



**Kent Ornithological Society**  
Providing information about Birds and Birdwatching in Kent

## **Executive Committee**

**Minutes** of a Meeting held on Thursday 26 February 2015 at 7:00pm at Brogdale Farm, Brogdale Road, Faversham, Kent ME13 8XZ

**Present:** Martin Coath(Chair), Jack Chantler, Mike Henty, Norman McCanch, Keith Privett, Chris Roome, Mike Roser, Stephen Wood, Barry Wright.

### **1. Chairman's Welcome and apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from, Robin Mace, Tony Morris, Geoff Orton, Brendan Ryan and Anthea Skiffington

### **2. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2014(Attachment A), were accepted as an accurate record.

### **3. Promotions and Publicity**

BR was unable to be present, but had spoken with JC, who updated members on progress with the website re-design. Most of the work has now been completed, the main exceptions being the photograph gallery and persisting problems with defining editing rights to the blog spots. Brendan is being assisted by Nigel Jarman.

After a general discussion, it was resolved to ask BR to complete the work by May 2015, and MC agreed to discuss this with him when he returned from holiday.

BW volunteered to publicise the re-designed website via the KOS Facebook page and suggested that BR might be able to do the same via the KOS Twitter account.

**Action: Martin Coath, Brendan Ryan, Barry Wright**

#### **4. Membership**

CR reported that membership continues to fall, and that a number of subscriptions are significantly overdue. He has discontinued membership benefits to those concerned, and this has had the effect of accelerating the decline. There are currently 672 paid-up members.

He also highlighted the phenomenon of new members who do not renew their subscriptions after the first year. 32 new members enrolled during 2014. Email addresses are known for 430 members. Two-thirds of members pay by standing order.

It was noted that the issue of membership numbers is to be discussed at the AGM on 9 April, and various suggestions were made for ways to improve the recruitment. CR suggested that we should give more publicity to our conservation activities. BW agreed to contact New Generation Birders to find out if they have any members in Kent who might be interested in joining KOS.

(see <http://www.birdguides.com/webzine/article.asp?a=4139>)

**Action: Chris Roome, Barry Wright**

#### **5. Kent Bird Report**

KP reported that preparation of *KBR 2013* was running about two months behind schedule because of the late submission of some species summaries, and also the late publication of the *Dungeness Bird Observatory Report*. He believes that it would be helpful to recruit additional writers, and MR expressed an interest in joining the team after he gives up his present role as Outdoor Meetings Organiser. Anthea Skiffington has also volunteered to help with proof-reading. KP thanked them on behalf of the Editorial Committee.

He also appealed for more photographs to be made available, and BW agreed to provide additional rarity photos.

**Action: Keith Privett, Mike Roser, Anthea Skiffington, Barry Wright**

#### **6. Kent Breeding Bird Atlas 2008 – 13**

SW informed the meeting that the text, maps and photographs were virtually complete. It had been decided to have hard covers for the *Atlas* in order to make it more durable, and he was awaiting a final price for this from LTD Design.

CR estimated that members would probably account for 400 copies, and emphasised that they should be offered some degree of discount over non-members. MH suggested that members be offered free P&P. NM pointed out that the *Atlas* would be an important document to be consulted when planning applications are submitted.

It was resolved that a small group be set up to take forward arrangements for publicity, pricing and distribution, and CR agreed to organise this in conjunction with MH and SW.

**Action: Stephen Wood, Chris Room, Mike Henty**

## **7. KOS News**

Norman McCanch reported that he continues to accumulate material for future editions of the newsletter, and that the next issue is on schedule for March.

MR volunteered to write a summary of his five years of experience of organising outdoor meetings, and will send it to NM.

**Action: Norman McCanch, Mike Roser**

## **8. Treasurer's Report**

MH drew members' attention to his draft accounts for 2014, previously circulated (Attachment B). He proposed that discussion should be deferred to the AGM, and this was agreed.

**Action: Mike Henty**

## **9. Indoor Meetings**

In the absence of AS this item was deferred until the next meeting.

**Action: Anthea Skiffington**

## **10. Outdoor Meetings**

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked and congratulated Mike Roser on his five years of service in organising outdoor meetings. These have been very much enjoyed by participants, and attendances have been consistently good, despite some very challenging conditions, such as wet and windy Kentish winters and disruptive engineering work at Oare Marshes. Mike announced that Ray O'Reilly had kindly agreed to take over from him, and members expressed their appreciation to both Mike and Ray.

