



**Kent Ornithological Society**  
Providing information about Birds and Birdwatching in Kent

## **Executive Committee**

**Minutes of a Meeting held on Thursday 23 November 2016 at 7:00pm  
At West Faversham Community Centre, Bysing Wood Road, Faversham,  
Kent ME13 7RH**

**Present:** Martin Coath, (Chair), Jack Chantler, Mike Henty, Robin Mace, Norman McCanch, Geoff Orton, Keith Privett, Chris Roome, Stephen Woodand Barry Wright.

### **1. Chairman's welcome**

- 2. Apologies for absence** were received from: Ken Lodge, Tony Morris ,Ray O'Reilly, Brendan Ryan and Anthea Skiffington,

The minutes of the meeting held on 23March 2016 were accepted as an accurate record.

### **3. Publicity and Website**

Brendan Ryan was unable to attend the meeting, but had submitted several papers on the subject (**Attachments A to D**), for which the Chairman expressed his thanks.

BR recommended that a sub-committee be established to oversee publicity, communication and similar matters, and this was approved by the EC, with the suggestion that BR be asked to chair the sub-committee and co-opt members as appropriate.

**Action: Brendan Ryan**

Several issues were raised during the course of a wide-ranging discussion:

- (a) A number of old and duplicate webpages remain online. Some are linked to the 'official' KOS website, and these require management, or in some cases removal.
- (b) The Kent list requires up-dating. KP has the current list in Word format that could be used as a basis.
- (c) RM stated that it would not be possible to transfer the old observations database to the new format without considerable expenditure, which he doubted could be justified.
- (d) CR noted that links between the photo gallery and some other functions appeared to be faulty, so that, for instance clicking on a species no longer brings up a matching photo.
- (e) The old website had been maliciously hacked. The hosting arrangements have now been changed and the service has been taken over by a UK-based provider. This has improved the website's appearance, functionality and speed.
- (f) CR has discussed on-going maintenance with the site's developer, Michael Bennett, who has kindly agreed to undertake this role. In the first instance he proposes to spend two hours a month on maintenance, but this may need to be adjusted in the light of experience. The rate to be charged is £45 per hour, or £90 per month. MH confirmed that the proposal was acceptable to him as Treasurer, and the EC agreed to CR's plan.

**Action: Communication & Promotion Sub-Committee**

CR also outlined proposals for a KOS Conference to take place on Saturday 4 November 2017 from 9am to 5pm. Stephen Moss has agreed to be the keynote speaker at the event at a fee of £500 plus expenses. The proposed venue is Canterbury High School, which is available for £1,000 for the day. Chris' costings assume an attendance of 80 members at £20, or £30 for non-members.

Members welcomed the proposals with enthusiasm. GO suggested that the BTO be invited to participate, and perhaps provide a speaker such as Dawn Balmer or Andy Clements. SW thought that commercial sponsorship should be sought.

The EC welcomed CR's proposals and requested that he continue to develop them with the assistance of other members.

**Action: Chris Roome**

**4. Membership**

CR reported that membership stood at 683, compared with 681 at this time last year. Many members have taken up continuing mandates under PayPal, and CR welcomed this trend.

BW told the EC that he had been in touch with Next Generation Birders and had learnt that they have at least one member in Kent. Encouraging younger birders to join KOS is clearly an uphill task!

**Action: Chris Roome**

## **5. Kent Bird Report**

KP discussed progress with the 2014 edition of the *KBR*. The Ringing Report has been completed by Chris Hindle. Some species accounts have yet to be completed, but most have now been submitted by the writers. *The Dungeness Bird Report* is also delayed this year. The 2015 *KBR* will contain an article on the Acadian Flycatcher by Martin Casemore.

**Action: Keith Privett**

## **6. KOS News**

The Chairman thanked NM for his work on the latest newsletter, which has just been published. NM pointed out that this had been the last edition that would be produced as hard copy, all future numbers being on-line only. He aims to publish six editions in 2017, in January, March, May, July and September and November. More copy is always welcome, and forthcoming issues will contain an article on the pollution incident in the River Medway 50 years ago and a piece by Sean Fergusson on the mapping of sites.

**Action: Norman McCanch**

## **7. Treasurer's Report**

MH discussed the report he had circulated in advance (**Attachments F & G**) and invited comments. KP stated his view that the improvements being made to the website should not be used to justify an increase in the subscription rate until the site is fully functional, and not simply work in progress. This principle was generally approved by EC members. MH pointed out that any increase approved at the next AGM would have little effect upon the in-year balance of accounts, as most subscriptions are paid in the early months of the year. He also pointed out that if a change is made it necessarily entails a great deal of additional work for the Membership Secretary in contacting members and arranging for the new subscriptions to be paid. For these reasons he proposed that the rate should remain unchanged in 2017, and any deficit met by recourse to existing funds.

