

Kent Ornithological Society

Executive Committee – Draft Minutes

29th January 2020

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

Apologies: Norman McCanch, Robin Mace, Barry Wright

1. Key matters for decision or discussion

1.1 Annual Accounts 2019

MH set out the position with regard to the Society's accounts at the year ending Dec 2019. A healthy balance was reported with significant surpluses accumulating, largely as a result of recent legacies received (£18,063 in 2019) and funds set aside for a future Birds of Kent publication.

There was a discussion about whether it was appropriate to hold such a surplus and whether this might be an issue for the Charity Commissioners. This was not thought to be an immediate problem but it was agreed that a decision was needed on how to proceed with the Birds of Kent project and this would be added as a Key item for the next meeting.

How legacy monies should be used was deferred until the financial impact of developing a new data base was fully understood.

The committee thanked MH for all his work and approved the Annual Accounts for 2019, subject to external examination

1.2 KOS database

CR reported on the work of the sub-committee. The work had stalled a little because it had been difficult to get suitably qualified people involved to help progress the next step in the programme, i.e. specifying the requirements of any new data base.

After a detailed discussion the committee agreed:

- i). the priority for the working group was the replacement of Cobra rather than the transfer of the on-line database to our own platform
- ii). we should formally write, through the Chair to all other bird recording societies to ascertain how they store and manage their ornithological records, if they have any experience of renewing or upgrading their systems in the recent past and are they aware of anyone who could help KOS in a paid capacity to undertake such a review/implementation
- iii). the sub-committee should meet again to consider developing a specification for the project

1.3 Retention of paper records

BW had provided a note to the meeting setting out the position and views of the Editorial and Records Committee.

The committee was happy for the sub-committee to organise this project. It was important that an urgent assessment was needed of the state of the records and of what work would be needed to put them in a format that allowed them to be scanned and archived in a way that meant they could be accessible in the future. The sub-committee was requested to arrange a site visit as soon as possible.

1.4 KBR 2018

RM had distributed the data to writers although gulls and escapes hadn't been allocated to anyone as yet. Articles and the ringing report had been completed.

The committee discussed at length the current format of the KBR and whether a refresh was required to bring it in line with progress made by other counties. We should explore what "the best in class" look like.

It was also agreed that the writers' guidelines needed to be updated to give a clearer direction to writers.

A replacement Area Recorder was needed to replace Geoff Orton. It was unclear what records GO may still be holding on to. MO would speak to Geoff.

BR alerted the committee to a number of issues that had come to light highlighting the Society's failure to acknowledge the contributions of members. This included Area Recorders not acknowledging records and descriptions received from contributors and KBR writers not being acknowledged for their contribution.

The most pressing issue was to find a replacement on the editorial team for Jack Chantler and Ken Lodge. Without this there was likely to be a significant delay once the writers had completed their work.

1.5 Funding requests

The RSPB had approached the Society for a donation of £500 towards fencing to protect breeding waders at Northwood Hill. This was agreed. AF to contact RSPB

A team involved in the Champions of the Flyway event had requested sponsorship from KOS. This was declined on the grounds it was not Kent or UK related and we needed to be consistent in dealing with such requests. BR to inform applicant

1.6 KOS Facebook page

Between committee meetings there had been an e-mail discussion about the posting of photographs on the KOS website. There was a danger that the page would be inundated with the posting of photographers making it more difficult for viewers to access more relevant information. Other Facebook pages had encountered similar problems.

It was agreed that in future unless a photo had significance beyond being a nice picture, only members of the Society would be allowed to post photos on our Facebook page. The moderators would have the discretion to remove photograph posts from non members if appropriate.

1.7 Driven Grouse Shooting

In the light of criticisms from a member about the implied support of the Society for the campaign to end driven grouse shooting, it was suggested that the Society should have a clear policy statement in respect of this and other shooting activities. The committee discussed the sensitivities surrounding these issues and the danger of jeopardising the cooperation of some landowners currently supportive of our work. The RSPB was currently reviewing its position and it was agreed that the Society should wait and see what position the RSPB and other national bodies take before coming to a view ourselves.

1.8 Turtle Dove Survey 2020

The survey is planned to proceed in 2020 and MO is working with partner organisations on the logistics and methodology to be deployed. The survey provided a great opportunity to engage the media and general public.

Meeting to agree methodology set for the following week

1.9 Involving young people

BW had provided a note about discussions with Simon Ginnaw. Simon was keen to get involved and would give some thought about how things could be taken forward

1.10 Bough Beech Reservoir nature reserve

MW reported that there had been a non committal response to our letter from the water company but that there remained some uncertainty about when KWT were relinquishing their lease

2. Updates

2.1 Conservation and surveys

MO provided an update on the major developments, Lower Thames crossing, Lodge Hill and Cleeve Hill.

Upcoming/ongoing surveys included an extension to breeding waders of water meadows, Turtle Dove and Honey Buzzard surveys and final year of seabird survey

2.2 Newsletter

NMc reported that the revised format had been well received

2.3 Membership

CR provided update. Membership stood at just over 700, with 48 new members joining in the last year

3. Administrative matters

- i) Minutes of previous meeting (18th September 2019) Agreed

- ii) AGM 2020 (30th April)
BR to approach Tony Morris about doing the after business talk
BR to provide notice of meeting to CR and NMc for newsletter
and e mail of members

4. Any Other Business

4.1 Christmas Bird Count

MO reported that Hertfordshire and other counties had done or were preparing to do a Christmas Bird count between Christmas and New Year

The committee agreed that Kent should also undertake such a count

5. Any other Business

5.1 KOS conference 2020

CR outlined plans for this year's conference to take place on 7th November at Chaucer Collage Canterbury. An impressive line up of speakers was already in place. Cost to members to remain at £25

5.2 Annotated Checklist of Birds of Kent

Steve Wood was working on a document similar to that produced for hampshire

Date of next meeting: 20th May 2020

- i) Agenda items for next meeting
Birds of Kent