

MINUTES OF LBC COMMITTEE MEETING: February 18 at 7.30pm

PRESENT

Phil Espin (Chair), Colin Casey (IT support), Andrew Chick (IT officer), John Clarkson (County Recorder North), Mike Harrison (Membership Secretary), Phil Hyde (County Recorder South), Bill Sterling (Sales Secretary), John Watt (Treasurer), Jim Wright (Secretary)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Ian Macalpine-Leny.

PE and other members expressed sadness at the circumstance of Ian's absence and looked forward to his returned involvement with the committee when he feels the time is appropriate.

MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 28 MEETING

Signed by PE as a true record subject to amendment to the effect that AC remains as IT officer (formerly known as Webmaster) and that CC is not a member of the committee.

MATTERS ARISING

There were none.

BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

- i) Agreed that AC and JW_r be approved as additional signatories on LBC's HSBC internet business account. The new debit card for this account will have JW_a as its sole signatory. Noted that there is a payment limit of £500.
- ii) Agreed that LBC's Paypal account will be overseen by JW_a and AC using the single password known to both. CC's suggestion that a Paypal debit card might be beneficial not taken up at the present time.

UPDATE ON MEMBERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

- i) Following lengthy discussion, confirmed that Paypal will be preferred method of payment both for renewing and for joining members. Members will be encouraged to support this system. For the minority who do not use internet banking, the option will remain to pay by cheque/ cash via MH or Wilma Gammon at Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, subject to their details (first name, last name, username, address and category of membership) being provided to Colin for importing into the club's system. Wilma to be

briefed accordingly. This may create unavoidable delays for members obtaining access to the website which they should be aware of when choosing their payment method.

ii) Agreed that new members will be supplied with a copy of the latest edition of the annual report, LBC car windscreen sticker and website link to the constitution (or hard copy for those not on the internet).

iii) Agreed that LBC car sticker be supplied to all members along with distribution of next annual report (probably in April). To be discussed at a later date; possible production of a new sticker to coincide with next year's 40th anniversary of the club,

MEETING WITH DATA COLLECTORS

AC to arrange date, time and place to explain arrangements/ procedures.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO CONSTITUTION

All revisions as detailed by PE and previously circulated to committee members were agreed. No action to be taken on JWr's proposal that the constitution should allow the club a lobbying role in the event of bird habitats or populations being threatened. PE cautioned that LBC was an apolitical organisation and that the existing wording in 1.3 ("to encourage conservation of wildlife") was sufficient. No action to be taken on MH's suggestion that should be a reference to the role of the website in the revised constitution.

The proposed revisions will be detailed in the next newsletter and submitted to the whole membership as an item at the AGM on 20th March, 2018.

NEW WEBSITE AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS

CC was congratulated for his work in modernising the website. Since its successful relaunch last month, it has already attracted 46 new or returning members. AC commented that its present form was not the final version. There was scope for further refinement, enhancement and addition of new features. CC noted that, in response to a member's post, it was hoped the website might soon incorporate a list of links to blogs published by some members. MH felt that the new site was less user-friendly than its predecessor and more difficult to navigate, particularly in respect of the forum. CC maintained that he had adopted the standard forum model. In the absence of a gallery, for which he had been unable to find a suitable website component, he said members should be encouraged to use photographs when submitting posts to the forum. CC said 100 members had yet to sign in

on the new website. He produced statistics on the number of “hits” and said the increasing level indicated that the revised website was “going in the right way”. JWa said greater ease of use would come with increased familiarity with the site. CC said the main page banner publicising the forthcoming visit by Roger Riddington to speak at the AGM would be removed and replaced the day after the AGM.

FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS FOR E-NEWSLETTER

Hitches with most recent e-newsletter (No 2) were attributed to late introduction of content which had skewed layout. E-newsletter 3 to be compiled and jointly edited by CC and AC based on contributions submitted via Google docs and a fixed deadline/cut-off time.

JWr to maintain an observing brief with a view to taking over as editor at a later date.

The e-newsletter is to be published on an as-and-when basis, but probably not every month. Agreed that contents of next e-newsletter would include notice of AGM, agenda for AGM including election/re-election of officers and proposed revisions to constitution, plus topical news articles including an update on the county rookery survey (AC) and, space permitting, articles by CC, PE and/or others. CC noted that photographs of Whisby’s black-headed blue tit were available for inclusion. PH suggested the photographs should be supported by summary text on the bird. BS volunteered to mail out printed hard copies of the next e-newsletter to those members who do not use the internet.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR VISIT BY GUEST SPEAKER AT FORTHCOMING AGM

PH and PE confirmed that arrangements for hospitality and payment for speaker were in hand. He will be staying with his parents who live in Lincolnshire and who are welcome to attend the meeting.

AGM - AGENDA ITEMS

Agreed that agenda items will follow format of previous AGMs, including election/re- election of officers. All officers were re-elected for 3 years terms at the 2017 AGM so the only elections required will be for Secretary and IT Officer. There will also be an item on proposed changes to the constitution (see above).

