

## HEREFORDSHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

### Minutes of the 67<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting held at Holmer Parish Centre on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Present: (45 members) Judy Allen; Derek Barnes; Pam & Chris Bartlett; Graham & Jo Bennett; Ian and Archie Buttriss; Mick Colquhoun; Mervyn Davies; Russell Davies; Peter Eldridge; Jean Ellis; Janet & Barry Fitzpatrick; S.E. Griffin; Susanna Grunsell; Andrew London; Astrid Mick; Una & Gareth Morgan; Helen Morton; Helen Osborn; Gerald Parker; Phil Parsons; John Pullen; Frances Riddell; David Roberts; Ian & Mary Roberts; Chris Robinson; Nick Smith; John & Allison Sumner; J.M. Spencer; Robert Taylor; Sheila & Maurice Taylor; Gerald Wells; Brian Willder; Ann & Jim Wilkinson; Phil & Chris Williams; Graham Wren.

1. Apologies: Eric Aplin; Philip & Margaret Brown; Dave Coker; Steve Coney; Nicky Davies; Geoff Davis; Norman Fincham; Rachel Jenkins; Chris & Keith Mason; Derrick Murphy; Mr & Mrs O'Connor Thompson; Sharron & Charlie O'Gorman; Tom & Jennifer Weale

2. Minutes of the 66<sup>th</sup> Annual General meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016 at Holmer

These had been sent to all members

3. Adoption of the minutes

These were adopted without dissent

4. The Chairman's Report Gerald Wells

*"I would like to begin with thanks to the President, all members of the Executive Committee, the main Committee and our Sub Committees for their hard work and support throughout the past year. Many thanks also go to all those members who make a contribution to HOC activities, be it at meetings, through submitting records, or in other background ways.*

*Some of you may not be fully aware of the breadth of the work that your officers, Committee and Subcommittees cover in the course of a year. I will try to give you a flavour of what we have been up to.*

*The Editorial Subcommittee continues to do a splendid job on the Annual Report and we can be confident that the improvements made under Mervyn Davies stewardship mean that the high standard achieved compares favourably with that of other county club reports. The Education Subcommittee continues to strive to encourage recruitment of young people to the club. There will be a family day event at Bodenham on 6th May. Your Rarities Subcommittee, chaired by Mick Colquhoun, our county bird recorder, has the important task of validating records of rarities reported in the county. Their activities require a high level of birding skills and, in the case of national rarities occurring in the county, interaction with the BBRC. (British Birds Rarities Committee). This year they have also completed a comprehensive review of historical records so that we have a county bird list based on rigorous scrutiny of the available evidence.*

*The club has entered into a major collaboration with the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust in relation to the Trust's management of the Bodenham Lake site and hopefully in future also with their potential involvement in the Wellington GP site. Most notably the HOC has contributed a new bird hide to the environmental enhancement project at the Bodenham site, construction of which is scheduled for this month.*

*We also participate in a number of bird surveys, some through contribution to BTO surveys and some from members' initiatives. This past year we have helped with the BTO House Martin survey and that continues*

*this year. The plight of the lowland breeding Curlew has been addressed and further work is planned to assess the species status in the county and to identify threats and possible conservation measures. Swifts are currently threatened by a diminishing breeding sites resulting from renovation of old buildings so we hope to identify established breeding sites across the county, conduct a more thorough survey in one large town and erect nesting boxes in places where swifts are already nesting to encourage expansion of the colony. Volunteers are needed for both these surveys, so please let Chris Robinson know if you can help.*

*A small group of members have investigated the feasibility and merits of revisiting a local farmland bird survey carried out 50 years ago and a pilot study at the site is planned for this spring.*

*To help members access the county's best birding sites we have embarked on a project to roll out a series of site guides. The first of these, on Garway Hill, appeared in the last newsletter.*

