

LBC COMMITTEE MEETING: Nov 27, 2018 at Hemingby

1 Chairman's welcome

Phil Espin thanked members for making the effort to attend the meeting on an evening of torrential rain.

2 Attendance

Phil Espin, John Watt, Bill Sterling, John Clarkson, Mike Harrison, Andrew Chick, Phil Hyde, Jim Wright.

3 Apologies for absence

Nick Tribe, Colin Casey.

4 Minutes of previous meeting

These were signed and approved by PE.

5 Matters arising

Confirmed that Prof Ian Newton has accepted an invitation from the club to be guest speaker at the joint LBC/LNU meeting at Whisby education centre on January 5, 2019. His subject will be *Birds and Migration*.

Confirmed that bookings are now being accepted via the BTO website for the LBC/BTO conference to be held at Whisby education centre on January 26, 2019.

PE noted that thanks to the efforts of Jwr it appears the question over the signatories on the club bank account has now been resolved.

6 Update on 2017 annual report

Good progress was reported by PE and PH. No target date has been set for publication, but it should be ready well in advance of the annual meeting in April next year. The report is likely to be slimmer than its 2016 predecessor, with fewer graphs (though there will be one for hawfinch). Among the prospective articles is one by AC on tree-nesting preferences of the county's rook population, based on data from approx 4,000 individual nests. JC queried if some of the entries might still be too long e.g. up to three pages on avocets. During discussions, JC stressed the importance of the annual report in "maintaining a progression of knowledge through the years" so that trends in species populations/distribution can be monitored. Subject to a decision by AC, who is photo-editor, the bluethroat seen by many observers at the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust's nature reserve at Willow Tree Fen early in

2017 is likely to feature on the report's front cover. The discussion was steered by PH who is overseeing compilation of the report. His written update included the following:

- * All species data has been circulated including the LBRC records.
- * The majority of species accounts have been completed with a few exceptions that are being chased up.
- * The introductory section has been updated.
- * James Siddle will do a Review of the Year when he receives the draft Systematic List. To facilitate this we need a deadline of 7Dec for all species accounts to be returned.
- * There are the following articles to include:
 - a. Buzzards, Ravens and Red Kites in a South Kesteven survey (Vin Fleming)
 - b. A Preliminary Phenological Analysis of Seven Commoner Autumn Passerine Migrants at Gibraltar Point National Nature Reserve, Lincolnshire, England from 1965 to 2017 (George Gregory)
 - c. White-billed Diver in Lincolnshire (P A Hyde)
 - d. Mandt's Black Guillemot (Newsletter article to copy/paste/polish up) – IC with BBRC.

7 Update on e-newsletter

Edition 6 should be ready for electronic distribution to members before Christmas. Among contributors are Graham Catley who has written an article on how he became a birder (back in 1974). Also proposed are features on stilt sandpiper and one on the birdwatcher's code of conduct, plus a round-up of forthcoming events.

8 BBRC archives

BS provided an update on the project to collate historic Lincolnshire records which had become surplus to the needs of *BBRC*. In all, the three folders contain up to 600 records, but 50 per cent are handwritten, sometimes on scraps of paper or yellow cards, making them impossible to scan. In some cases, important information - for instance, the date of records - is missing so such records may now have become a "waste of space" and unworthy of being preserved. It was noted that it might be possible for Charlie Barnes at the Lincolnshire Records Centre to digitalise them. Bill agreed to retain the documents pending the next committee meeting when the matter will be reviewed further.

9 Officers' reports

a i) Chairman (PE): noted that arrangements would soon need to be made re the AGM in April. Members discussed the Golf Hotel in Woodhall Spa as an alternative to the Admiral Rodney in Horncastle. According to MH, its conference room will accommodate up to 100 and a rate of £95 has been quoted. Horncastle golf club is also a possible location. JWa will obtain quotes from the Horncastle venues prior to the next meeting. The proposed date is April 9, and it is hoped Alex Lees will be available to speak, possibly on the subject of rewilding. AC to confirm dates with Alex Lees.

a ii) PE said that, thanks to an initiative by CC a stalled project for a county bird atlas had been revived. There had been collaboration with recorders and committee officers, past and present, and it could be published as soon as in the first half of next year. PH suggested that the sub-title for the atlas should denote that the purpose of the publication was to provide an historical perspective. PE said that the atlas should contain a list of known and probable contributors, their names to be collated from the lists of observers included in the county reports dating from 1980 to 1992.

b) Treasurer (JWa): Noted that statements from PayPal provide more information than those from the HSBC bank account. JWa talked members through the latest financial report which had been supplied in advance of the meeting. Outgoings included £508 for recent purchase of a laptop computer to host records.

c) Secretary (JWr): Nothing further to report

d) IT officer (AC): Noted that he was still learning about the system used to host the website since it was revised by CC last year. He was not yet certain that he would be able to resolve any problem in the event of something going wrong. JWa noted there was a “vulnerability” to being dependent on the expertise of a single individual.

There followed a general discussion about the club’s website, particularly the forum. MH and JWa felt it was not as user-friendly as its predecessor. JC asked for the font for writing posts- light grey on a white background - to be changed because the text was difficult to discern for those contributing content. PH asked for the Lincolnshire list to be featured more prominently on the front page because of the increased data it now contains. AC said he was liaising with CC about updating the front page, but CC was not keen to make a radical overhaul at present.

e) Membership secretary (MH): Wilma at LWT no longer has any club car stickers. PH noted that Steve Keightley may have stickers available, PE to contact SK about this and through him, Neil Smith about a 40th anniversary redesign of the sticker.

f) Sales secretary (BS): Written update provided - sales remain slow compared with the historic average

g) County recorder north (JC): Nothing further to report

h) County recorder south (PH): Said he would welcome instruction on the Wildlife Recorder system that is being used by CC. He volunteered to have WR on his own laptop for back-up purposes.

10 To consider proposal to revise the arrangements both for membership and for publication/distribution of the annual report.

Further to comments made at the October committee meeting, CC had provided a written report proposing a) that the subscription should be reduced to retain/attract members and b) that a charge should be introduced for the annual report (payable by those club members wishing to buy a copy – possibly through a print-on-demand scheme). During discussion, members saw merit in the proposal but queried if there were examples of this model having been adopted by any bird club(s) elsewhere. JC noted that a Hampshire bird club had a membership of 2,000-plus and he undertook to ascertain what approach it took to recruiting/retaining members. JWa reminded the meeting of the value of Direct Debit renewal of subscriptions for those without PayPal accounts. Jwr asked what the cost of a report would be and it was agreed that if the costs of membership plus report were much greater than currently the idea might not be attractive to members. In the absence of details on costings of any revised publishing arrangements, it was decided to carry out further research and continue the discussion at the next committee meeting. It will also be an agenda item for the AGM in April to get feedback from members. PE said that as the measure would require constitutional change it would be important that members are on board with the change. To start this process, CC will be asked to include his paper in newsletter 7 for consideration by the wider club membership.

11 Any Other Business

MH suggested that consideration should be given to inviting a distinguished ornithologist to become honorary president of LBC. This position was once

held by the late Eric Simms. It was agreed that this should be an agenda item for the next meeting.

MH further reported on his ongoing correspondence with David Ballance, of Minehead, who has a particular interest in the Lincolnshire Bird Atlas project.

12 Date/time/place of next meeting

This was set for 7.30 pm on February 26, 2019, with the venue being the Coach and Horses pub in Hemingby subject to its availability.

There being no further business, the chairman closed the meeting at 9.45pm