**Action: Mike Henty**

## **8. Indoor Meetings**

As the programme is in abeyance for the time-being, this item was not discussed.

## **9. Outdoor Meetings**

In the absence of Ray O'Reilly, this item was deferred.

**Action: Ray O'Reilly**

## **10. Editorial and Records Sub-Committee**

BW noted a general absence of records in the breeding season, resulting perhaps from a decline in interest compared to other aspects of birding. NM and SW agreed that this was the case and that, sadly, it is no longer feasible to mount local surveys of breeding species.

## **11. Conservation and Surveys Sub-Committee**

NM told the EC that he would be stepping down as Chairman and a member of the C&S Sub-Committee before its next meeting owing to other commitments. On behalf of the EC, MC thanked him for his contribution and was glad to note that he would still carry on with his other work for KOS, including the editorship of the newsletter.

Murray Orchard has kindly agreed to take over as Chairman of the C&SC, and this was warmly welcomed.

NM outlined some of the current issues concerning the Sub-Committee, including the proposed Lower Thames Crossing and Lodge Hill.

**Action: Murray Orchard**

## **12. Any other business**

CR reminded members that Don Taylor has announced his intention to step down as President of KOS at the 2017 AGM, and asked MC to clarify the matter and to discuss the issue of his successor at the next EC.

**Action: Martin Coath**

## **13. Date and time of next meeting**

The next Executive Committee meeting will take place on Thursday 9 March 2017 at 7:00pm at West Faversham Community Centre, Bysing Wood Road, Faversham, ME13 7RH.

The 2017 Annual General Meeting will take place Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at 7.15pm at Grove Green Community Hall, Grovewood Drive, Maidstone, ME14 5TQ.

## **Attachment A**

As you may be aware I will not be at the next committee meeting but there are a couple of items that I think that we should discuss and resolve.

1. Committee structure. After discussions at the last meeting I undertook to work on a proposal for a new sub-committee to cover publicity and communication and similar matters. I feel that such a committee would be very useful in the light of changes to the website and the need to manage its content and format. I had previously circulated a draft. Can we make sure that it is discussed and a decision reached. I attach the paper again.

2. Display Boards. I have circulated details of revised display boards/exhibition materials for the society to use at events. There are two options, a full display stand or smaller pull up banners. Chris is the only person to have responded thus far. It would be useful to come to a decision on what we want or need. The costs of either option are not prohibitive, although Chris has pointed out the issue of storage with the larger system. the pull up banners may be adequate for our requirements. They are very cheap

3. Members day. We talked about having a members day to incorporate our AGM and indoor meeting programme but never came to a firm conclusion as to whether this is what we were going to do. So we have the AGM sandwiched between two or three talks from "big names" to draw the crowds. I know Chris is keen and I think it is a good idea. Again we need to agree this if we are going to do it for next years AGM

4. Website. Great progress on website, thanks to the support of Chris and the work done by his contact Michael. The site now seems much more stable. Michael has made some changes to the design and I have some observations and tweaks which might inform the next phase of the re-design process. ( attached). I am also keen that we do not lose sight of the other priorities for the website, ( e.g. developing the pages for the Kent List, Kent Listers and trip reports). I attach the original brief for this phase of the work. Ideally the new sub-committee would oversee these decisions in the future.

Have a good meeting. I will be thinking of you as I struggle with Foliage-gleaners and the like. I am away from tomorrow until 5th December

## **Attachment B**

### **Kent Ornithological Society:- Communications & Promotions sub-committee**

#### **Terms of reference & purpose**

- To actively promote the society and its activities & publications
- To raise the profile of KOS in the local media
- To encourage involvement in the society's activities, including events, data collection and surveys
- To engage with members, to regularly seek their views on various aspects of the society's work and role
- To encourage new members to join the society
- To manage and coordinate the society's communications channels, (website, Facebook, Twitter and Newsletters) ensuring that information is up to date, timely and consistent
- To ensure that responses to controversial or emotive issues are consistent with the agreed position of the Executive Committee
- To organise and promote the society's events and meetings (*see note below*)
- To develop and implement a communications plan for KOS

#### **Membership of sub-committee**

- Two members nominated by the Executive Committee, one of whom will be chair of the sub-committee
- Membership Secretary
- Nominee from the Conservation and Surveys Sub-committee
- Two ordinary members (not on existing committees)

#### **Co-option**

- The Committee will be able to co-opt up to three additional members from time to time, where additional technical or specialist skills can enhance the work of the sub-committee, e.g. IT/website management skills

