

Kent Ornithological Society

Executive Committee – Draft Minutes

2nd September 2020 (via zoom)

Present: Martin Coath, Chris Roome, Mike Henty, Murray Orchard, Andre Farrar, Barry Wright, Keith Privett, , Brendan Ryan

Apologies: Stephen Wood, Ray O'Reilly, Robin Mace

1. Key matters for decision or discussion

1.1 Birds of Kent Checklist

Steve Wood had done an excellent job developing a prototype based on a similar product from Hampshire. It was agreed that BW would have a detailed look at the checklist over the next week. He would circulate his comments to initiate an on-line discussion through which a consensus on the final format could be agreed.

The committee discussed whether this was going to be an on-line product or a printed booklet type publication. The general feeling was that it should be printed and should be used to promote membership of the Society.

The potential of getting sponsorship was discussed.

There was an opportunity to tie in the publication with the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the founding of KOS

Action: BW to draft observations and circulate to the committee

1.2 Birds of Kent

The project brief has been written and circulated. MO would run past Garganey Consulting to see if they could assist in this project. Andrew Henderson was happy to provide the exiting data and to be involved in the editorial team. Other members suggested as forming the steering group included MO, BR, SW and Chris Hindle. There were three key phases to the project, designing the species template, importing existing available data into the template, drafting any additional text for each species and embedding the work into the website with viewing limited to subscribers.

It was agreed that:

BR would circulate a screenshot from Cornell's Birds of the World.

MO would provide a link to the Birds of Herts website

MO would run the project brief past Garganey

1.3 Website refresh

Some frustrations were expressed about the website in terms of its general appearance and the need to keep information up to date. There seemed to be a lack of clarity on the various roles in oversight of the website. The need for a dedicated in-house person/team to manage the website was required. The committee should seek recruit a third member to assist the existing team. BR had provided a detailed analysis of the website and had suggested a number of changes required in the content, format and appearance of the site.

It was agreed

BR would re-circulate his analysis, identifying where content or format needed changing

MC would speak to Alan Fossey and SW about how management of the website could be improved

CR would speak to Michael Bennett to seek his help on the format and appearance changes

1.4 Promoting diversity

AF introduced a wide-ranging discussion which included how we engage a more diverse range of people in the Society and bird watching. Do we want to re-brand the Society so that it more inclusive but at the same time retains its focus on our main purpose. It was suggested while matters regarding the interface with members, communications and PR were being managed by the executive there had been limited progress. A new committee to sit alongside the Editorial and Records, Surveys and Conservation committee should focus on membership and communications issues. CR suggested that we might approach potential new committee members with skills and experience in this area.

It was agreed that:

BR would circulate an outline for a new committee structure

ARF would coordinate responses to the a new committee structure and bring forward a fuller paper on membership and communication issues to a future meeting

We make use of the 70th anniversary to step up our external communications and visibility in the media

1.5 Impact of Covid 19

MO set out some of the consequences on bird life and habitats resulting from Covid restrictions particularly the reduction of wardening on reserves and monitoring of breeding birds. There were concerns expressed that the Society didn't do enough to control the dissemination of news of scarce birds during lockdown but at the same time there was a feeling that we didn't see it as our role to pass judgement on how individual KOS members had interpreted the lockdown guidance and regulations.

2. Updates

2.1 Database replacement

Garganey Consultants had made some progress in building the new database but they were awaiting information from KOS to progress in areas like data transfer. This seems to have been as a result of the work needed to progress data for the 2019 KBR

It was agreed

CR would speak to RM about any blockages in providing Garganey with the information they required

2.2 Treasurer's Report.

MH had previously circulated an update. The 2018 KBR although improved in quality, cost around the same to print as the previous reports but postage had increased. The costs of the KBR were of no concerns within the existing budget provision. Concerns were expressed about the quality of the envelopes used to dispatch the KBR

2.3 Kent Bird Report

The new format was widely appreciated and praised. MO raised a number of proof reading issues that needed to be addressed.

2.4 Kent Breeding Atlas

It was suggested that the remaining atlases could be used as an introductory offer to encourage new members. No conclusion was reached

2.5 KOS Conference

CR confirmed the decision to postpone this year's conference to November 2020. A note to be put in the newsletter to let members know that a conference had originally been planned this year

3. Administrative matters

- 3.1 Minutes of meeting 22nd June- approved
- 3.2 Dates of meetings for 2021 agreed.
- 3.3 Next meeting 13th January 2021 (via zoom)