



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,AntheaSkiffingtonand 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 oflinks 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 AntheaSkiffington 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: AntheaSkiffington

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 A



Executive Committee

Minutes of a Meeting held on Thursday 10 July 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, Keith Privett, Chris Roome, Mike Roser, Brendan Ryan and Barry Wright.

1. Chairman's Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Anthea Skiffington and Stephen Wood.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2014 were accepted as an accurate record.

3. Promotions and Publicity

BR led the discussion and mentioned that he and TM hoped to co-opt a young volunteer who is currently working at the Medway CP project. Brendan will contact him. They and any other interested EC or other members or volunteers have agreed to form a Publicity Sub-committee reporting back to EC.

Action: Brendan Ryan, Tony Morris

BR felt that we need to use Twitter and update our Facebook page more frequently. Kent Birders have a Facebook page too. There is a big birding community out there. We can use these social media to advertise our Indoor and outdoor meetings, initiated by the relevant organiser, as well as other significant events or news.

Action: Brendan Ryan, Tony Morris, Anthea Skiffington

BR informed the committee that any discussion within Facebook can be restricted to KOS members; it can be moderated to remove any sensitive information or objectionable comments. As with the Forum this could be a source for the *KOS News*. It would be useful to discuss our social media parameters with our volunteer.

Alex has all but rebuilt the website, but we have to manage the data and content in the new format. Brendan can delegate the content to EC or other members, such as Mike Gould and Warren Baker. We will need to protect some of the existing pages such as old sightings and Atlas data and there will be a hyperlink to the old site.

We pay for the same hosting service. A lot of data now needs culling.

There will be a rolling programme of photos.

The Forum and Database will stand alone. It is hoped that the new site will be up and running at the end of the summer.

MC read out the main points from Andy's email about EC organisation. Some points are already on board; others will be discussed, but we cannot work on two KBRs at the same time as a lot of the important data does not reach us until at least six months after the end of the year.

It was agreed that Tony, Chris and Barry will attend the AGM of the Tonbridge RSPB AGM to talk about the KOS. They will of course publicise the new *Atlas*. Martin mentioned that he gave a brief talk at the end of the latest AGM of Maidstone RSPB.

Action: Brendan Ryan

4. Membership

CR reported that membership has fallen to 651 with only 13 joining this year. He has been robust in removing members who have not paid up after two reminders. He suggested that our publicity should emphasise the point that KOS is the only body responsible for maintaining records of birds in the county.

Action: Chris Roome

5. Kent Bird Report

KP reported that he is building the final version. It could have been out three months earlier, but for strategic delays. However useful additional records have arrived in the meantime. The report will go to the printers next week and CR will email members at the appropriate time. Other publicity will follow.

Action: Keith Privett, Jack Chantler, Chris Roome

RM reported that he will be chasing 2013 data to be processed in September.

Action: Robin Mace

Geoff will ask the BTO if we can include an article about the Nightingale survey, but it is not clear who owns the data.

Action: Geoff Orton

6. *Kent Breeding Bird Atlas 2008 – 11*

SW was unable to attend, but Norman McCanch gave members an update on progress. The book is progressing towards the proof reading stage, and all the photographs have been chosen by Gavin Coultrip and approved by the editorial committee. MC said that we would like to produce a Winter Atlas and Murray Orchard is keen, but there are no specific plans as yet. A third volume covering Kent rarities would also be desirable.

Action: Stephen Wood

7. *KOS News*

Norman McCanch commented that although *KOS News* is not a publication for up-to-date news, he believes that Chris Hindle's round-up of sightings is a useful and interesting item, and EC members agreed.

He has a number of book reviews on the stocks. One is The "Diaries of Collingwood Ingram", 1880-1981, who was a West Kent birder. It is a fascinating read.

Only 50 members receive a paper copy; 416 get the email of whom 67% open it - a high hit rate. A significant number apparently get nothing, but this has not been a real source of complaints.

Action: Norman McCanch

Barry Wright will supply the latest decisions on rarities.

Action: Barry Wright

There was a comment that those who get the hard copy get a lesser deal, but KP preferred to say that those who receive it online get an expanded version which includes more photos.

8. *Treasurer's Report*

MH referred the EC to his recent email. He had nothing further to report.

Action: Mike Henty

9. Indoor Meetings

Anthea has reported by email. It should not be difficult to get people to give talks at the November meeting, but they need not be committee members. We can use Social Media to ask for volunteers and Martin could ask on the Forum. Martin will ask Anthea to email something to Robin for the website.

Action: Anthea Skiffington

10. Outdoor Meetings

MR reported that Ray O'Reilly has agreed to take over from him the organisation of outdoor meetings. The Website, Forum and Social Media will be a triple spearhead of communication.

