

**MINUTES OF LINCS BIRD CLUB COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON JULY 16, 2019, AT 7.30 pm
COACH & HORSES, HEMINGBY**

1. The Chairman, Phil Espin, welcomed committee members John Watt, Mike Harrison, Phil Hyde, Andrew Chick, and Jim Wright, plus members Colin Casey, John Badley, Anthony Bentley, Chris Grimshaw, James Hewson.
2. Apologies for absence received from Bill Sterling and Nick Tribe.
3. Minutes of the February meeting (as posted on website) were confirmed and signed.
4. There were no matters arising.

5. Feedback on 2017 report

Comment had been positive on the contents/ print quality of the 2017 bird report (at 200 pages slightly slimmed down from its 256-page 2016 predecessor). There had been some glitches with postal distribution resulting from inaccuracies, changes of address etc in the address databases but these appear to have been resolved. PE suggested a group of members should get together as soon as the 2018 report has been printed to ensure speedy dispatch to those members unable to collect their copies at the AGM. JB suggested ways of speeding up publication to make future reports were more timely - for instance, sharper deadlines for submission of records - but PE, PH, CC and AC noted there would be practical issues

in bringing forward the publication date. The target date for the 2018 report will be in time for distribution at the AGM in March, 2020, but earlier if possible.

6. Website

Since early July, the home page has been enhanced with a Latest News section on the homepage. This can be viewed by non-members as well as non-members. It is updated daily by Chris Grimshaw who was commended by AC for doing “a cracking job”.

MH said the faintness of the text when posting content on the Forum is an issue. CC said this would be addressed when the website is next upgraded.

7. Newsletter (*The Heron*)

After a spring lull, publication of *The Heron* has resumed under the editorship of AC who said that his aim was for it to be produced monthly - preferably as near to the start of each month as possible. J Wr queried the value of the newsletter given that the club has a website for sharing news, comment and photographs. PE said the newsletter was valuable because it went direct to the email boxes of members, including those who might not log into the website forum. AB said he was more likely to read the newsletter than view the website. JB said he would be interested in occasionally contributing material from RSPB Frampton Marsh. CC maintained that Google Docs remained the preferred method of collating text and pictures. Contributors unfamiliar with Google Docs could submit material in Word or other formats to AC or any editorial committee member. All contributions will be welcome.

8. Co-option

PE agreed that the committee would benefit from new members to share the workload, but noted any co-option decision was a responsibility for the whole committee not solely the chairman. AB, CG and JH, were invited to reflect on whether they might like to join at some future point.

9, Club President

There were two nominations for this honorary position which has been vacant for many years since the death of Eric Simms. PE proposed distinguished academic Ian Newton who has written many authoritative books on subjects such as the sparrowhawk, finches, migration and the impact of modern farming practices on bird populations. JWrr proposed Graham Catley for his extensive contributions both to the LBC and county ornithology over many years. Both live in the county. The vote was 4-1 in favour of Prof Newton, with three committee members abstaining. PE agreed to write to Prof Newton inviting him to become hon president.

10. Feedback on 2019 AGM

The switch of venue from the Admiral Rodney in Horncastle to the Golf Hotel in Woodhall Spa was felt to be mostly positive because of the latter's more spacious car park and larger meeting room (which also has the advantage of being on the ground floor). All agreed that

the presentation by guest speaker Alex Lees on Rewilding was excellent - both informative and thought-provoking. The relatively low member-attendance was attributed by PE to the proximity to Easter, with many regular attendees of previous years unable to attend. However, AC noted that one individual had come up from London to hear our guest. For the 2020 AGM, there was a suggestion that a talk on Frampton Marsh by JB would be popular, but JB felt it might be too soon after a similar talk he will be giving at the November Conservation Forum of the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust . It was agreed that an approach should be made to Sheffield-based author, academic and guillemot expert Prof Tim Birkhead.

