

Minutes of Lincs Bird Club committee meeting held via Zoom at 7.30 pm on February 22, 2022

1. Chairman Phil welcomed committee members:

John Watt, Phil Hyde, Andrew Chick, Joy Croot, Mike Harrison, Bill Sterling and Jim Wright, plus guests Chris Gunn and Geoff Mullett.

2. Apologies for absence

None.

3. Minutes of the committee meeting of November 9, 2021 (as posted on the LBC website) were confirmed as a true record.

4. Matters arising

Cut End Hide: PE reported nothing more has been heard from the Environment Agency about selling the building. Hide keys are now available online for LBC members via the website. They can order and pay and Bill will dispatch. RSPB Frampton warden John Badley has expressed concern it might be possible for someone without a key to enter the hide along with a key holder and, if remaining on their own, get locked in. Following an observation from JWa, it was agreed that a warning sign should be posted within the hide.

5. Update on peregrines/ churches/ CCTV webcam/ lighting

a) St Wulfram's, Grantham

AC said birds had recently returned to visit the site periodically without showing much obvious sign of nesting commitment.

b) St James, Louth

Geoff Mullett reported that early courtship signs were "promising" for another successful nesting season for the birds. There has been a glitch with the electrics which has led to intermittent interruption of CCTV webcam coverage, but it is hoped that this will be rectified by contractors GRS. Of concern to the church council and the new part-time vicar is that the birds' activity has meant that visitors are not permitted to ascend the full height of the staircase resulting in lost ticket income (between January and July) for St James which is already under financial pressure, notably from escalating energy costs (£12,000 last year and likely to double this year). LBC has been asked to provide compensation for lost income but the club has been reluctant, noting that it has provided monies in the past and further that it is the legal responsibility of the church to ensure that the peregrines are not disturbed. JWa said it was "a bit rich of the church to ask LBC to pay for it to comply with the law". For 2022, the arrangements will be as last year, but this issue may need to be revisited in the coming months. In the meantime, visitors are being allowed to climb part-way up the stairs to enjoy the views. AC noted that the peregrine was a Schedule I species and thus likely to be "protected from the point of pair-bonding". MH urged caution on health and safety re the electrics. The committee noted with appreciation donations to the club's webcam costs, most recently £25. PE commended Geoff for overseeing the welfare of the birds and for negotiating a delicate situation "with aplomb". He added: "We will keep a watching brief and trust to Geoff's best endeavours."

6. Motus migration monitoring

PE report positive developments on the Motus tagged bird tracking system, noting that the BTO is supportive. He had met with Kev Wilson, Gibraltar Point warden, plus Rob Adams and Nick Whitehouse of Spurn Bird Observatory Trust on 26 January to discuss siting and installation of a transmitter at Gib Point. in the medium

term and Freiston Shore, Wainfleet and Saltfleetby are also being considered as potential sites - and possibly even two LWT reserves, Far Ings and Whisby. Asked by MH the range of the transmitter, PE said it was up to between 5-10km. Pending further information on costings, committee agreed PE's suggestion that LBC offers support of 50 per cent (up to £2,500) to cost of a first receiver, most likely at Gib, and £1,000 towards each one thereafter. AC emphasised that LBC should be involved with Motus. "It is what the club stands for," he insisted. MH hoped that emerging data would reveal that Lincolnshire was not a "black hole" between Spurn and Norfolk as is sometimes claimed.

7. Update on *Birds of Lincolnshire* - sales, storage, distribution etc

PE reported the position on 22nd Feb as follows:

Summary		Sold	Stock held	
Books printed by Swallowtail	704		192	
Sold by LBC		318	55	(PE 22, BS 21, PH 12)
Given away by LBC		37		
Sold by Wildsounds		46	14	
Sold by LWT		9	15	
Other sales		3	14	
Total		414	290	704

LBC is now in profit on sales as shown in the audited 2021 accounts. All future sales represent profit. There could be more sales depending on response to 4,000 sales leaflets to be distributed with the Spring edition of *BTO News* to its readers in Yorkshire and East Midlands counties, including Lincolnshire. Neil Smith was thanked for designing the leaflet. Printing was by Allinson & Wilcox, Louth, for around £120. A further cost was £18 for posting leaflets to the distributor in Norwich. If stock remains after this new sales push, the club will consider gifting around 25 copies to libraries in

Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire. There is also the possibility of further sales at the Global Birdfair at Oakham in July. JWr commended the continuing promotional initiatives of PE and PH. BS expressed disappointed that relatively few copies had been sold by Wild Sounds given its preferential sales terms. MH suggested Waterstone's as a potential new sales outlet but GM cautioned that they take a high commission and the costs of delivery to their distribution outlet also has to be considered. Following comments from CG, PE will investigate whether to generate income under authors' rights from library loans through relevant licensing arrangements.

