

Kent Ornithological Society

Executive Committee – Minutes

18th May 2021 (via zoom)

Present: Andre Farrar (Chair), Mike Henty, Robin Mace, Murray Orchard, Keith Privett, Chris Roome, Brendan Ryan, Barry Wright

Apologies: Ray O'Reilly had indicated that he wished to step down from the Executive Committee but retain his other positions in the Society.

1. Key matters for decision or discussion

1.1 Update from Chris Dee

Chris Dee had provided a written update on various projects he was engaged on for the Society. RM provided an explanation of some of the more technical aspects of CD's paper. The most immediate question to be addressed was where the website was to be hosted. Michael Bennett currently arranged the hosting on behalf of the Society but as he intended to withdraw from supporting the website and it was felt to be desirable that hosting and technical support should be vested in one person, it was agreed that it Chris Dee should be asked to managing the hosting and that we would be guided by him as to whether we stayed with the current host or transfer to a new host.

CD had also indicated that he needed access to the control panel of our website in order to progress. It was agreed that Michael Bennett be asked to pass this on to CD.

The replacement of Cobra had been put on the backburner in order to prioritise the replacement of the sightings database. RM had provided CD with a specification for the sightings database. This meant that the 2020 Kent Bird Report would use Cobra to provide writers with the records.

The urgent need to update the website was discussed. Michael Bennett was to be asked to provide access to CR and BR to make amendments.

Developing the templates for the Birds of Kent was also delayed by prioritising the sightings database. BR would update Andrew Henderson.

The whereabouts of the downloadable excel spreadsheet was questioned. RM said he would re-circulate so that copies could be sent to members seeking advice on the alternatives to the sightings database

Action. CR to contact Michael Bennett to ask for Chris Dee to be given access to the existing website and to arrange editing access for CR and BR.

BR to update Andrew Henderson on progress and implications for developing a template for the Birds of Kent.

RM to re-circulate the excel spreadsheet to record sightings

1.2 Membership Committee

The committee had previously considered the possibility of setting up a membership sub-committee to complement the work of the existing editorial & records committee and conservation and surveys committee. The new committee should be focussed on increasing the membership with an aim of reaching 1,000 members. The committee's remit would include recruitment of new members, events and communication with members including newsletters and the website.

Like the other sub committees membership should be drawn from members of the Society not currently serving on the executive committee. Some potential members were discussed. Chris Roome offered to set up and lead the committee.

Action: CR to draw up terms of reference for a membership committee.

1.3 70th anniversary arrangements

Discussion took place around various formats for a publication to mark the anniversary. CR suggested a document entitled "70 years and still counting" and undertook to work on the document. BR suggested that some of the work done for the "Going, going gone" document that he had produced a couple of years ago highlighting changes in some bird species, could be incorporated in the new document. He would forward the documents to CR. The committee was still keen to use Steve Wood's checklist as a promotional handout but felt that the original document was too complicated and would need to be refined if it was to be a printed document that people could take in to the field. The extended checklist could be included in the members' section of the revamped website. BR to contact Steve Wood to discuss the checklist.

The possibility of doing a feature or something involving any surviving founder members was discussed. CR would check the membership roll.

Action: CR to develop draft leaflet "70 years and counting

BR to forward to CR the "Going going gone" document

BR to contact SW to discuss the checklist.

CR to identify any founding members

1.4 Members' conference

The conference organisers, CR and Brian Watmough had previously met with AF to discuss options for this year's conference in the light of the ongoing pandemic restrictions. A final decision on whether to go ahead in the original format would be made in mid June. The venue could accommodate 200 seated participants but it was likely that numbers would be limited to 130. If the conference couldn't go ahead as a physical event, then it would take place on-line spread over a few days/nights.

1.5 Promoting diversity

AF suggested that this was a key issue that should remain with the Executive Committee rather than be delegated to a sub-committee. It should remain a regular agenda item for the executive committee.

The Society should seek to address audiences and groups that wouldn't be considered as part of the normal KOS remit. A promotional presentation on the work of the Society should be developed. BW undertook to circulate the talk developed to promote the Society and breeding atlas.

It was recognised that people becoming involved or interested in birds and bird watching were more diverse than previously and KOS needed to tap in to this.

AF mentioned suggested that Nicole Khan would have an insight into potential barriers to participation in the Society. He would speak to her.

It was agreed that a better understanding of our current membership would be a useful starting point. BR had been exploring using Survey Monkey or something similar to carry out a simple online survey of members. BR would continue this and discuss with Norman McCanch the possibility of including in the Newsletter.

Action: BR to liaise with NMc over including small surveys in future newsletters

2. Updates

2.1 Kent Bird Report

Robert Carr who is responsible for organising the writers of the KBR had requested the help of the Executive to recruit members to join the writers' team. A number of names were suggested and committee members were requested to identify potential writers and ask if they would want to join the writing team. KP to coordinate.

KP reported that the 2019 KBR was with the proof readers and was likely to be with the printers in July.

2.2 Treasurer's Report

MH reported that no significant expenditure had been incurred other than an interim payment to Chris Dee. Everything else was on track and as anticipated.

2.3 Editorial and Records Committee

No meetings had taken place although record assessments had continued online. Chris Hindle was now coordinating the Kent Rarities. A number of changes were being made to reflect changes in taxonomy.

2.4 Membership

CR reported that there had been a boost to membership during lockdown and a number of new members from the south London area.

2.5 Surveys and Conservation committee

MO provided an update on ongoing surveys taking place this year. He reported a good take up for the Turtle Dove survey.

3. Administrative matters

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3.1 Minutes of previous meeting (13th January 2021)

Approved

3.2 **Minutes of special meeting (28th March 2021)**

Approved

3.3 **Draft minutes of AGM**

Approved subject to confirmation by members at next year's AGM

3.4 **Next meeting 15th September 2021 7.30 (via zoom)**