#### **Meetings**

- The sub-committee will meet twice a year but will have the ability to conduct its business by e mail where appropriate

## **Attachment C**

### **KOS website**

#### **1. Home page**

1.1 While we agreed to increase the size of the photos on the front page, I think that the latest iteration is too large. The problem is that we have limited control over the editing of the photos and the propensity of photographers to over crop their images. This means that some of the photos especially passerines look a bit overwhelming when displayed at full screen. The other problem is such a large image is that some of the other information from the home page is not readily viewable. Part of the rationale for changing from the original website, other than the problems with contribute, was the inability to promote events/meetings and other news prominently on the home page. Therefore the news and events links should remain prominent on the homepage.

1.2 I think that the photos on the home page scroll through a little too quickly

1.3 The link to KOS Facebook has been lost from the front page. Facebook is increasingly important as a communication tool for KOS especially with the closure of the Forum. I can't find any link at the moment.

1.4 Similarly the link to Twitter has been dropped. Many twitter users were using the @kentishplover link in their tweets and they were appearing on the website. Similarly it was hoped that #rbnKen would allow recent sightings to be displayed on the homepage

1.5 The link to Recent Articles should not be on the home page as there are that many "recent" articles. It could be used as an archive for articles in from the newsletter but the space taken up on the homepage could be better used for News/Events or Facebook

#### **2. Records tab**

2.1 Kent Listers needs to be moved back to the Miscellaneous tab. It is not something officially endorsed by KOS and is a bit of fun that doesn't sit comfortably in the records section.

2.2 A link in the drop down menu to the KOS database would be useful

### **3. Sightings tab**

3.1 The presentation of each page has been vastly improved and will be welcomed by the contributors.

3.2 Is the link to historic sightings pages lost? It was a link back to the old website. I know that one or two contributors will be concerned about this (Don and Geoff)

3.3 the bottom tab "Sightings" just seems to replicate the tab on the menu bar.

3.4 The Reculver tab, needs to link into Chris Hindle's website, i.e. clicking on the link should open up the Home page of the Reculver website/blog

3.5 The links to Dungeness Bird Observatory and Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory seem to have been lost

### **4. Gallery**

4.1 The outline of the new gallery looks much better.



## **Attachment D**

### **Kent Ornithological Society Website**

#### **Background and current position**

During 2014 the Society migrated to a new website built on a Wordpress platform.

The first phase of the development & design was concluded but for various reasons the second phase of the site development has not taken place. There remain a number of areas of the website that have not been developed.

In the meantime the website has experienced for an extended period, a number of performance issues including; being unavailable at times to users or very slow to load; site editors and contributors being unable to access their administrative areas to update the site. The original website designer has suggested that the problems with the website are related to the hosting company, although the hosting package was upgraded at the time of the launch of the new website. The full reason for the continued under performance of the website needed to be explored further before any decision on hosting is made.

#### **Immediate requirements**

The Society needs a professional assessment of the sites performance and recommendations on what actions are required to remedy the situation. This may require liaison with the Society's website hosts.

#### **Long term support requirements**

The Society lacks the internal technical skills to manage the non content aspects of the website. We would be looking for proposals from technically qualified persons to provide on-going support to the Society's officers who manage and update the site. This would include updating/managing the plug ins to the site, making minor amendments to the layout of the site, assisting in managing access to the site for page editors and resolving problems relating to the sites functionality. Our preference would be for such a service to be provided the basis of a fixed fee monthly retainer, reviewed annually.

#### **Development of the existing website**

As indicated above a number of areas of the website remain undeveloped from the initial phase of the website. These requirements are set out below in annex one.

#### **Contacts:**

Brendan Ryan, Vice Chairman KOS. [brendan.ryan@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:brendan.ryan@yahoo.co.uk) 07966 976028  
Robin Mace, Database Manager KOS, [robin@mace-online.co.uk](mailto:robin@mace-online.co.uk) 01233 631509

## **Annex one- Phase two site development requirements**

### **1.1 Kent list**

A new page needs to be designed for the new website that incorporates all the information from the old site. The transfer of this data and the photos was problematic when the website was set up and deemed to be too time consuming/resource intensive at the time. The information could be transferred manually. How can the photos be retrieved from the old site? Need to agree a format for this, so that information can be transferred from the old site to the new site, including photos.

### **1.2. Trip reports**

This page needs to be designed so that Reports can be added in word or PDF format and grouped together in geographical areas. i.e. by continent, then by country and then by date. Existing page still sits on the old website. the design of the page need to be in conjunction with page editor, Warren Baker.

