

Kent Ornithological Society

Executive Committee – Draft Minutes

13th January 2021 (via zoom)

Present: Chris Roome, Mike Henty, Murray Orchard, Barry Wright, Keith Privett, , Brendan Ryan

Apologies: Stephen Wood, Ray O'Reilly, Robin Mace, Andre Farrar

1. Key matters for decision or discussion

1.1 Birds of Kent Checklist

The committee was appreciative of the excellent and diligent work done by Steve Wood to create the checklist.

Some committee members felt that the checklist was over ambitious and complex and might be difficult to maintain in the future. On the other hand Steve has done the leg work and should be the one to decide the final content and format, taking account of comments made by others. The general feeling was that there was scope from some simplification in order to make the data more accessible.

Clarification was required on which version of excel the checklist was running as some people had difficulty in opening it.

The committee agreed that the publication should be on-line, preferably in a members' only area of the website. As such a facility didn't currently exist we should provide a copy to members via the e-mail link. The possibility of a simplified printed version was not ruled out.

Action. BR to feed back to SW

1.2 Birds of Kent

The committee considered whether given all the other projects currently being undertaken e.g. data base replacement, archive of paper records and members' conference, whether this project should be deferred. There was a strong feeling was that this project should progress and that we should build on the momentum that has been created. Andrew Henderson who has done much of the leg work so far to date is keen to progress and if we delayed further the information already collated would lose its value.

The development of this initiative linked with the need to develop the website.

The need to establish a steering group was discussed and possible membership of that group.

It was agreed that:

BR and MO would discuss setting up a steering group outside this meeting

The steering group would meet (via zoom within the next couple of weeks).

1.3 Website refresh

Two issues were considered. The need to keep information on the website up to date; and the design and layout of the site. A paper outlining potential changes to the site had been considered by the previous meeting. Additionally further development work was required on the site if changes to accommodate the Birds of Kent and Checklist were to be implemented.

CR and BR had volunteered to be added to those with access to edit the site.

CR and BR agreed to have a discussion outside the meeting before briefing Michael Bennett on changes to the format and layout of the site.

It was agreed

CR would contact Michael Bennett to allow access for CR & BR to edit the site.

CR and BR to discuss the development requirements for the site.

1.4 Promoting diversity

It was recognised this is a far reaching topic that extended into many areas that had been discussed over the years including how to increase membership; how to raise the profile of the society; and extend the range and diversity of members especially younger birders and the increasing number of female birders.

It was agreed that AF's experience and insight in this area was invaluable and it was difficult to have a fruitful discussion in his absence. It was also agreed a wide ranging topic that would benefit from having adequate time to explore the full range of issues within the topic.

It was agreed that:

BR would speak to AF about producing a framework for such a meeting

Some external participants be invited to get involved who could reflect a wider perspective. James King and Nicole Khan were suggested.

Zoom meeting to be held in February or March

1.5 75th Anniversary Plans

CR updated the meeting on plans for the members' conference in November. All the arrangements including speakers and venue have been carried forward from 2020. The event would provide a focus for the celebration.

It was agreed that there should be something to highlight the changes over the last 75 years. A pamphlet based on the extinction exhibitions/Going, going gone materials should be produced incorporating some of the illustrations from the atlas.

It was agreed that:

BR would look to re-work the Kent's disappearing birdlife leaflet

BR to contact SW for copies of parts of the atlas to be included

2. Updates

2.1 Database replacement

CR and Garganey Consultants provided an update. Around 50% of the project has been completed.

MO asked if the outputs from the database could be tested. i.e. will it be capable of producing the data we required in an accessible format.

It was agreed

Key users of the data base should identify their required outputs to CR and Chris Dee and RM will test the new databases ability to deliver these requirements.

2.2 Treasurer's Report.

MH had previously circulated the year end accounts for 2020.

There was a discussion about whether to raise subscriptions given that we now use more external advisors to support the technical aspects of our operation, plus the increased costs of postage.

MH said that with reserves of £51,000 it was difficult to justify an increase at this point in time and we might have difficulty in explaining this level of reserves to the charity commission. There were however a number of ongoing commitments that will require expenditure over the next year including the data base, the archiving of paper records and the Birds of Kent. It was also noted that there was inevitably a delay in implementing any subscription increase as it was not feasible to increase subscriptions until the December/January following the decision.

The treasurer's recommendation to the meeting was not to increase subscriptions.

MH highlighted potential difficulties due to covid of having the accounts examined and audited. The possibility of using a courier to transfer working papers was discussed.

It was agreed that:

Subscriptions should remain unaltered for the time being.

The Treasurer was authorised to take appropriate action as he saw fit to facilitate the external examination of the accounts.

2.3 Kent Bird Report

KP provided an update on the 2019 KBR. Although the first lockdown period was used to start the writing of the report, delays in the publication of the Dungeness report meant that a number of accounts had still not finished. It was anticipated that publication would not be until July.

RM reported that he had started work on collating data for the 2020 report.

It was agreed that:

RO'R in his capacity as trustee of DBO should ask Dave Walker if the KOS could help in any way to speed up the production of the Dungeness report.

2.4 Editorial and Records Committee

Chris Hindle had stepped in to help relieve the workload of BW and Alan Fossey and had taken over responsibility for processing the Kent rarities, where a large number of records are not adequately documented. BW will continue to deal with the BBRC submissions. The committee are very appreciative of the support from CH.

The transition to accepting only electronic submissions of records seems to have gone well.

2.5 Surveys and Conservation Committee

All survey work currently suspended by the BTO. Anticipated surveys in 2021 include breeding waders of wet meadows, urban gulls and turtle doves. The latter being a key focus for the year.

The sub-committee want to recognise the contribution of Howard Vaughan who has used his time furloughed from the RSPB to collect extensive breeding data from the Medway area.

MO noted the recent death of Geoff Orton, a previous committee member and BTO representative. MO has provided an obituary for the newsletter.

There was a discussion about whether obituaries should appear in the KBR. It was agreed that in future they should only be published in the newsletter

2.6 Outdoor meetings

RO'R provided a note highlighting problems and issues raised by covid restrictions and in particular what to do about people who booked places and then failed to turn up

It was agreed that:

RO'R was delegated to take whatever action he saw fit to manage people who booked a place and then failed to attend

2.7 KOS Conference

CR provided an update to the meeting – 1.5 above

3. Administrative matters

3.1 Confirmation of decisions taken outside the meeting cycle

i) Reward for the prosecution of persons responsible for unlawful killing of a buzzard. Decision to offer £1,000 reward endorsed

ii) Presentation to retiring chairman. £65 for Stephen Message painting- decision endorsed.

3.2 Minutes of last meeting: 2nd September 2020

Approved

3.2 Arrangements for AGM

In the event of a physical meeting being unlikely to take place it was agreed that a virtual meeting should be held on 7th April via zoom.

There was a discussion about the need to fill vacancies on the executive. These vacancies and the desired experience/skills of potential committee members to be promoted in the newsletter and by e-mail. Committee members should also consider and approach other society members who they consider may have the appropriate skills and experience to serve on the executive.

It was agreed that:

Existing committee member indicate to BR their willingness to serve for as further year.

Committee vacancies to be advertised via the newsletter and by e-mail

CR and BR to consider the format of an on line AGM

3.3 Next meeting 19th May 2021 (via zoom)