In passing, it was noted that as MR would no longer be attending future EC meetings, he would be unable to arrange the use of Brogdale. SW agreed to look into suitable alternatives.

**Action: Mike Roser, Ray O'Reilly, Stephen Wood**

## **11. Website and Forum**

See Item 3.

## **12. Editorial and Records Sub-Committee**

BW discussed issues of confidentiality concerning certain species such as Ruddy Duck, and agreed to circulate guidelines on reporting.

He reported that Chris Hindle and Malcolm McVail have both agreed to extend the period of their membership of the Rarity Panel, and EC members expressed their thanks and approval.

**Action: Barry Wright**

## **13. Conservation and Surveys Sub-Committee**

NM reported that the C&S Committee had met on 18 December 2014. He highlighted the continuing difficulty in recruiting members to take part in survey work. He illustrated this by his experience of the WeBS scheme, which is poorly covered in parts of Kent. However, as the organiser for West and East (but not North) Kent, he had recently managed to take on two new counters. Nevertheless, he could not be confident of committing KOS to future BTO or RSPB surveys.

**Action: Norman McCanch**

## **14. Any Other Business**

None reported

## **15. Date and Time of the Next Meeting:**

The 64th Annual General Meeting of the Kent Ornithological Society  
Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2015 at 7.15pm at Grove Green Community Hall, Grovewood Drive, Maidstone ME14 5TQ.

# Attachment A



## Executive Committee

**Minutes** of a Meeting held on Thursday 30 October 2014 at 7:00pm at Brogdale Farm, Brogdale Road, Faversham, Kent ME13 8XZ

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

### 1. Chairman's Welcome and apologies for absence

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

### 2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2014(Attachment A), were accepted as an accurate record.

### 3. Promotions and Publicity

BR gave a detailed account of the redesign of the KOS Website, which is nearly complete. The result should be launched in the next couple of weeks. Much of the existing content and a great deal of new material will be available on the new site. Where old content, such as the Atlas pages, cannot be transferred, they will continue in the old format with appropriate links to the new site.

Twitter feeds will be supported, and selected tweets will automatically be displayed on the main page. PCs, mobiles and tablets will be supported and content will automatically be formatted to match the receiving device. Links to members' blogs will also be provided, and in future, committee meetings will be displayed here in pdf

format. A list is being drawn up of links to other birding societies and similar sources of information.

MR asked if it would be possible to restrict access to certain parts of the website to KOS members. In reply, BR felt that it would be neither practicable – and would require tedious password protection - nor particularly desirable, as he believed that the site would act as a powerful incentive for visitors to take up membership.

It was suggested that obituaries should in future appear on-line, and this received wide support, although it was pointed out that this need not preclude their inclusion in the *KBR* where appropriate.

The Chairman thanked Brendan for all the work that he and his colleagues have put into this project and looked forward to seeing the new site in action.

**Action: Brendan Ryan**

#### **4. Membership**

CR was unfortunately not able to be present, but forwarded his report. This showed that on October 21 2014, the Society had 623 fully paid-up ordinary members. A further 9 members continue to pay at the reduced concessionary rate of £9, while 32 are currently in arrears. Thus the total membership stands at 664 – an increase of 13 since the last meeting. Over the last year, however, membership has contracted, which CR attributes to his taking a more robust stance towards those in arrears.

**Action: Chris Roome**

#### **5. Kent Bird Report**

MC congratulated KP on the successful production and publication of *KBR 2012*, and members of the EC warmly endorsed his views.

KP described progress on *KBR 2013*, and is presently awaiting data from Robin Mace. He noted that the team of species group writers is now down to fewer than a dozen, and that he hoped to recruit more. MC agreed to take on the shearwaters report

A wide-ranging discussion followed, covering the problems of proof-reading and the validation of records supported by only a single observer.

**Action: Keith Privett, Jack Chantler, Robin Mace**

#### **6. Kent Breeding Bird Atlas 2008 – 13**

SW provided an update on the *Atlas* project. He told members that the introductory section had been edited and proof-read, and he distributed copied of the contents page by way of illustration.

