



Executive Committee

Minutes of a Meeting held on Thursday 1 November 2012 at 7:00pm at Brogdale Farm, Brogdale Road, Faversham, Kent ME13 8XZ

Present: Martin Coath, (Chair), John Cantelo, Jack Chantler, Rob Clements, Mike Henty, Ken Lodge, Geoff Orton, Keith Privett, Chris Roome, Mike Roser, Brendan Ryan AntheaSkiffington, Stephen Wood and Barry Wright.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chairman welcomed Rob Clements as the new chair of the Conservation and Surveys Sub-Committee and Geoff Orton as BTO representative, to their first meeting of the Executive Committee, as well as returning EC alumni Jack Chantler and Ken Lodge, who were in attendance for Item 5.

Apologies for absence were received from: Chris Abrams and Robin Mace.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 28June 2012 were accepted as an accurate record.**(Attachment A)**

3. Publicity

BR told the Committee that following his experience in establishing a Twitter account for Bockhill Birders, he had been working closely with Keiron Palmer to create Twitter and Facebook accounts for KOS. He explained that these could be used to announce KOS activities such as indoor and field meetings as well as to encourage new members to join us. However he emphasised that it was not intended to establish a bird information service similar to RBA or Bird Guides. He proposed to restrict the number of individuals who could tweet on behalf of the Society to himself, Keiron and one or two others so that unauthorised or malicious material could not be transmitted.

In answer to MH he confirmed that the service was free to both KOS and to users. Members welcomed this innovation and expressed their thanks to Brendan and Keiron for their efforts.

Action: Brendan Ryan

4. Membership

CR presented his membership report (**Attachment B**). He told the committee that the current membership stood at around 700 and that he had received encouraging comments from new members. An unforeseen consequence of this continued success is that we have run out of copies of the 2009 KBR to include in the new membership pack, and he has had to repossess copies from the RSPB shop at Dungeness !

Action: Chris Roome

5. Kent Bird Report

RM was unable to be present but had sent a report, which the Chairman read out (**Attachment C**).

Jack Chantler and Ken Lodge, long-standing members of the *KBR* production team described some of the problems which they had had lately in completing *KBR 2010* together with their suggestions for future improvements. They noted that Robin was clearly overburdened with work and had indicated his desire to step down as *KBR* Editor while continuing as Archivist, but that this had so far proved impossible because no-one had stepped forward to replace him as Editor. They therefore proposed the following arrangements be brought into effect:

- The Archivist will be responsible for distributing sightings data to the writers and for maintaining a list of observers.
- Responsibility for maintenance of the gazetteer should be clarified.
- 'Aspects of the Year' should be prepared by the Editorial and Records Committee.
- Mike Gould will be responsible for photographic content.
- The Ringing Report will be provided by Chris Hindle.
- The list of KOS officers will be maintained by Steve Wood.
- The Systematic List will be prepared by Jack Chantler and Ken Lodge.
- The arrangement for the maintenance of the list and count of rarities, first and last dates of migrants and special articles remains to be settled.

Jack and Ken proposed that a *KBR* Sub-Committee be established to take on the editorial role formerly invested in a single person. After a wide-ranging discussion the Executive Committee accepted the proposals and appointed JCh and KL together with Keith Privett to be the core members of the Sub-Committee, with the authority to co-opt further members at their discretion. JCh agreed to act as the *KBR* chairman and also to be a co-opted member of the EC to report on its progress.

The issue of whether professional assistance was required with certain technical aspects of *KBR* production was discussed and MH agreed that up to £1,000 could be made available at the request of the new Sub-Committee.

Action: Jack Chantler, Robin Mace

6. *NewBirds of Kent*

BR reported that he had been in correspondence with Andrew Henderson and that he had reiterated the EC's offer of help with the project.

Rob Clements spoke as the new chair of the C&S Sub-Committee. He proposed that we should immediately set about the production of breeding season atlas based on the mapping already published on the KOS Website, together with a short explanatory text for each species. He believed that the C&S Sub-Committee already had sufficient resources and expertise to complete this project, but if necessary he could call upon the wider KOS membership to assist.

