

## Herefordshire Ornithological Club

### Minutes of a Committee Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2017 at Holmer Parish Centre

(unapproved)

Present: Gerald Wells, Chairman; John Pullen, President; Gareth Morgan, Tom Weale, Brian Willder Vice Presidents; Susanna Grunsell, Vice Chairman; Mick Colquhoun; Mervyn Davies; Una Morgan; Gerald Parker; Mary Roberts; Chris Robinson; Robert Taylor; Jim Wilkinson.

**1 Apologies:** Dave Coker; Nicky Davies; Rachel Jenkins.

#### **2 Minutes of the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2016 Committee Meeting**

After deleting "all churches" in point 3.5 Swifts, these were agreed and signed by the Chairman

#### **3 Matters Arising**

3. 2) Bird ID Courses: what is needed is still under discussion with the Chairman suggesting it may be best to steer people to the good range of material available on the Internet, as well as teaching at field meetings. A small teaching experiment/or quiz will be done at the Club AGM in March utilising sound and pictures for just a few species; timing 20 – 30 minutes. **John Pullen** will speak and **Mick** will do the pictures.

It was suggested that the AGM would be a good time to find out what is wanted by members for the bird photography request and Mick could try to find an appropriate suitable tutor.

3. 3) No further news on Wellington and Tarmac. HWT are still in talks with Tarmac.

3. 5) Swifts: Work proposed in the next breeding season. *Chris has put an appeal in the newsletter.*

3. 8) Burley Gate Project: a visit has taken place and the team has met with the two farmers; Mervyn has located some historical data and Rachel has now located some of the 1960s maps. *A presentation and proposal will be made at the next Committee meeting*

7 Walking Guides/Site guides. John Pullen and Robert's first guide, on Garway Hill, will be in the Newsletter. John queried the need for the author to be identified. Robert has produced a list of future potential guides. **Gerald Parker** agreed to do Credenhill Park Wood; **Jim Wilkinson** will do Coppet Hill and **Tom Weale** will do Bringsty Common. It is hoped eventually they may be collated into a booklet (this cannot be sold if OS maps are included but a donation can be requested) and they maybe on the website for downloading. The Chairman congratulated John and Robert.

#### **4 Treasurer's Report.**

This had been distributed to the committee.

The annual accounts were made available at the meeting.

The commission on Atlas sales was a one-off and the provision for the annual report has been increased.

There will be no change to subscriptions or meeting charges.

We may be asked to help HWT financially in the future with Wellington.

The new hide at Bodenham Lakes may be erected in February with the landscaping to follow in the autumn – awaiting final confirmation of Lottery funding [*subsequent confirmed by HWT*].

We will need a new auditor as Eric Aplin is moving to Henley later this year.

## 5 Members Survey

The Executive Committee has met with Robert and identified areas where other committee members views and comments were needed. Relevant extracts were sent out to these members. Once the responses are in the committee will discuss further actions at the February Committee Meeting. *See the notes of 9<sup>th</sup> December Exec committee meeting.*

Robert has written an article for the February Newsletter and the Chairman has also highlighted it in his report. He thanked Robert again for the survey – one of the best we have done.

Some preliminary points:-

Treasurer reported that a few more paper newsletters would be printed as a result of the survey.

Indoor Meetings; the issue of friendliness had come up and committee members were asked to talk to members they didn't know. The Chairman will explain why we are wearing badges. The issue of a mid way break had been raised at the January meeting and overwhelmingly rejected.

## 6 Correspondence

6.1 Planning Applications: there were two planning applications where members had asked HOC to object P161412 Madley ESC and P163391 Bowling Green Farm, Clehonger.

- The Chairman previously sent a letter of objection regarding The Madley application based on the potential impact of the development on the conservation/educational role of the Madley Environmental Study Centre Nature reserve (see the June 2016 minutes). Apparently, this application was withdrawn and a new one submitted under planning number P163370/F, with virtually no changes (considered to be a tactical ploy by the applicant). We were requested to submit our original objection again and the Chairman has resubmitted our objection letter changing the planning number.
- The Bowling Green Farm application details were circulated to members and three written responses were received (see supporting papers) all of which considered that HOC did not have material grounds or evidence on which to base an objection. At the meeting no further evidence on which we could object was forthcoming. *Following the meeting Chris checked records and could not provide further compelling evidence.*

The committee agreed that we could only object to really important planning applications based on our own records and not submit objections to all requests. The Chairman said it showed the need for the Club to have a Conservation Officer to keep a watching brief on planning issues.

6.2 Request for help with an on-line survey on optical equipment preferences from University of Neu Ulm students. The Secretary would check on future ones with the Chairman before forwarding to members.

6.3 Bodenham Management Committee; Robin Hemmings is our representative (see June 16 minutes) and Secretary received the notes of these meetings which she forwarded to Chairman and Treasurer. In the future, with greater HOC involvement with HWT at Bodenham Lakes, we may need a HOC committee representation on the Bodenham group.

## **7 Sub Committee Business**

### Editorial

2015 Annual report is now at the printers and will be ready for next indoor meeting. The Editor will have a meeting in March to plan the 2016 Report. He made a plea for more review articles.

### Education

The sub committee has planned a HOC family day at Bodenham Lake on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May. Mary asked for ideas for activities and help on the day and also owl pellets. The committee approved the plan and agreed to fund a Portaloo.

The Treasurer asked them to give him details of other equipment the sub committee need.

### Records Working Group

A meeting has being arranged.

### Rarities

Work will start again in February

## **8 Annual General Meeting Business**

The Secretary reminded members that the next Committee meeting will need to arrange nominations for 2 ordinary committee members, an indoor meeting and an outdoor meeting organiser, Publicity Officer and Conservation Liaison Officer.

Other posts needing re-appointment are Annual Report Editor, Newsletter Editor and Recorder

(Gerald Parker will be standing down as Outdoor meeting organiser at the AGM when his term runs out but has done some future plans)

Awards: Chairman and President make the decisions

## **9 Any Other Business**

Strategy document will be revisited when actions from Members Survey are decided

Secretary will write to Mrs Russell to express our appreciation for the work of Jeremy Russell. (we only found out about his death last year at the recent January meeting when Mrs Russell gave us his books to sell)

**10 Date of next meeting** 16<sup>th</sup> February at Holmer Parish Centre. The Chairman is away, so Susanna will be in the Chair and there will be a short presentation on the Burley Gate Project.

*Una Morgan 30 January 2017*