The species accounts receiving their final editing, and John Cantelo has kindly agreed to proof-read the result. SW also thanked Anthea Skiffington for proof-reading the introductory section. He told the Committee that he had recently given a presentation of the project to the annual conference of the Kent Field Club, and that he believed that it had been well-received.

Members discussed the financial aspects of the project. MH stated that he believed that the *Atlas* should be priced so that the Society does not make a loss overall, although he recognised that recovery of the outlay would take several years. MC felt that KOS members should be offered the publication at a discount – perhaps free postage and packing, for instance - and this was supported by members.

Finally, there was general support for a companion volume to cover winter birds in Kent, and SW agreed to raise this with his colleagues.

**Action: Stephen Wood**

## **7. KOS News**

In the absence of Norman McCanch, this item was deferred.

**Action: Norman McCanch**

## **8. Treasurer's Report**

MH presented his Finance Report (Attachment B). The cost of the *KBR 2012* was significantly higher than had been anticipated due to increased postal charges because of its extra weight, compared to the previous edition. MH led a discussion about future *KBR* costs, and it was resolved to continue its funding from the Society's reserves, rather than to reduce its size or quality. Members felt that the *KBR* is highly valued by subscribers, and that the membership would not wish to see its quality deteriorate. MH considered that it was unnecessary to consider an increase in the membership subscription rate before the 2016 AGM. It was agreed, however that the time had come to withdraw the concessionary rate, and that in future, all members would be asked to pay the same subscription.

**Action: Mike Henty**

## **9. Indoor Meetings**

AS discussed recent and forthcoming meetings. As an experiment, the November meeting will be a Members' Evening, with three short contributions given by KOS members. BR and JC agreed to present '20 years of Bockhill', together with an account of a recent trip to Ethiopia, and it was hoped that Andy Lawson would be able to give a talk on Shetland.

As announced that the annual Quiz Night would be in February next year.

**Action: Anthea Skiffington**

## **10. Outdoor Meetings**

MR described the two trips that had taken place so far this season. There had been fog to start with at Sandwich Bay, but this was turned to advantage as members were able to observe a ringing session carried out by SBBO volunteers, which they all found very interesting.

The most recent trip had been to Dungeness, led as usual by Andy Lawson, but MR had not been able to attend in person and was awaiting feedback from participants.

The next outing will be to Oare Marshes, but Mike warned that vehicle access will be difficult, as the Environment Agency is carrying out work at the site.

**Action: Mike Roser**

## **11. Website and Forum**

Robin Mace was unable to attend, but had sent an email, in which he stated that the COBRA replacement system would be used for 2014 data, but that he hoped to run the two systems in parallel at first.

**Action: Robin Mace**

## **12. Editorial and Records Sub-Committee**

In the absence of Barry Wright, this item was deferred.

**Action: Barry Wright**

## **13. Conservation and Surveys Sub-Committee**

SW reported that the C&S Subcommittee had not met for some time, but that a meeting would be held before the end of the year. He noted that the long-standing controversy about the proposed Lodge Hill development continues to rumble on, and has become a significant issue in the Rochester and Strood by-election.

NM has been contacted by Collette Hall, of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust concerning a wild swan census to be carried out in January 2015. This will be done as an extension of the usual WeBS count, and Norman will co-ordinate it on our behalf.



He has also been in discussion with Hayley New, of the RSPB, on a possible conservation strategy for Turtle Doves in East Kent, which it is hoped, will involve local farmers. He will report back on this.

**Action: Norman McCanch, Stephen Wood**

#### **14. Any Other Business**

MH drew the committee's attention to an article in the RSPB Life Fellows' Magazine concerning the restoration to grazing marsh of Great Bell's Farm, on the Isle of Sheppey

#### **15. Date and Time of the Next Meeting:**

##### **The Next Meeting of the Executive Committee**

TBA. Suggested dates 19 or 26 February 2015. Please let SW know which of these would suit best.