### **1.3. Kent Listers.**

This page needs to be designed in conjunction with the page editor, Geoff Burton to allow easy of amendment.

There is the possibility ( to be explored with Geoff, to include Blockers and gaps in the lists of the listers. (I think that the SOS site does this)

### **1.4. Sightings pages**

The "home" page for sightings looks a little bland and would be enhanced if photos could be included on the tabs for each site. e.g. a picture of Bockhill, where you click to access the Bockhill sightings?

May want to consider the way that information is presented on the actual sightings pages, i.e. have a single post/page that can be added to on the top in the same way that most blogs work

### **1.5. Articles and notes**

This page needs some design work to give it some structure.

### **1.6 Wildlife Gallery**

Getting access to this site seems to have been problematic. There is a willing administrator but can access the site at the moment [*Question to the executive- as an ornithological society, is there a place for other wildlife. rather than having another wildlife section, should we have a Foreign Birds section?*]

### **3. Other issues**

#### **3.1 Forum**

The link has been removed from the Home page but is still on the footer of the other pages & needs to be removed.

#### **3.2. Subscription renewals (Paypal options)**

Currently there are paypal options for Joining KOS, Buying KBR and Buying the Atlas. A further option for renewing membership/Paying subscriptions needs to be added

#### **3.3 Contact us**

The link seems to have fallen out. Previously when people used this facility, an e mail was generated to a nominated administrator. (BR) but there have been no such e mails for some time.

## **Attachment F**

### **KOS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - TREASURER'S REPORT - AUGUST 2016**

#### **Kent Breeding Bird Atlas**

Sales in the year to date are £1,376 from which must be deducted postage & packing expenses of £67 and the value of stock held at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 £500, giving a net credit to the Birds of Kent Fund of £809.

Unit sales for the year via the various outlets were as follows:

##### PayPal:

January 3; February 3, March 4; April 5, May 2; June 1; July 0; August 0.  
Total 17 (14 members; 3 non-members)

##### RSPB Dungeness

January to mid-March 2; mid-March to mid-June 7

##### NHBS

February 1, May 1 & June 1.

##### KWT

September 2015 to June 2016 - 16

##### Cedar Shed Books (Brogdale)

January to June - 2

The balance is made up of cheque and cash sales banked on or before April 8<sup>th</sup>.

The tailing-off of sales one year after publication to a minimal level means that consideration should be given to what is done with the physical stock remaining.

#### **Kent Bird Report 2014**

The cost of printing and posting the 2014 KBR was £5,528. This was only £65 more than the 2013 KBR and £272 less than the £5,800 provided for in the 2015 accounts. In those accounts I provided £6,200 for the cost of the 2015 KBR; this would appear to be around £300 too much based on the actual cost of the 2014 KBR so our accounts this year will include a favourable adjustment of £572 (subject to review).

#### **Other Financial Matters**

##### Subscriptions

Subscriptions received to date appear to slightly down on the 2015 level but the crucial factor will be those new members who joined from July last year in order to buy an atlas for £15 rather than £22.50. How many will renew?

Gift Aid £877

Up by £54 on 2015. Thanks to Chris for getting new members to sign up and more than outweigh the losses due to mortality or otherwise.

Interest

Expected to be down a bit on 2015 but will be significantly down in 2017 as a result in recent base rate reduction.

Website & IT expenses

We have spent very little to date this year. There must be some expenditure to come given the need for website maintenance.

Other Expenditure

We have incurred £173 in transferring our record cards south of the Thames and made a donation of £500 for fencing at Northward Hill. I have not been made aware of any other one-off expenditures.

**General Financial Position**

I would anticipate a small financial surplus for the year, subject to any unexpected expenditure that may arise. On that basis, there appears no need to increase the subscription rate.

## **Attachment G**

### **KOS EXEC. COMMITTEE - TREASURER'S REPORT - NOVEMBER 2016**

#### **Kent Breeding Bird Atlas**

Since the August Treasurer's Report we have sold between 15 and 20 more copies: two via PayPal, one NHBS and the rest direct sales via Exec members and Murray Orchard. There have been no sales notified to us by RSPB or KWT.

#### **Other Financial Matters**

##### Website & IT expenses

We have spent £700 on sorting out the website. There is more expenditure to come as work has been carried out since this was billed; the amount is unknown.

#### **General Financial Position**

I would now anticipate a deficit for the year as a result of the expenditure on the website. This can be absorbed from our existing General Reserve. It is necessary to estimate the cost of ongoing website maintenance to determine whether to increase the subscription rate. An increase approved at the 2017 AGM will have minimal effect on 2017 income as the bulk of subscriptions are received in the first quarter of the year.