RC acknowledged that technical help would be required with aspects of digital mapping and he had entered into discussions with Chris Dee who had been responsible for the Hertfordshire Atlas and who would be prepared to help with an equivalent Kent atlas. He requested financial assistance from the EC in funding this.

RC suggested that the atlas could be published either as part of a future edition of the *KBR* – as with the last atlas in 1996 *KBR*, or as a stand-alone book. It could also be made available on-line. He believed that it would be possible to complete the project in about a year.

In discussion SW strongly supported RC's proposal and pointed out that the reputation of KOS was seriously impaired by its difficulty in the timely publication of annual reports and other material. He believed that if a breeding bird atlas could be published within a year or so it would do much to improve the perception of the Society in birding circles.

John Cantelo expressed the view that we should be careful to ensure that the publication of an atlas did not damage the prospects of the *NewBirds of Kent*, and that Andrew Henderson should be fully involved.

The Executive Committee agreed that RC should proceed with preparations and should establish the likely costs. MC agreed to brief Andrew Henderson on the proposals.

Action: Rob Clements, Martin Coath

7. KOS News

John Cantelo told the Executive Committee that the last two issues of the Newsletter are now available on-line as .pdf files and that the next issue will be the last to be published as a hard paper copy. CR reported that so far he had received only 16 requests for continued provision of paper copies, but he expects this to rise when the

routine circulation ceases. He emphasised that if the desired cost-savings were to be achieved, then future hard copies could only be simple laser prints of the electronic version, provided by special arrangement to a small and diminishing number of members. The EC endorsed this view.

Action: John Cantelo, Chris Roome

8. Treasurer's Report

MH presented his report (**Attachment D**). He considered that if the move to electronic publication of *KOSN* achieved the anticipated savings then there would be no need to increase subscriptions.

Although the current account showed a deficit of around £1,500 for the year, this was adequately covered by reserves. Action has been taken to control expenditure in the next financial year as noted above.

Action: Mike Henty

9. Indoor Meetings

The Committee recorded its thanks to Marcus Lawson for his splendid effort in organising indoor meetings over the last few years and wished him well in his new home in Dorset.

AntheaSkiffington agreed to take over responsibility for organizing the programme and recruiting speakers in 2013, although she could not guarantee to attend all meetings, and would therefore need help with practical matters such as unlocking the hall and setting up AV equipment. CR currently holds the key to the hall and is in possession of the projector.

Action: AntheaSkiffington, Chris Roome

John Cantelo reported that he had looked into the possibility of holding a conference, but it appeared that the cost of hiring a suitable venue would be prohibitive. He will continue to explore the possibilities.

Action: John Cantelo

10. Outdoor Meetings

MR reported that new members had been appreciative of several outdoor meetings, which were averaging 13 to 22 participants per trip.

Action: Mike Roser

11. Website and Forum

CA reported via email that there had been no recent issues affecting the website apart from the addition of several hundred fake members! This appears to be a problem with the hosting service rather than the KOS website itself and should not affect its performance.

Action: Chris Abrams

12. Editorial and Records Sub-Committee

BW noted that the E&R Sub-Committee had met in July when the main topic was *KBR 2011*. There had also been a discussion concerning the replacement of COBRA but without any conclusion being reached.

Action: Barry Wright

13. Conservation and Surveys Sub-Committee

MC thanked RC for taking over the chair of the C&S Sub-Committee following the resignation of Marcus Lawson.

RC summarised some of the topics recently covered including the BTO Nightingale Survey and work on a variety of other species. He informed the EC that an Avian Population Estimates Panel had been set up to establish best evidence for bird populations in Kent.

Action: Rob Clements

14. Any Other Business

Honorary Life Vice Presidents

SW pointed out that with the recent sad news of the death of EH Gillham, the Society had only two Honorary Life Vice Presidents, Ken Lodge whom we were fortunate to welcome to the present meeting, and Jim Allen who now lived outside the county and played little part in KOS activities. He suggested that an additional HLVP should be sought and asked the Chairman to take this up with the President, Don Taylor.