8. Review of the previous month's annual joint meeting via Zoom of LBC/Lincolnshire Naturalists' Union

Members who attended agreed that this had been successful.

9. Provisional arrangements for LBC AGM 2022

This will be held at the Golf Hotel, Woodhall Spa at 7.30pm on March 22. The arrangements have been made by JWa. and AC. In lieu of booking, and potentially having to cancel, a guest speaker, LBC committee members PE and PH will discuss their book, Birds of Lincolnshire, and the challenged of gathering and collating bird records in the county.

10. Update on forthcoming social events

Having launched a series of Zoom meetings in December, CG is now working on further initiatives (including outdoor trips) for spring and summer. On March 8, warden Kev Wilson will be giving a presentation on Gib Point. For the future, one possibility would be a countywide event to coincide with the May 10 (5.30am-7am) Dawn Chorus event being planned by the LWT at Whisby. JWa noted that

obtaining public liability insurance was advisable for outdoor gatherings. CG's preliminary inquiry indicated that the premium is likely to be c. £56, based on a quote from Churchill Insurance. MH suggested NFU might also be an insurance provider. AC said he would take advice from Nick Tribe of LNU. More details of meetings will be reported via LBC outlets as and when.

11. Welcoming/ encouraging new members

JWr queried whether anyone on the committee had responded to appeal made in the website forum (January 7) by the father of a new LBC student member (from North London) for birding buddies in the Lincoln area. To date, no one had responded. JWr agreed to make contact if someone could provide relevant / phone email details.

12. Global Birdfair 2022

The forthcoming revival of Birdfair in July after two years' Covid-enforced absence provides an opportunity for LBC to fly the flag as a way of raising the club's profile, of recruiting new members and of achieving sales of its publications. Members considered the pros and cons of taking stand space - either solo or in partnership with an organisation such as Lincs Wildlife Trust and Spurn Bird Observatory Trust - and of purchasing a credit/ debit card reader to facilitate taking monies. Preliminary research (conducted during the meeting) by CG indicated that buying a card reader might be less expensive than initially suspected. No decision was taken pending further investigation and information from Global Birdfair about how much a stand would cost.

13. Officers' reports (if any) on items not previously covered on agenda

a) Chairman

i) PE thanked Colin and Sheila Jennings who have retired (after 17 years) from their role of gathering and collating bird records. He has presented them with a limited edition Pallas's Sandgrouse print (number 19/20) as a gift to thank them for all their hard work.

ii) In advance of the meeting, PE supplied a one-page Rare Breeding Birds Panel summary report covering 2020.

iii) Back copies of the annual *Lincolnshire Bird Report and Scarce Birds in Lincolnshire* are currently with Woodhall Spa printshop for scanning and the project should be completed shortly. The samples so far seen are fully searchable. PE expressed a preference for back copies from 1977 up to a certain date (yet to be determined but probably 2018) to be published on the public part of the website as a resource for the entire world birding community. Then, when the 2021 report is published, 2019 could be put online. They will be free to view online; with perhaps a token charge, say £1. for every copy downloaded. All this to be finalised following feasibility discussion with the club's IT officer, AC.

PE believes the time has come for back stock of annual reports to be remaindered - not least to reduce the accumulated weight on the loft floor of the club's sales officer, BS. Thereafter, the club would hold two year's worth of stock.

iv) Online Mapping Tool: Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership have supplied a link to an online mapping tool they are testing. They intend to make it available for free on their website. This link has also

been shared with some committee members. Anyone else interested should contact PE

v) Monthly Zoom meetings: PE thanked CG for her launch of these events. So far there have been three. The first, a Christmas, quiz was a bit shaky due to an issue with the invitation. In January, CG gave a talk on making birding count. In February, Owen Beaumont on Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes National Nature Reserve. There were 31 attendees at the February event. PE hoped more support would be forthcoming from committee members in future.

