

MINUTES FOR LINCS BIRD CLUB COMMITTEE MEETING AT 7.30pm ON NOVEMBER 10, 2020, VIA ZOOM

1. **Attendance:** Phil Espin (chairman), Phil Hyde, John Watt, Andrew Chick, Bill Sterling, Mike Harrison, Jim Wright

2. **Apologies for absence:** Nick Tribe

3. **Minutes of July meeting:** These were confirmed. MH asked to be emailed a copy of the minutes as he did not regularly log into the website. AC agreed to do this (if he remembers).

4. **Matters arising:**

a) Joint LNU/LBC meeting proposed for January 16, 2021, has been cancelled due to CV-19.

b) PE confirmed that John Badley remained willing to give a talk via Zoom/online platform on the history, development and wildlife of RSPB Frampton Marsh at a date to be arranged, possibly at the joint internet meeting of LBC/BTO proposed for the afternoon of January 30, 2021.

c) Two display banners have been bought - one featuring landscapes/ the other featuring birds. These are currently with BS and PE. Cost for the pair was £148.80. Photographs were supplied by Simon/ Karen Spavin at no cost. BS reported that he has in hand potential order of table display board if required in future.

d) Modus radar tracking initiative - PE confirmed there was no new information to report.

e) Co-opting of new member(s) to the committee. Members agreed with JWr's suggestion to approach Joy Croot. JWa suggested that the committee should consider inviting a female guest speaker at a future AGM.

f) National Trust plan to convert former Sandilands golf course to a wetlands/ dunes nature reserve. Agreed that JWr should liaise with project chief Carl Hawke and Rachel Marriott re offer of potential support by LBC in a recording capacity. The Trust is interested to establish what species use an abandoned golf course before its transformation into dunes and wetland.

5. Publication of Lincolnshire Bird Atlas (1980-99).

PE and PW reported positive member-feedback, and JWa and BS reported encouraging sales. The print-on-demand/ distribution arrangement with Lulu seems to have worked well. However, a couple of members have reported sub-standard binding in their copies. BS queried whether it might be beneficial to use the Lulu arrangement for production/ distribution of future editions of the annual report. PH said this was currently "unthinkable" because of the complexities of the software that had been used for the atlas.

6. 2019 Lincs Bird Report:

PH reported steady progress on systematic list, features, other content, etc. Finders reports will include: B-w Pratincole, Bobolink, Mandt's Black Guillemot, Pallid Swift, Isabelline Wheatear, Iberian Chiffchaff, Water Pipit influx (Baston Fen).

PH commended the assistance of Chris Grimshaw and Viv Fleming in contributing species reports. He suggested inviting John Badley to contribute a site report on the history of RSPB Frampton Marsh.

He hoped someone - preferably a ringer - might volunteer to compile the ringing report. AC said he would ask if Alan Ball might be willing to do this.

It was agreed that the report's print run should again be 400 copies.

MH reported that the report's longstanding printers, Cupits of Horncastle, had been taken over by a Woodhall Spa firm. AC agreed to liaise with this firm.

BS and others noted that any new pricing structure needed to be monitored in the wake of an unexpected price-hike with the last report.

AC noted that this would be the LBC's 40th anniversary report – a record which needed to be registered on the front cover. He favoured a bumper edition to include a 30-page report on low-tide birds of The Wash. PH and others queried whether the additional printing cost would be justified given that interest among members on such a specialist subject might be limited.

PH noted that a Norwich-area firm, Swallowtail Press, had experience with printing bird reports if a time were to come when LBC needed to look elsewhere.

7) Policy on awarding grants (in part or full)

It was agreed that, rather than introducing a formal policy, any awards should be at the discretion of the committee for reasons of flexibility, the key issue being that they should relate to Lincolnshire related projects.

8) Grant requests

a) The committee looked favourably on grant requests for web-cam projects for two separate peregrine nests - one on Louth church, the other on Grantham church- the pictures to be live-streamed to the LBC website. MH and JWa queried whether grants might be better spent on conservation projects, but PE said no other requests had been submitted. AC said peregrine populations were "plummeting" in some parts of the country such as Derbyshire and Cumbria. Members noted the favourable publicity to the club that would most likely accrue. PH said the projects would also have educational value. AC agreed to liaise with Geoff Mullett (Louth) and Bob Sheppard (Grantham) to encourage them to dovetail a joint project.

b) No action to be taken on a proposal by PE that LBC should make a donation of £100 towards the Fair £600,000 appeal for costs of rebuilding Fair Isle bird observatory which was destroyed by fire last March. Members have been encouraged to support the project individually through an article in the Oct Heron.

9. Website

AC emphasised the value of the sightings records updated daily by Chris Grimshaw who was doing " a really good job". He noted the importance of the website for recruiting new members, but said he was exploring areas where it could be enhanced.

