



Welsh Ornithological Society

Minutes of the Council meeting at Plas Dolerw on Saturday, 12 July 2014

Present: Anne Brenchley, Bob Haycock, Julian Hughes, Kelvin Jones, Carlton Parry, Ian Spence, Reg Thorpe, Steph Tyler, Alan Williams.

Apologies: Richard Facey, Mick Green, Derek Moore, Iolo Williams.

14.16 Minutes of the meeting of 8 March 2014

With the correction that the date of the meeting was 8 March, the minutes were accepted.

14.17 Matters arising

13.38 Conference 2013 debrief

JH has now put on the website the information about where to find AMs and MPs.

13.39 Conference 2014

To make contact with Lush about possible sponsorship through their website.	AW
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13.43 Licences to cull fish-eating birds

Gilbert et al is available, secondhand, eg through Amazon.

14.10 Grants for Conservation Awards

Grants for this year have been sent out.

14.11 Birds in Wales

Action carried forward...

To update the guidelines for authors for technical requirements (graphs, pictures, etc).	IMS
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14.18 Treasurer's report

A financial report had been sent to all and was available at the meeting.

The Bridge's Centre, Monmouth, did not receive a cheque for payment for the last conference so a payment of £295 appears in 2014 when it should have been paid in 2013.

A new corporate member – West Wales Holiday Cottages - has been welcomed.

The list of trustees for the Charity Commission is now up to date.

It is good to see that we now have 256 memberships.

14.19 Editor's report

ST reported about papers that she has received or is due to receive for the next edition of Birds in Wales.

To have the next edition ready to be sent out to members in September 2014.	ST
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14.20 Council membership and officers

IMS reported the problem that will arise in November 2014 when several Council members, including officers are all due to finish their second terms of office. There was discussion about the issues that arise, including building in resilience – ie the likelihood of continuity with key officers, but particularly with the Treasurer.

Firstly, JH wished to know who from the current Council is willing to continue serving (if members agree at the AGM). BH, JH, IS, ST and AW agreed to stand again.

To check with RF and MG if they are willing to stand again for another term.	JH
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There was discussion about how to deal with the situation and it was agreed that we should propose to members that we change the terms of office from three years to five. This would require two one-word changes to the constitution. If these are accepted, we would then propose an exceptional arrangement that AW (Treasurer), IS (Secretary) and ST (Editor) be re-elected for a third, but five-year term (taking their total time of service to 11 years, one more than if there were two terms of five years).

The proposed changes to the constitution are:

7.1.3 Change 'three' to 'five'.

7.1.5 Change 'six' to 'ten'.

This left the issue of the Chair and it is understood that DM does not wish to continue in the role of Chairman. Assuming this to be correct, there was nobody in the current Council who was able to take over as Chair from November 2014 but there was a person who expressed the likelihood of being willing to take over from the AGM in November 2015. JH was willing to continue to act as Chair in the interim period.

Currently the Council has two vacant places and we understand that DM did approach ██████████ but the latter declined. It was not known if ██████████ was willing to become a member of Council. There was discussion about other potential Council members and eventually eight names were suggested.

To contact ██████████ (if DM has not already contacted him), ██████████ and ██████████ to ask if they would be willing to become Council members.	JH
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14.21

Conference 2014

The programme now has a complete list of speakers which met with general approval. The conference is likely to just break even or make a small loss this year, depending on the amount of expenses that has to be paid and the numbers of delegates who pay for places. It was agreed that we keep the ticket prices at £21 for members and £26 for non-members.

To invite Subbuteo to attend with their bookstall.	IMS
To check with Lush for sponsorship.	AW
To check with a power company building the new power station on Anglesey for possible ongoing or conference sponsorship.	KJ
To check with Tarmac/Lafarge for possible sponsorship.	CP
To send round the list of jobs to be done for completion by all, by email.	IMS
To check if the hall has Wifi.	IMS

14.22

Lifetime Achievement Awards

It was agreed that this year awards would be presented to David Saunders and Peter Davies.

To contact both proposed recipients to inform them of the awards and invite them to attend the Conference	IMS
To invite John Lawton Roberts to attend to receive his award publicly (he was unable to do this at Monmouth).	IMS

14.23

Student Research Award

The closing date has been changed this year to the end of July. There are three entries, so far, this year.

To circulate all entries to all to enable selection of the winner.	RF
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14.24 Licences to cull fish-eating birds

A FOI request was sent to NRW and a reply was received and circulated to all Council members. There are some issues that have been identified and we would wish to challenge, including: How have birds been aged? How have birds been retrieved from rivers?

