



Kent Ornithological Society
Providing information about Birds and Birdwatching in Kent

Executive Committee

Minutes of a Meeting held on Thursday 20 January 2011 at 6:30pm at Brogdale Farm, Brogdale Road, Faversham, ME13 8XZ

Present: Martin Coath (Chair), Gordon Allison, John Cantelo, Jack Chantler, Mike Henty, Marcus Lawson, Robin Mace, Chris Roome, Mike Roser,, Stephen Wood and Barry Wright.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chairman welcomed members and thanked The Brogdale Trust for its kindness in providing the facilities for the meeting, and Mike Roser for making the arrangements.

Apologies for absence were received from: Chris Abrams, Sally Hunter and Brendan Ryan.

2. Annual General Meeting

MC confirmed that the AGM will take place at 7:45pm on April 14 2011 at Grove Green Community Hall. Don Taylor will not be able to attend and his Presidential Address will be read by MC as Chairman.

Action: Martin Coath

SW will arrange for notice of the meeting to be posted in KOS News and the Forum. He will also arrange for the reports made by the Society's officers to be collated, published and passed to the Treasurer to be sent to the Charity Commissioners.

Action: Stephen Wood, Mike Henty

ML reported that he had been in touch with the Charity Commission to seek clarification as to whether non-members of the Society should be permitted to attend the AGM. Its advice was that the Society should conform to its own rules. However these rules make no specific mention of the issue and the Committee resolved that non-members

should not be disbarred from attending the AGM, but should not be allowed to vote.

Jack Chantler commented that members of the Executive Committee must be elected or re-elected at the AGM. SW stated that the Rules required a quorum of 30 members to be present and that nominations for EC members must be submitted in writing to the Secretary at least one week before the AGM. SW will draft an announcement to be posted on the website.

Action: Stephen Wood

MC pointed out that if RM stood down from the Executive Committee (to join the Editorial and Records Sub-Committee), then a vacancy on the EC for an Ordinary Member might be created. Further discussion of the KBR editorship took place under item 4.

BW agreed to organise an illustrated talk for the second half of the AGM and will liaise with Mike Gould.

Action: Barry Wright

3. Publicity and Membership

CR tabled his report. Membership currently stands at 696, with email addresses being held for 550 of those, although he could not be confident that they were all up-to-date.

A discussion followed in which it was suggested by CR that a KOS Conference might be a useful strategy to boost membership. Some members recalled their own previous experiences of such conferences, which although generally beneficial to the Society, had been expensive and arduous to organise.

In his absence, BR provided a paper (Attachment B) giving a preliminary analysis of the membership survey recently undertaken. 263 members returned the questionnaire, equivalent to approximately 38 per cent of the membership. In surveys of this kind this represents a fair response rate. Brendan had not yet had the opportunity to study the results fully, but commented that 63% of members are over the age of 60, while 29% were over 70. He will provide a complete analysis in due course.

Action: Brendan Ryan

It was agreed that the full version of the survey should be published on the website with a summary in KOS News. BR will be asked to present his findings to the AGM. The Executive Committee will carefully consider the full report before deciding on its response.

Action: Brendan Ryan, Chris Abrams, John Cantelo, Martin Coath

4. Kent Bird Report

The Chairman congratulated RM and all concerned in the production of *KBR 2008*, and members warmly agreed that the content and presentation of the Report were highly professional.

RM updated the committee on progress of *KBR 2009* and expected it to be delivered to the printers by mid to late March and in any case to be delivered in time for the AGM. The print run will be 800 copies.

CR suggested that KOS should establish a reference collection of *Kent Bird Reports*.

Action: Chris Roome

It was noted that the post of editor of the Kent Bird Report will shortly fall vacant due to the resignation of RM who will be concentrating on the Webmaster role. So far no-one has expressed an interest in taking over and members discussed various options for remedying the situation. One suggestion that found wide support was for an 'apprentice editor' to be appointed under Robin for a year or so before taking over the full role.

There was a wide-ranging discussion of how to recruit a new KBR editor. It was agreed that a letter should be sent to all members in advance of the AGM. It was noted that the cost of a mail-shot would be in excess of £200, but the Chairman stated his opinion that members without access to the website and forum must not be excluded from the Society's activities, including the recruitment of the KBR editor and other EC members.

Action: Martin Coath

5. KOS News

John Cantelo reported on progress. Articles are submitted in a rather haphazard manner with alternating drought and glut. He paid tribute to Norman McCanch for his excellent drawings and willingness to contribute them at short notice. The committee enthusiastically endorsed JC's comments.