LNU RECORDERS’ MEETING

As no one from the committee will be able to give a presentation at the meeting on February 10, AC will submit an apology on the club's behalf.

OFFICERS' REPORTS

a) Treasurer

JWa expressed concern over a potential squeeze on funding for nature partnerships (some of which had not been performing well) up and down the country. Such action might jeopardise the future finances of the successful Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership (GNLP). This could have repercussions for LBC which, in 2017, received almost £3,500 income (15 per cent of proceeds of sales of data to developers or their agents) from GNLP. AC suggested a proportion of income received from GNLP could be "ploughed back" into its funds to help it to produce and publish species information leaflets. JWa further noted that the £89 listed under miscellaneous receipts referred to in the 2017 accounts related to the sale of nest boxes to members at the last AGM. This money had been donated to the BTO for which a receipt was still awaited.

b) Secretary

Nothing of significance to report.

c) Sales secretary

BS provided an update on sales of publications. These were slow. His suggestion that back copies of unsold reports should be offered to committee members in token for unpaid work on behalf of the club was adopted. Various suggestions were made for selling surplus stock. Some such as ebay had been tried before without success. CC agreed to trial a special limited-time reduced price sales offer on the website. AC has possession of a publication sales rack (cost: £20) which he hopes the RSPB might be willing to install at their Frampton reserve visitor centre, the charity to take commission of a third of sales. PE suggested there might also be a similar sales opportunity at Spurn Bird Observatory

d) Membership secretary

MH welcomed the work done by CC and others to streamline the membership system. He commented: "I've sometimes felt redundant, but I'm not complaining!". AC suggested in that event MH could be responsible for ensuring that an outline stencil of key details required by CC for generating a user name and password, is completed by either him or

Wilma for all new members not joining online and sent to CC as soon as possible. MH agreed .

e) and f) County recorder south/ County recorder north

PH and JC discussed issues connected with submission and storage of records and the pros and cons of Birdtrack as a recording tool. PH reported that Andy Stoddart, who compiles the Norfolk Bird Report, no longer uses BTO Birdtrack, preferring to rely on data from known and trusted sources. JC described how he used Birdtrack in recording species seen/heard in central Louth and Hubbards Hills (notable examples included a Kingfisher outside his front door that morning!). PE suggested a “trusted Birdtrack user” system might provide a half way house between our current system and Norfolk’s approach. This will be considered going forward.

g) Webmaster

Agreed that the title ‘Webmaster’ be changed to ‘IT officer’ with immediate effect.

AC said it was important for the LBC to be aware of its obligations under data protection regulations. CC responded that the club only made use of personal information data supplied voluntarily by members.

PROGRESS UPDATE ON ANNUAL REPORT 2016)

PE reported information from Andrew Henderson that 94 per cent of the systematic list is in final draft form.

AH has supplied further information that most of the articles are in final draft form with one - an account of the Western Purple Swamp Gallinule - expected to be submitted soon by author Graham Catley. James Siddle is working on a review of the year During committee discussion, AC said the quote for printing (by Cupits of Horncastle) was the same as last year. The proposed cover photo will feature on the website after the report has been published. A basic species index will be included.

To ease the workload on AH, it was suggested that, subject to his agreement, a professional proofreader be engaged to check spelling/ grammatical errors etc. AC to obtain a quote and discuss with AH before a decision is taken.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

MH referred to his recent email correspondence with a Canadian birder who will be visiting Gainsborough later this year and would like to meet a fellow-birder willing to show him some Lincolnshire birds. MH felt that RSPB Frampton would be a good starting point. PE suggested that the

Canadian's appeal should be posted on the forum, so any interested LBC member could contact him. He said there might be an opportunity for reciprocal visits. JC referred to the website www.birdingpal.org/ which existed specifically to put birders in various parts of the world in contact with one other. He had

used the service to benefit in Perth to meet a birder who had shown him sites with various species in this part of Australia.

CC suggested that the club should invest (about £400) in the purchase of a laptop computer dedicated to storage of records using the club's three licences with Wildlife Recorder software to be used by the County Recorders

CC requested that a letter of appreciation be sent to Jack Levene in respect of his work on adapting Wildlife Recorder to LBC's requirements. Agreed that this would be done.

PE reported that Pete Short, of the RSPB, had expressed concern about jet-skiers frightening birds at Covenham Reservoir on a stretch of water from which they are prohibited. He said he had written to Anglian Water about the disturbance and AW had responded positively. Based on previous experience, JC doubted if the jet-skiers would be responsive.

PE reported having been contacted by Mr Martin Davis whose late uncle had left a legacy of bird photographs which he was offering to LBC. AC doubted if they would be of significant value to the club unless they had been captioned with date and location. CC suggested they might usefully be archived.

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

Members were pleased with the room provided at the new Coach & Horses venue in Hemingby as organised by MH. Agreed that this should be setting for next meeting, provisionally set for 7.30 pm on July 24, 2018.