Alex to set up the new website. I will need some support in this but there are lots of members out there that run their own websites and blogs. It would be useful to have more than one person to manage the overall site.

Any thoughts?

Brendan Ryan