## Attachment B

### **Kent Ornithological Society**

Charity No. 212489

#### Annual Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2014

<b>2013</b>	<b><u>Statement of Financial Activities</u></b>		<b>2014</b>
	<b>Income</b>		
7,478	Subscriptions, net of PayPal fees (£36, 2013 £37)		7,342
816	Income tax recovered under Gift Aid		819
196	Donations		577
536	Interest		372
286	Meetings		224
161	Sale of Kent Bird Reports		34
-	Sale of DVD		20
<u>9,473</u>			<u>9,388</u>
	<b>Expenditure</b>		
	Estimated cost of 2014 KBR	6,100	
5,123	Under-provision for earlier KBRs	<u>1,273</u>	7,373
396	Other Printing, Postage, Stationery, etc.		695
706	Meetings		623
113	Insurance		113
232	Website & IT Expenses		555
233	Donations		-
552	Costs of Atlas of Breeding Birds		216
55	Sundry Purchases		198
260	Depreciation of Computers & Equipment		140
<u>7,670</u>			<u>9,913</u>
1,803	Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year		(525)
30,434	Total Reserves brought forward		32,237
<u>32,237</u>	Total Reserves carried forward	[Note (a)]	<u>31,712</u>

<b>2013</b>	<b><u>Balance Sheet</u></b>		<b>2014</b>
	<b>Assets</b>		
270	Tangible Fixed Assets:	[Note (b)]	130
	Current Assets:		
36,534	Barclays Bond & CAF 90 Day A/c	28,904	
2,881	Cash at Bank - Current & PayPal A/cs	12,732	
2,470	Cash at Bank - Deposit A/c	2,472	
100	Cash in Hand	<u>119</u>	44,227
113	Debtors & Prepayments		269
<u>42,368</u>			<u>44,626</u>

<b>Liabilities</b>			
	Current Liabilities:		
	Provision for KBRs	11,800	
10,131	Other Creditors	<u>1,114</u>	12,914
<u>32,237</u>	Net Assets		<u>31,712</u>
17,092	Birds of Kent Fund		16,876
<u>15,145</u>	General Fund		<u>14,836</u>
<u>32,237</u>			<u>31,712</u>

### **Notes to draft 2014 Accounts**

#### **Main Differences 2013 v 2014**

##### **Income**

##### **Subscriptions £7,330**

This is £136 down on 2013, which was £310 down on 2012. In 2008 we recorded the lowest level of subscriptions at £6,820; in 2000 (the earliest year for which I have records) it was £7,909.

##### **Donations £577**

This is £381 higher than 2013 because we received £450 in memory of George Shannon whereas in 2013 the only non-regular donation was £50 in respect of a talk given by Chris Roome.

##### **Interest £372**

Down by £164 partly because interest rates fell still farther and partly because £8,000 was transferred from an interest-earning account to our current account to fund the atlas (but not utilised so far).

##### **Meetings £224**

Down by £62 even though we had one more meeting in 2014 (the October 2013 meeting was cancelled). Attendances continue to fall and the average admission receipts are now £34 per meeting while the hire of the Hall is £39 per night and the average cost of a speaker £90; net cost £95 per meeting.

##### **Sales of KBRs £34**

Down by £127. This is always a variable number but this is the lowest of the current millennium.

##### **Expenditure**

##### **KBR £7,373**

An increase of £2,250 of which £1,150 is the extra costs of the 2012 and 2013 KBRs not provided for in the 2013 accounts.

**Other Printing, Postage, etc. £695**

An increase of £299 of which £105 is the cost of posting our newsletters (zero in 2013) and the balance is increased Memberships Secretary's postage.

**Meetings £623**

This is lower by £83 primarily because we had a “free” members evening.

**Website & IT £555**

An increase of £323 represented by the cost of the website refurbishment £425 less savings on other costs.

**Donations £0**

We made no donations in 2014, compared to £233 in 2013.

**Atlas £216**

These further costs will be charged to the Birds of Kent Fund as were the 2013 costs.

**Sundry Purchases £198**

This is our contribution to the cost of digitising George Shannon's films.

**Depreciation £140**

This is £120 down on 2013 as we only have one fixed asset (a laptop) not fully written off (the balance to be charged in the 2015 accounts).

**Summary**

There is a deficit for the year of £525 of which £216 is charged against the Birds of Kent Fund leaving £309 to go against General Reserves. Given that 2014 has borne the extra costs of earlier years' KBRs of £1,150 that (fingers crossed) should not be repeated to this extent, a surplus is expected in 2015.