

Kent Ornithological Society

Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting

10th January 2019 7.00pm

Faversham Cricket Club

Present: Martin Coath (Chair), Chris Roome, Mike Henty, Murray Orchard, Brendan Ryan, Keith Privett, Andre Farrar, Ray O'Reilly

Apologies: Robin Mace, Barry Wright, Stephen Wood, Norman McCanch

1. Key matters for decision or discussion

1.1 KOS Conference – Feedback and review

It was widely agreed that the conference was an overwhelming success in terms of the programme, range and quality of speakers, venue, catering and organisation. The committee again gave its thanks and appreciation to CR and his team for all their work.

It was agreed that there would be no event in 2019.

1.2 KOS database – resilience and continuity

The committee's ongoing concern about the vulnerability of the Society's ornithological database and our over dependence on a single person to access the records was explored at length. Particular concerns were expressed about the risks posed by restricted access to the database and what the consequences would be should anything happen to the database manager. The limitations and suitability of Cobra was considered and whether steps needed to be taken to hasten its replacement especially as advances in database, GIS and cloud technologies created opportunities for better ways of gathering and storing our ornithological records. The Committee agreed:

- i. The Chairman should follow up his discussions with the database manager and agree the next actions to be taken in line with the Committee's wishes MC
- ii. As a business continuity requirement a copy of the database should be made and kept by the editor of the KBR RM
- iii. Efforts should be made to identify a deputy for the Database Manager and have them trained on the use of Cobra MC
- iv. The Database Manager will be asked to present the outline of a draft strategy for the replacement/upgrading of the existing database, setting out the key considerations and resource requirements MC
- v. A special meeting (project group) should be convened to consider a replacement for Cobra. The group should include the Database Manager; relevant people from the Records Committee and whatever external resources/advice deemed appropriate (e.g. representative from BirdTrack?) MC
- vi. The County Recorder should contact his counterparts in other counties to identify which systems they use to collect and store their ornithological records and identify any good practice that could be applied in Kent BW
- v. The Chairman should agree with the Database Manager priorities for when

he is fit enough to resume his duties. The Committee set these out as MC

1. Making a copy of the database to provide a backup
2. Extracting the RBBP data and providing this to MO
3. Extracting the records for the next KBR
4. Setting out an outline strategy/considerations for the replacement of Cobra

1.3 KOS database – access to records from third parties

The Society is occasionally asked by environmental consultants and others for data to assist in supporting or opposing planning applications. The Committee was asked to provide guidance in how to deal with such requests. It was agreed that the Society should decline such requests on the grounds that:

- i. We do not have the resources to recover the data requested in a timely manner
- ii. Without understanding the context of how the data will be used there is a risk that records or lack of them could be misused
- iii. Data for specific locations is likely to be ad hoc and not collected on a systematic basis, therefore of limited value and as above at risk being misused or misinterpreted
- iv. Environmental consultants might use data provided by the Society as a means to avoid undertaking proper and systematic field work
- v. The Society will continue to provide records to partner conservation bodies to support their work in responding to development and planning proposals

1.4 Advertising in the Newsletter

Guidance was sought from the committee on whether it was appropriate to carry paid adverts from commercial concerns in the Newsletter, the website and other media. It was agreed that:

- i. Subject to the editorial discretion of the Newsletter Editor paid bird related and relevant adverts could be included in the newsletter
- ii. The rate would be £40 for a full page and £20 for a half page
- iii. Payment should be made in advance to the Hon. Treasurer by bank transfer or cheque
- iv. There should be no advertising on the website, except through the link to the newsletter
- v. KOS members remain eligible to use the KOS Facebook page to sell ornithological related items such as second hand binoculars

1.5 Website: Oversight and management

The Committee continued its discussion on the ongoing management and development of the website and the principle previously agreed that there should be designated person(s) responsible for the content and development of the website and for managing the relationship with our external consultant. It is proposed that all changes, updates and thoughts on the website should be channelled through the designated person(s). Stephen Wood and Alan Fossey had been identified to carry out this role and a number of discussions outside the Committee had already taken place. The next step was to arrange a meeting with Michael Bennett. CR agreed to arrange this.

1.6 Draft Accounts 2018

MH presented the draft accounts for the year just ended. A few clarifications and adjustments remain to be actioned before they are subject to audit and the approval of the committee ahead of the AGM.

The Society's finances remain healthy with provisional reserves of £29,835.

It was agreed that membership subscriptions should be held at £12 for 2019

The feasibility of providing free membership to people under 18 was discussed.

It was agreed

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| i. | The audited accounts would be circulated to the Executive for approval before the AGM | MH |
| ii. | A donation of £150 to be made to the BTO to express the Society's appreciation of Andy Clements giving his time to the KOS conference | MH |
| iii. | Proposals of free membership and or other incentives for the under 18s to be considered at the next meeting | CR |

1.7 Communications and Publicity (standing item)

Now that KOS didn't run its own indoor meeting programme, the possibility of the Society promoting other meetings and talks around the county (RSPB, SBBO and local bird clubs) was discussed.

There was also a discussion about improving links to the local RSPB groups and a suggestion that we should have a nominated representative on each group in the county.

It was agreed:

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| i. | The Newsletter and website should include a diary of talks & events of other bird related groups across the county | NM |
| ii. | The possibility of closer relationships between the Society and local RSPB groups and nominated representatives to be raised with RSPB Regional Organiser | AF |

2. Updates

2.1 Kent Bird Report

Awaiting data to be made available for the writers to commence work on the 2017 report. Timetable suggests that we will miss the August shutdown by the printers

Cover artwork commissioned from Stephen Message

2.2 Conservation and Surveys sub-committee

MO updated the meeting on proposed development at the two sites of major concern, Lodge Hill and Graveney Marshes. The deadline for registering an interest in the Graveney site is fast approaching and members should be encouraged to respond.

Current surveys in progress or planned for 2019 - Tawny Owls, Winter Bird Survey, urban nesting Gulls, Farm Woodland Bird Survey.

Actions

- i. Members to be made aware of the Graveney deadline via Twitter, Facebook and Website BR

2.3 Membership

CR reported that there are currently 710 members of the Society

2.4 Outdoor meetings

Meetings continued to be well attended. RO'R raised the issue of whether non members should be allowed to attend. The possibility of a boat trip on the Medway was discussed. It was agreed:

- i. A charge of £5 should be introduced for non members attending field meetings RO'R
- ii. CR to provide membership details to Ray to help identify non members CR

3 Administrative matters

3.1 Minutes of previous meeting (19th Sept 2018)

Minutes agreed

3.2 Co-option of Andre Farrar to the Executive Committee

The meeting recorded its decision taken outside the meeting cycle in November to co-opt AF to the Committee

3.3 Venue for future meetings

BR explained problems with the previous meeting venue at West Faversham Community Centre. An alternative venue had been identified which was more central and cheaper. It was agreed:

- i. Future meetings will be held at Bearstead Memorial Hall BR

3.4 Arrangements for AGM

Revised date for the AGM is 11th April at Grove Green. As yet no speaker has been arranged. AF to mention to Ralph Todd

3.5 Revised meeting dates for 2019

Executive Committee: 15th May; 18th Sept

AGM: 11th April

3.6 Agenda Items for next meeting

- i. Incentives for members under 18
- ii. KOS database – resilience and continuity