ML and BW agreed to contribute an update on progress of the *Atlas*.

Action: Marcus Lawson, Barry Wright

The committee discussed options for the future of *KOS News*. There was a consensus that we should move towards on-line publication in order to reduce costs. MH stated that the last issue had cost £870.

Several members expressed the view that a hard copy would still be required for readers unable to access the internet. SW suggested that it might ultimately be necessary to impose differential subscription rates to reflect the increased costs of providing printed copies of *KOS News*. It was resolved that we should trial on-line publication in parallel with the traditional hard copy.

Action: John Cantelo, Chris Abrams

6. Indoor Meetings

ML reported that recent meetings had proved popular and successful despite the snow! Phil Chantlers' talk on 'Bird Migration and Patterns of Vagrancy' had had to be postponed until January 4, but still attracted about 40 participants. The annual Quiz Night had also been very enjoyable, and MC recorded his gratitude to Tony Morris for devising the questions. An allegation that the winning team, the Bockhill Boys had received inside information was dismissed as sour grapes by the majority of the Committee.

Grove Green Community Hall has once again been reserved for this year's meetings and speakers are to include Ralph Todd, Martin Garner and Tim Loseby.

JC suggested that it would be helpful if KOS could supply speakers to RSPB local groups as a means to widening the appeal of the society.

ML requested that consideration be given to printing a list of indoor and outdoor meetings, but recognised that this may not be cost-effective. He suggested that a direct link be placed on the home page of the website to make access quicker and simpler and RM agreed to look into this.

Action: Robin Mace

7. Outdoor Meetings

MR reported that the 'Gull ID Masterclass' led by Andy Lawson had been well attended and much praised by participants and both Glaucous and Caspian Gulls had been identified. It is planned to repeat this outing in 2011/12.

Further *Atlas* fieldwork trips are planned for May and June as well as a Medway Pelagic.

Following the success of Gill and John Brooks's talk on the dragonflies of Kent, Mike was pleased to announce that the couple had kindly agreed to conduct a field trip at Sevenoaks Wildfowl Reserve on June

25. It is expected that this will be especially popular with photographer members. MR is also negotiating a half-day session at Castle Coote which will focus on littoral ecology.

John Cantelo commented that there may be considerable interest from retired members in mid-week outings and MR agreed to consider this. He also enquired whether the society's public liability insurance would extend to trips to northern France, but MH confirmed that it applied only to the UK.

8. Website and Forum

CA's recent posting concerning his proposal to provide a direct link from the website to the RSPB sites for Dungeness, Northward Hill and Cliffe sightings was noted with general approval. This would end the need for the KOS website to duplicate information already available elsewhere.

Action: Chris Abrams

CA's comment on the need to simplify internal communication between members of both EC and Sub-Committees by better use of the forum was discussed. MC pointed out that there remained the difficulty of appending long attachments to forum postings and that until this was fixed, old-fashioned emails might still have to be used on occasion. RM undertook to post some instructions on how to make an attachment, and would couch these in terms suitable to the understanding of the Chairman and other similarly challenged members.

Action: Robin Mace

9. Treasurer's Report

MH introduced his report (Attachment C) and invited discussion.

SW commented that although subscription income had increased since the year 2000, this failed to take account of inflation, and in order to keep pace the 2010 income would have to have been £9414 instead of £7636. This means that subscription income now stands at 81% of its value ten years ago.

MH replied that Charity Commission rules do not allow the Society to accumulate reserves without having a proper intention for their application. He believes that KOS has sufficient funds to fulfil its objectives and that it is not necessary at present to contemplate increasing the subscription rate.

Members endorsed the draft accounts and agreed that MH should proceed to have them audited in preparation for the AGM.

Action: Mike Henty

Members discussed the matter of the funding of the proposed new *Birds of Kent* which has been in preparation for several years, but has been deliberately postponed in order to incorporate results from the current *BTO Atlas* fieldwork. MH stated that he envisaged that *BoK* would be funded by subscription and that its cost would not therefore fall upon the Society's reserves.

MC agreed to ask the editor, Andrew Henderson for an update on progress for the next Executive Committee meeting.

Action: Martin Coath

10. Editorial and Records Committee

BW described the work going on to bring the database of accepted and rejected rarities up to date. The website page has not been refreshed for some considerable time, and BW suggested that it served no useful purpose and should be deleted.