9. Update on *The Heron* e-newsletter

This continues to go smoothly and AC is hoping to produce a bumper edition for December. Subject to approval by LWT, this could include a feature on the Little Tern breeding project at Gibraltar Point which this summer enjoyed financial support from the LBC as well as sunset-to-sunrise wardening assistance from PE and other club members. The issue will be a public one and the ability to download it will be publicised on social media.

10. Honorary life membership

- a) Colin Casey has thanked the club for granting him honorary membership status
- b) Proposal by AC for Neil Smith - a valued contributor of photos and artwork - to be made an hon member was approved.

11. Arrangements for 2021 AGM

With Covid-19 uncertainty continuing, PE suggested that this should be held via Zoom, with no guest speaker. Agreed

12. Proposed BTO/LBC virtual conference

This proposal by Chris Gunn of BTO was supported, with a proposed date of Saturday, January 30 - time to be arranged. Four/five talks of about 20 minutes with five minutes for question and a 10-minute interlude. The registration would be fee £5. Maximum delegates: 200. Suggested speakers/ topics: Nocturnal migration speaker from BTO; Nest record scheme, European bird migration portal; John Badley on Frampton Marsh and/or Roger Wardle on wetland bird reserve design.

13. Officers' reports:

a) Chairman

1. 2021 AGM - provisionally to be held via Zoom with no guest speaker. No questions raised in response to the Chair and Treasurer's reports published in the Sep Heron.
2. Ben Ward the Shorebird Warden at Gibraltar Point had submitted a report regarding how the season went and how our sponsorship worked out. Successful. It will be adapted into an article in the Dec edition of *The Heron*. A future issue will carry a request for volunteers to support the 2021 effort.
3. Environment Agency has finally made contact with us and offered to reimburse our expenditure on a new lock at Cut End Hide via RSPB.
4. Phil Hyde, John Clarkson, Colin Casey and PE have been writing and putting together a new Birds of Lincolnshire since August. The book is mainly written but there is still plenty of checking to do. It will hopefully be published via Lulu in the new year as a fully illustrated 250 page A4 hardback (similar style to the

Atlas) and will likely cost £40 a copy and retail at £60-£65. In view of the cost the number of free copies will be much more restricted than for the Atlas.

b) Treasurer

JWa supplied a comprehensive financial report on income and outgoings. The current (November 5) balance is £27,327.62.

c) Secretary

Nothing further to report

d) Membership secretary

MH said he had been reassured by Michelle at Banovallum House that our current arrangement with LWT was up-to-date.

e) Sales secretary

Members welcomed BS's written update on sales of LBC publications. BS also supplied a brief but thorough verbal run-through of his recording procedures.

f) County recorder

Nothing further to report

g) IT officer

Nothing further to report

14. Any other business

a) Covid and bird information sharing

PE reported the website had been updated with a message following the current lockdown. LBC leaves it to members to decide on their actions. It will continue to provide bird news to keep people informed and encourages members to comply with social distancing and other relevant rules. Birding and bird surveying is a recreational activity and is not banned under the lockdown regulations.

b) Cress Marsh

BS reported on LBC members' co-operation with North East Lincolnshire Council on monitoring/recording not just the birds/wildlife but also the welfare of the cattle at the Cress Marsh mitigation site at Stallingborough. A seven-person panel is involved. BS noted that the site was currently out of bounds

during management/maintenance activities involving heavy plant. PE asked that Colin and Sheila Jennings be updated with records.

c) White-tailed eagle

MH queried why reports of a white-tailed eagle in the south of the county had been suppressed. PE explained that this had been at the request of the Roy Dennis Foundation which has been pioneering a re-introduction project of the species on the Isle of Wight. This bird had wandered and spent most of the summer in Yorkshire. There had been fears about its health which might be further undermined if it came under too much scrutiny from birders/the public. Specific up to date information on the bird's location had been provided and at the request of RDF, John Clarkson had subsequently photographed the bird and it appears to be healthy. BS said the wellbeing of birds should always be the top priority during observation activities.

d) Agenda arrangements

BS suggested future agendas should be compiled via GoogleDocs to allow members to contribute items for discussion, suggestions and comments which could be shared by fellow-members prior to meetings. JWr said that members already submitted items/ reports to him/PE via email, and this worked satisfactorily. PE and MH agreed that the existing system was sufficient. PE commented that if the discussions were held via GoogleDocs, meetings might become little more than tick-box exercises.

e) Big Bird Day

AC reported on an initiative by Richard Doan for a Big Bird Day on January 1, 2021 (and possibly another in May) whereby members should be encouraged to spend the day birding, then submit their records. JWr queried whether this might be extended to the wider public, not just LBC members. AC said the proposal was still at the drawing-board stage with further details to be announced later in the Dec Heron which would be available to the public.

15. Date and time of next meeting

This will be held via Zoom at 7.30pm on Tuesday January 12, 2021

There being no further business, PE closed the meeting at 9.25pm