Action: Martin Coath, Don Taylor

Kent & Medway Biological Records Centre

MR announced that KMBRC would be mounting a conference during 2013 and hoped that KOS would consider putting up a speaker. This was strongly endorsed by the EC.

Action: Mike Roser

Dates of Future Meetings

All meetings will be held on a Thursday evening:

2013	January 17,	April 4 (AGM),	July 18,	October 24
2014	January 16,	April 10 (AGM),	July 24,	October 23

Date and Time of the Next Meeting:

Next Meeting of the Executive Committee: Thursday 17 January 2013 at 7.00pm
at Brogdale Farm, Brogdale Road, Faversham, Kent ME13 8XZ

Attachment A



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 BirdsBirds*' 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 B

Membership Secretary's report

- As of October 30th 2012 :-
- We currently have **33** non paying members. [Mainly these are honorary members, lifelong members etc]
- We have **658** 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 **700** [Current mailing list] The apparent fall is accounted for by some 22 members who have all had two reminders in the current year, one in February and another in March - either by email, letters and phone calls - a combination of methods – but have not paid subs and have therefore been deemed to have lapsed. Since April 2011, **81 new** members have joined the society (Compared with 42 in 2010/11 – an increase of over 50%)
- Membership has been slowly growing – but we need to attract new members too. Leaflets have been circulated – and some used – and the website does produce a constant stream of new members.
- Anecdotally, a range of conversations with various members encountered in the County, in hides, beside marshes and gravel pits etc has pointed to a generally favourable view of the society and a recognition of the good work it is doing. (I have also received generally positive comment about *KOS News* going electronic.)
- New members have – for the past two months – been receiving the 2008 KBR as part of their Welcome Pack. I have no more hard copies of the 2009 Report.

Chris Roome

Membership Secretary

30 October 2012

Attachment C

KBR Editor's Report

KBR 2010

Now that all the queries on the Systematic List have been sorted I am working to get the report together for the printers by mid-November. I will arrange a final meeting with Ken and Jack to go through the copy before I send to the printers.

KBR 2011.

I am working on the 2011 data to get ready for the next KBR as soon as I can. If there is anything I can do to help whoever is taking over the editor's job I will, of course, make myself available.

Printers

I had an interesting meeting with a rep from Lavenham Printers. Their costs for producing a KBR are on a par with (if not slightly cheaper than) Press-on-the-Lake. They offer a significantly better turn round than POTL (maximum 10 working days against 4 weeks+). The main problem is that the way copy is provided will be different (I won't go into technical details here but it relates to photographs) and so would need careful consideration. The quality of their printing is at least as good as POTL and in some other respects (e.g.binding) better.

COBRA

Suffice to say that I have not made much progress on this. There are 2 products under consideration and I need to make a reasoned decision on this. As soon as KBR 2010 has gone to the printers and data sheets for writers for 2011 are out I can concentrate on this for a period. There are many aspects to consider, not least what is provided to Area recorders. The costs of providing all current COBRA users is likely to be in the order of £600 maximum.

Robin Mace

KBR Editor

30 October 2012

Attachment D

Treasurer's Report

Financial Balances

As of today the available funds are:

Current account c£4,000

Deposit account £6,968

PayPal account £32 (so far this year 70 members have paid subs via PayPal and I have transferred £1,120 to our current account), and

Cash £41.

The Barclays Bond will stand at £33,045.77 when it matures on 14th November

Our sound cash position has been boosted by the fact that we have not paid for a KBR this yet to date.

Financial Accounts

Very rough calculations indicate that we will have a deficit in 2012 of around £1,500. This is adequately covered by our reserves.

Critical to assessing the position for 2013 will be the projected costs of newsletters. In 2012 the cost of four newsletters was £3,895. If we substantially reduce this cost for 2013 there will be no need to increase subscriptions.

Barclays Bond

On maturity at 14 November we will be able to enter into another one-year bond but no shorter period is on offer. The key question is: will we need any of these funds in the next twelve months to finance the Birds of Kent?

If it is possible that some of this sum will be needed, alternative investments will have to be discussed.

Mike Henty

Treasurer

30 October 2012