Action: Barry Wright, Robin Mace, Chris Abrams

A KOS member had complained that some of his records, which he believed that he had submitted correctly, had not appeared in KBR. BW has had the opportunity to speak with him and explain the proper procedure.

BW advised the committee that a vacancy would arise in the BBRC this year.

11. Conservation and Surveys Committee

GA informed the committee that two members of the C&S Sub-Committee had tendered their resignation. The BTO representative, Sally Hunter is moving away from Kent and will be replaced by Geoff Horton.

Tim Hodge has made a tremendous effort over many years to promote greater involvement in ornithological survey work, but feels that this interest is not shared by sufficient members of KOS, including many KOS committee members, and is therefore with reluctance stepping down. He will continue with his work in maintaining the Kent *Atlas* website and validating Atlas records for the BTO.

The Chairman expressed his gratitude to Sally and Tim for their valued contribution to the work of the Society and his sentiments were warmly endorsed by all members of the Executive Committee.

GA announced that he would be seeking two new members for the C&S Sub-Committee, one to replace Tim Hodge and another to replace a member appointed a year ago who has unfortunately not been able to attend its meetings.

Action: Gordon Allison

The matter of Natural England representation on the Sub-Committee, which has been vacant for nearly a year, was also discussed. EC members agreed that NE participation was extremely important, but understood that the present financial restraints applying to the agency made its position very difficult.

GA summarised the main conservation issues being considered by the Sub-Committee, including onshore wind farms, paragliding, various small-scale developments and the proposed privatisation of Forestry Commission woodlands.

The proposed development of woodland at Chattenden was of great concern as the site holds a nationally important number of Nightingale territories. KOS President Don Taylor has written in support of representations made by the Medway Countryside Forum, but so far without acknowledgement or response. The C&S Sub-Committee will discuss this matter at its next meeting.

Action: Gordon Allison

12. Any other business

MC informed the Committee that Paul Cumberland, a KOS member and proprietor of '*Birds Birds Birds*' in Faversham, had generously offered to sponsor the Society for a specific, but undefined project, and the Chairman asked members for expressions of interest.

Action: All members

13. Date of next meeting

6.30pm Wednesday 6 April 2011 at Brogdale Farm, Brogdale Road, Faversham, ME13 8XZ

Attachment A



Kent Ornithological Society Executive Committee Meeting – 20th January 2011

Membership Secretary's report

- The membership data base is working well and is installed on a new laptop. As of January 20th 2011:-
- We currently have 39 non paying members.
- We have 644 fully paid up ordinary members.
- We have a further 13 paid up members who are debtors i.e. still pay £9 on a standing order.
- Current membership is therefore 696. [Current mailing list] A Small increase since we last met.
- There are 468 *lapsed* members on the data base, 118 in the *lapsed historic* category, and 138 in the *ceased* category.
- Since April 2010 30 new members have joined the society.
- We have email addresses for 550 members. (Therefore 146 whom we would have to contact via snailmail.)
- Seven members have addresses abroad on the data base. Three members in Canada, one in each of Spain, France, Italy and Hong Kong.
- So membership is slightly increasing. We need to do more. Leaflets. Conference? Presence at Birdfairs etc. Asking birders and others we meet on our travels?

Chris Roome

Attachment B

KOS membership survey

I am ploughing slowly through the survey returns and analysing the results. This is taking a bit longer than I had anticipated and having put the operation on hold to go to South Africa and then do my KBR stuff, it has taken time to get back into it.

I hope to complete a report in the next two weeks and thought that this could

1. Go in the Newsletter, as a means of feeding back to members (I have spoken to John about this)
2. Be reported to the AGM
3. Be considered by the next Executive meeting which could then draw up an action plan in response, this could then be reported back to the members either at the AGM or through the newsletter (or both). Might be worth having an Exec meeting in March to consider the results of the survey-i.e. before the AGM

Interesting results so far but I haven't got round to analyse the perceptions elements.