vi) Lincolnshire Birding Trail: Following up on a suggestion by Toby Collett and working with Matthew Capper at LWT, Luke Bamforth at GLNP and tourism officer Mary Evans at Lincs CC Tourism, PE has been involved in setting this up on the Visit Lincolnshire website. Their aim is for a trail of 10 coastal sites, in the first instance, to go live this spring. Subsequently, there will be further trails - for instance, Wolds, Marsh, Fens. Thanks were expressed to Toby for his initiative, to the RSPB for their support and to LBC members Graham Catley and JWr for writing up their local sites, respectively Alkborough Flats and Cleethorpes seafront.

vii) Lincolnshire Agricultural Society: PE reported on correspondence from LAS relating to the proposed Countryside Lincs event at Lincolnshire Showground on Sunday 10th April (10am-4pm). This is expected to attract more than 4,500 visitors. MH volunteered to man a stand on LBC's behalf subject to being given assistance in setting up the display material. It is possible that LBC will run a farmland species photo-id quiz with a copy of *Birds of Lincolnshire* as a prize.

b) Treasurer

In advance of the meeting, JWa supplied an up-to-date report reflecting the healthy state of the club's finance. He went on to question whether the club should continue banking with HSBC given a) its continued investment in eco-unfriendly fossil fuel projects and b) its poor rates of interest. CG suggested that National Savings & Investment's Green bond might be an alternative option. It was agreed to revisit a change of bank at the next meeting following further inquiries.

c) Secretary

JWr said he was preparing to submit an application to North East Lincolnshire Council for a grant to cover preliminary 'development work' on a bird heritage scheme. The grant would be dependent on demonstrating involvement of other community groups/ schools/ parish councils within NE Lincs. PE said he would provide some recently-supplied journals from the late Mr Winslow a birder active in the Cleethorpes area in the 1950s and 60s.

d) Membership secretary

MH said membership had been "going well" with 26 new ones (including 11 in January) joining since the last committee meeting in November. It is hard to be precise about the number of members because there are family as well individual arrangements.

e) Sales secretary

In advance of the meeting, BS provided a written report on sales performance. He said he would be altering the presentation Word Excel format (to show two years rather than three) for technological reasons.

f) County recorder

PH provided a written update on the forthcoming 2020 annual report. As well as the systematic list and review of the year, there will be features on:

- a. Common Cranes breeding success in Lincolnshire (LWT)
- b. Louth Peregrines (Geoff Mullet)
- c. Artificial Sand Martin site, Biscathorpe and the species' status in Lincs (Stuart Britton & Phil Hyde)
- d. Lincolnshire's Black-tailed Godwits (Jenny Gill & Graham Appleton)
- e. Black-throated Thrush – Finder's report (Josh Forrester)
- f. WT Eagle movements in Lincolnshire in 2020 – Tim Mackrill

Apart from the BT Thrush, the other accepted BBRC rarities for 2020 are:

Iberian Chiffchaff	(2nd record)
Terek Sandpiper	(5th record)
Gull-billed Tern	(7th record)
Great Snipe	(20th but first since 1984)
Hume's Warbler	(4th record)
Little Bittern	(14th record)

The print-run and distribution is likely to be similar to last year (50 copies on either side) subject to a decision delegated to AC.

To date, it has not been possible to find anyone willing to compile a Ringing Report for 2020.

LBC Records Committee: Richard Doan has agreed to be added to the ranks.

LBC Database: After the 2020 report has been published, PE, AC and PH will meet with Charlie Barnes of GLNP to discuss the way forward with new data uploading arrangements.

Colin Casey bird book library: Colin's estate is due to be granted probate in late March/ early April according to Leigh Taylor, the executor. He will advise when there are books and other bird-related paraphernalia to collect.

g) IT officer/ newsletter editor

Nothing to report.

14. Any other business

PE mentioned that the Manby Flashes hide has been put back in place after an absence of two years. It is now secured with a padlock. The owner local farmer Martin Chapman is happy for the bird club to distribute keys which will be sold on the same basis as Cut End hide ones on the website. A presentation of a copy of Birds of Lincolnshire, signed by all locals who already have keys will be made to Martin shortly.

15. Date/ time/ place next meeting

7.30pm July 12 at a place to be confirmed later.

There being no further business, the chairman closed the meeting at 9.43pm