MR acknowledged that there is nothing original about the venues, but they are where people want to go, so we were all happy about that. Attendances are not high, but too many can be an embarrassment. There is usually either Mike and/or Chris in attendance as well. No one wanted to discontinue the service.

Action: Mike Roser

11. Website and Forum

This is still rather quiet, but still a means of communication and there was no real move to close it down.

12. Editorial and Records Sub-Committee

BW reported that there would be a meeting on Saturday 19th July probably at Sandwich Bay.

Action: Barry Wright

Robin Mace reported that the data transfer from COBRA is proceeding, but it is a major task. We will need to train Area Recorders in the new system.

Action: Robin Mace

13. Conservation and Surveys Sub-Committee

Norman reported that we shall soon be receiving the minutes of the June meeting. This covered surveys of Peregrines, Winter Thrushes, Turtle Doves, discussions about the Atlas, Sandwich Terns and Med Gulls in the Medway Estuary, where there may be money available for habitat creation, the possible appearance of Baillon's Crakes, the proposals for a Thames Estuary airport, the new Lower Thames Crossing and housing development in Thanet.

Action: Norman McCanch, Stephen Wood

14. Any Other Business

No recent deaths have been reported, but there will be four obituaries in the 2013 KBR.

Action: Keith Privett

Tony kindly offered to take over the key to Grove Green from Geoff for the October meeting.

Action: Tony Morris

15. Date and Time of the Next Meeting:

The favourite dates for the next meeting were either October 23rd or 30th. SW will confirm in due course.

Action: Stephen Wood

Attachment B

KOS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING - OCTOBER 2014

TREASURER'S REPORT

Financial Balances

As of 20th October the available funds are:

Current account c£12,488,

Deposit account £2,471,

CAF 90 Day account £8,228,

PayPal account £94 (so far this year 96 members have paid subs via PayPal and I have transferred £1,130 to our current account), and

Cash £48.

The Barclays Bond stands at £20,400; interest of £275 will be added at maturity on 14th November.

2012 KBR

The 2012 KBR cost £5,018 to print and post out to members. This compares with an anticipated cost provided for in the 2013 accounts of £4,500, resulting in a charge of £518 to hit the 2014 accounts.

The comparison with the 2011 KBR paid for in September 2013 is as follows:

	2011	2012 Actual	2012 "Full"
No of copies printed	800	730	730
No of pages per copy	224	252	252
Cost of printing	£3,335	£3,490	£3,740
Packing & postage	£1,183	£1,528	£1,528
Total cost	£4,518	£5,018	£5,268

No of copies posted to members	682	653	653
Printing cost per copy	£4.17	£4.78	£5.12
P & P cost per copy posted	£1.73	£2.34	£2.34
Total cost per member	£5.90	£7.12	£7.46

The printing costs of the 2012 KBR reflects a discount of £250 as compensation for poor quality reproduction of photos in 2011 so the effective “Full” cost is £3,740. Part of the difference between this amount and the charge for 2011 represents an increased “corrected” charge for the photos for which we had been “under-charged” in earlier years.

There is a 32% increase in the cost of postage. The extra 28 pages in the 2012 KBR pushed the weight above 500g so the postage rate was £2.01 per copy instead of £1.48 if it was under 500g (the 2011 KBR plus envelope weighed 483g). This 35% difference on the rate was mitigated by a saving on the number of copies.

2014 Financial Position

The financial position for 2014 will depend on what approach we take regarding the KBR: whether to continue as we did for 2012 or try to reduce costs. Do we reduce the number of pages to get below 500g? Do we reduce weight using different paper? Do we put in fewer photographs as they cost more than print?

If we do not change then the 2014 accounts will not only contain the additional charge of £518 for the 2012 KBR but a further charge of £700 for the 2013 KBR and a provision for the cost of the 2014 KBR exceeding £6,000 (equivalent to around £8.50 per copy posted to members).

Other Items:

Subscriptions. The decline seen over the last few years continues

Gift Aid. The tax recovery remains steady as those who sign up for gift aid are likely to be “committed” members.

Donations. We have received £450 in donations re George Shannon but utilised £198 of this in contributing to the digitising of his films.

Website. We spent £213 on initial costs of upgrading the website but nothing since.

Atlas. There are costs associated with the atlas which will appear as a charge in the year but be allocated against the Birds of Kent Reserve and so not reduce our general reserves.

Summary

For 2013 we had a surplus of £1,800. There will be no surplus in 2014 because of the higher costs of the 2012 and 2013 KBRs. If those higher costs had been anticipated in the 2013 accounts, the surplus would have reduced to around £800 and given us a surplus in 2014. Subject to any requirement to expend funds on any other items or projects, we could continue to produce the KBR in its current format for a number of years before annual deficits started to seriously eat into our reserves.

Subscription Rate

Given the comments in the above Summary, I see no reason to propose any change to the subscription rate at the AGM next April.