11. Matters arising from the AGM

Following a proposal made at the AGM, it was agreed to set up a What's App group for LBC members wishing to communicate/ receive instant messages on rare and scarce bird sightings in the county. There are already similar schemes operating for birders covering Louth, Grimsby, Frampton Marsh (54 members) and Gibraltar Point. AB noted that an individual group could have up to 256 members. He agreed to set up a group on the club's behalf. This will supplement (but not replace) the Latest Sightings section on the website forum and the Latest News section on the home page. AB agreed to work up some rules and be Administrator, PE and AC volunteered to assist with Admin. Details of the proposed What's App scheme will appear in the next newsletter so interested members can apply to join.

12. Possible revisions to membership arrangements

There was a long discussion on streamlining existing processes, for instance by reducing the cost of subscription/ publishing the annual report in pdf format rather than hard copy etc. No agreement could be reached, so there will be no changes to the existing arrangement, at least for the time being. However, it was generally felt that special encouragement needed to be given to young birders. CC will explore the possibility of installing a feature on the website's home page that will advantage under-25s - for instance, those wishing to receive the club's newsletter.

13. Officers reports

a) Chairman

PE updated the committee's ongoing and positive relationship with the Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership.

PE further urged that some of the club's surplus monies should be earmarked for conservation projects rather than being retained in funds. He suggested installing nesting platforms for spoonbills at Frampton Marsh. Other committee members contributed ideas such as establishing nesting sites for ospreys, sand martins and swifts. Following a suggestion from JB, the club will also consider part-financing (with the RSPB) creation of enhanced habitat at Frampton Marsh to attract migrating passerines. Another proposal under consideration is to fund an interpretive board at the club's hide at Cut End, Boston, and to introduce a keycode admission system. PE

undertook to write to various LWT and RSPB reserve managers to identify projects which might be supported.

b) Treasurer

JWa reported on the state of the club's finances which remain healthy with a balance of £29,509. Subscription income to date this year is £3,099 via the club's arrangement with the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and £665 via Paypal. Meeting costs and speakers' fees to date total £700.

c) Secretary

None

d) Membership secretary

None

e) Sales secretary

BS supplied a written report detailing LBC report sales to three individuals (in Market Rasen, Birmingham and Dorset) plus five on sale or return to the reception area at RSPB Frampton Marsh. AC mentioned he would be supplying a sales cabinet for reports to Frampton Marsh visitor centre the following day and JB commented the centre is making a small amount of bird report sales.

f) County recorder

PH asked if anyone had thoughts about a replacement following the resignation earlier this year of county recorder North John Clarkson. JB suggested that instead of having separate recorders for south/ north of the

county, PH should be main recorder with someone else to assist. PH will look at what work might be delegated and then decide how to pursue this.

g) IT officer
None

14. Any Other Business

At PE's request, CC provided an updated on resurrecting publication of the county bird atlas which is approaching completion, subject to finding original line drawings to fill gaps in the text and updating the original text language for some species accounts. Once published a pdf will be made available free to members. However, payment will be required via a print on demand website for those seeking a hard copy. LBC will need to purchase a large number of copies to satisfy publication requirements and ensure the book is widely read.

AC reported that Cupit Printers have not responded to a request for a quote for printing 500 LBC windscreen stickers. CC agreed to seek a quote from a firm in Lincoln.

CC queried why the minutes of the 2019 AGM had not yet appeared on the website. AC and JWr to investigate.

JB suggested that a special birding event/party might be held one Saturday in early September to mark jointly the 40th anniversary of the LBC and the 10th anniversary of the opening of the RSPB reserve at Frampton Marsh. During the day, there would be a target of recording 100

species - and possibly even equalling/surpassing the 115 once achieved by AB. All welcomed the proposal which could include a barbecue in the evening. AC suggested there should also be an opportunity for bat-recording. Subject to a date being agreed and the proposal proceeding, further details will be posted on the website and/or in the newsletter.

15. Next meeting

This will be at the Coach and Horses, Hemingby at 7.30pm on November 19th.

The provisional date for the next AGM subject to speaker availability will be 24th March with a fallback date of 31st March.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 10.06pm.