*This past year we also carried out an online members' survey. For the facilitation of this and the technical skills to launch it we are indebted to a relatively new member, Robert Taylor. The response to the survey, at 57% of the membership, was exceptionally good. In general it reflected a high degree of satisfaction with most aspects of the club's activities and it has provided a very helpful insight into your views across those activities. Your Committee has, in recent weeks, been addressing any concerns raised and will report shortly on proposed actions for any improvements. One theme emerging from the survey was that members would like more information and tuition on bird identification. Tonight we are straight on to that with a session on identification presented by our President.*

*We have had good attendances at all indoor meetings which have covered a wide range of subjects. Field meetings have taken us all over the county and as well as finding good birds have always promoted much banter and humour. A special thank you goes to Gerald Parker who has not only been our field meetings organizer for the past 6 years but has held positions on Committee for many years prior to that.*

*I hope that gives you a brief overview of the club's 2016 year.*

*Each year we recognize members who have made an outstanding contribution to the club with the presentation of the River Wye Award. This year it goes to someone, or rather a partnership, who over a period of 8 years has delighted members with an annual weekend or week away to different birding venues across the country. Their planning and organization of these holidays, which invariably included a WI tea, was impeccable. They stepped down in 2016 and so have left a vacancy for anyone who feels they have travel agent skills. For their great contribution to club activities The River Wye Award goes to Chris and Pam Bartlett."*

#### 5. The President's address John Pullen

The President re-iterated the Chairman's thanks to all who help run the HOC. He thanked the Chairman for all his hard work, commitment and zeal to keep the club ticking. He gave a special thanks to Keith and Chris Mason who were not present tonight. He explained that Keith's condition does not allow them to attend any more but wanted to record how much we appreciate their years of service and membership; Keith as field meeting organiser and BTO rep and Chris quietly organising the indoor meeting refreshments for over 20 years. The meeting gave a huge round of applause.

He stressed that we need more active members to fill the officer positions (especially the indoor and outdoor meeting organisers) and to contribute generally towards the success of the birds in the county. He encouraged members who feel they can help in any small way to talk to him, the chairman or the secretary.

## 6. Treasurer & Membership Secretary's Report

Jim Wilkinson thanked the auditor Eric Aplin. The report had been distributed to all. It was broadly similar to the previous year, although the Atlas commission was a "one off". He is moving money in response to the low interest rates. Indoor meetings income covered the costs. The Annual Report costs will be higher. Next year's surplus he expects to be reduced. The Club received a donation of £5,000 which was part of the £10,000 given to Hereford Wildlife Trust for the new hide at Bodenham; ground works will be done in September after the breeding season. He reported that subscriptions would remain at the present level.

Membership: at the end of 2017 there were 299 subscriptions equating to 380 individual members; there had been 10 new members since the beginning of December.

### The meeting unanimously adopted the accounts

## 7. Election of Officers and committee

Three posts as below were up for re-election at this AGM

Nominations received before the AGM were

Recorder Mick Colquhoun (proposer Dave Coker, seconder Tom Weale)

Annual Reports Editor Mervyn Davies (proposer David Coker, seconder Tom Weale)

Newsletter Editor Nicky Davies (proposer Jim Wilkinson, seconder Peter Eldridge)

Only one nomination for an ordinary Committee member had been received:

Norman Fincham (proposer Una Morgan, seconded by Dave Coker)

Archie Buttriss proposed accepting these nominations, Seconder Chris Robinson. Approved unanimously by the meeting.

The Chairman stressed that the Indoor and outdoor meeting organisers were essential roles for the Club and he urged all to give some thought. Other posts, although important, could be considered by the Committee for co-option.

## 8 Appointment of Auditor

Eric Aplin has retired after 15 years as he is moving away. The Treasurer expressed the Club's gratitude for his service and would be making a presentation at a later date.

Ian Roe was proposed as auditor by Gareth Morgan seconded by Nick Smith. Carried unanimously.

## 9 Motions from the committee

None was proposed

## 10 Any Motion from any member

None was received.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm

It was followed by a short tutorial on 5 birds (song thrush, mistle thrush, blackbird, wren and dunnock) including their song by the President. A Dutch supper followed and then Mick Colquhoun showed some of the best photos from members during the year.