263 Surveys were completed which I think is over 40% of the membership, which is a reasonable return. The age profile is as we might have expected in that it is heavily skewed to older people. 29% are over 70 and 63% are over 60. Assuming that it reflects the profile of the membership generally and not by those more inclined to complete the forms then it suggest that our membership numbers are likely to reduce significantly over the next 10 years. From the returns it would appear that 1% of members are dead already. Less than 4% of the returns were from people under 40 and there were only three returns from people under 30

Of the groupings that I have analysed so far (the older age categories which may not be representative):

91% of members are members of the RSPB (37% belong to a local group)

58% belong to the KWT & 50% to the National Trust

A surprising 6% are Friends of Rye Harbour

In terms of media use

27% of members read British Birds but only 1% read Birding World

35% of members listen to Radio Kent (though this may be skewed by older members)

A full analysis and report will be circulated shortly

Brendan

Attachment C

Kent Ornithological Society

Charity No. 212489

Annual Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2010

2009	<u>Statement of Financial Activities</u>		2010
	Income		
7,323	Subscriptions, net of PayPal fees (£24, 2009 £18)		7,636
855	Income tax recovered under Gift Aid		873
255	Donations		204
931	Interest		629
367	Meetings		295
99	Sale of Kent Bird Reports		232
30	Sales of DVDs		60
120	Advertisements		80
<u>9,980</u>			<u>10,009</u>
	Expenditure		
	Estimated cost of 2010 KBR	3,500	
3,783	Overprovision for 2007 & 2008 KBRs	<u>(112)</u>	3,388
3,794	Other Printing, Postage, Stationery, etc.		4,640
637	Meetings		445
110	Insurance		110
605	Website & IT Expenses		1,158
-	Donations		-
-	Sundry Purchases		606
275	Depreciation of Computers & Equipment		495
<u>9,204</u>			<u>10,842</u>
776	Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year		(833)
<u>31,438</u>	Total Reserves brought forward		<u>32,214</u>
<u>32,214</u>	Total Reserves carried forward	[Note (a)]	<u>31,381</u>

2009	<u>Balance Sheet</u>		2010
	Assets		
305	Tangible Fixed Assets:	[Note (b)]	490
	Current Assets:		
31,138	Barclays Bond	31,761	
1,906	Cash at Bank - Current & PayPal A/cs	523	
10,957	Cash at Bank - Deposit A/c	6,962	
27	Cash in Hand	<u>18</u>	39,264
140	Debtors & Prepayments		256

44,473		40,010
	Liabilities	
	Current Liabilities:	
	Provision for KBRs	7,000
12,259	Other Creditors	1,629
32,214	Net Assets	31,381
16,530	Birds of Kent Fund	16,860
15,684	General Fund	14,521
32,214		31,381
		31,381

Notes on draft 2010 KOS accounts

INCOME

Subscriptions

This shows an increase over 2009, continuing the reversal of the decline experienced up until 2008. (Subscription income in 2000 was £7,909 although in 2001 & 2002 it was c£7,300. It fell steadily from £7,798 in 2004 to 2008).

Some of these new members signed up for Gift Aid enabling us to more than offset our losses.

Interest

The interest rate on the Barclays Bond fell again this year in line with the expectation of low rates continuing.

Meetings

Income from meetings is down on 2010 because of the cancellation of the meeting in January and the postponement of the December meeting until January 2011. Allowing for these, we are on a par with 2009.

KBR Sales

Sales in 2009 were very low, in 2010 we were much closer to the average for the decade.

EXPENDITURE

KBR

Actual costs of producing the two KBRs this year were slightly less than the amounts provided. I have provided £3,500 each for the 2009 and 2010 KBRs based on current prices and the production of the same number of copies.

Other Printing, Postage, etc.

There was a net £846 increase in 2010 compared with 2009. In 2010 we sent out a questionnaire at the cost of £660; however in 2009 the special “Atlas” newsletter cost £439 so the net effect of “one-offs” is only £221. The bulk of the increase arises from inflation in printing and postage rates plus an increased number of members receiving newsletters.

Meetings

Expenditure was down in 2010 because for two meetings we used committee members instead of more expensive outside speakers.

Website & IT Expenses

Expenditure in 2010 includes the following one-off items: £300 cost of setting up the data base and £480 cost of putting the Atlas data on the website. This leaves £378 for regular expenditure compared with £605 for 2009 when we incurred a number of expenses related to the change in website provider during the year.

Sundry Purchases

This is the cost of gifts to committee members who retired in the year.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY:

The deficit for the year £833 is wholly accounted for by the one-off items referred to above (total £2,046); without them we would be in surplus.

I have increased the Birds of Kent Fund by the equivalent of interest earned on this fund during the year, as has been done in previous years. In August I suggested that the £480 cost of putting the Atlas on the website could be deducted from the BoK Fund but on further consideration I have deducted it from the General Fund. This will reduce the risk of us being challenged on the level of funds we carry relative to our annual outgoings.