To compile a draft reply to NRW for circulation to all before sending.	ST, MG
To send agreed reply to NRW.	IMS

14.25 BTO Cymru

This has been another record year for BBS in Wales. There is now a need to retain all the new surveyors so that the new sites are surveyed each year. It is likely there will be meetings of BBS surveyors to try to maintain engagement.

The Peregrine Survey has gone well though there have been problems of persecution, particularly in North Wales. In SW Wales there seem to have been problems with resident adults not being in good enough condition to breed, possibly following winter gales and storms. It is unclear how the random squares results compare with the actual nest checking that has been done. It is hoped to be able to provide more feedback at the conference.

14.26 RSPB Cymru

A Chough survey was undertaken this year. In SW Wales numbers of breeding birds may have increased but it has not been a good season for all nests with many non-breeders around. In N Wales there seems to have been a considerable decline in the numbers of breeding birds, particularly at inland sites.

RSPB and various partnerships seeking to gain funds for conservation work through the Welsh Government Nature Fund.

14.27 WOS led bird surveys

To arrange a meeting in August to consider possibilities and draft a document for Council.	AB, RT
To arrange extra time for the meeting on 22 November to discuss the draft document.	IMS

14.28 Subgroup reports

14.28.1 WRP

A draft report has been circulated to Recorders. The report will be published soon after the publication of the rare birds report in British Birds (c Oct 2014).

BH raised an issue about reviewing some records of Great Shearwater seen at Strumble Head.

To consider a way of dealing with the Great Shearwater issue.	RT, BH
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14.28.2 WRSG

Meeting planned for 23 August.

14.29 All-Wales tetrad mapping of breeding records

IMS reported on the way the data are shaping up. So far, there have been no data provided

by Glamorgan despite repeated requests. Data for all other areas have been sent to IMS. There was discussion about how the data were to be used and the following were suggestions of what should be included:

- Exploration of any changes in distribution that may be evident from data gathered early in the period 1998 – 2012 and later.
- Mapping some records to show the different periods of data gathering.
- Choosing a selection of species maps which show particular points for a paper in Birds in Wales.
- Preparing a different and complete set of maps, in colour, for publication in the Members' area of the website.

14.30 WOS e-media

A report had been sent to all prior to the meeting.

The next e-Newsletter is due to go out within the next two weeks.

JH has drafted a proposed membership drive for Twitter followers to go out in spring 2015. This was agreed.

To buy domain names birdsin.wales and adar.cymru when available.	JH
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14.31 Any other business

14.31.1 Hen Harrier day

An awareness-raising day has been arranged on 10 August, which will include several mass events in northern England.

To put a supportive message about the Hen Harrier day and its stance against illegal persecution of Hen Harriers in Britain with a positive message about the situation in Wales, on the website.	JH
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14.31.2 BirdTrack

IMS proposed that WOS contribute £1000 to the partnership for further development of BirdTrack to help bird recorders in Wales. This would include complete enabling of VC boundaries across Wales. There was discussion about several issues and the proposal was not agreed at this time. It will be reconsidered after IMS has gained more information (see below).

To check with the BTO the development costs that are likely to prepare the VC boundaries for all of Wales and the timing of implementation if funding support were agreed.	IMS
Seek information about the current and likely use of BirdTrack data from Recorders across Wales.	IMS
To report back to Council.	IMS

14.31.3 Change of Minister responsible for wildlife matters at Welsh Government

There was discussion about several issues arising from the sacking of Alun Davies.

To email to all a Biodiversity Statement from NRW when it is published.	RT
To write to the First Minister requesting what the WG is doing about biodiversity / wildlife. To draft a letter and circulate before sending to the Minister.	IMS
To email Laura Cropper to ask whether RSPB Cymru is planning to get a question raised in the Senedd about the WG responsibility for/commitment to wildlife in Wales.	JH

14.31.4 Greenland White-fronted Geese

The Petitions Committee of WG has considered the recent petition about these geese and

the letter from MG. In order to proceed further we need to know the answers to questions raised in item 14.31.3.

BASC, RSPB Cymru and WWT had submitted a request for Nature Fund money but it is not known what will happen now that the political situation has changed.

14.32

Dates of next meetings

All meetings will be on Saturdays:

Council meetings.

7 March 2015

11 July 2015

21 November 2015

Conference

7 November 2015 – venue to be decided.

Ian M Spence

13 July 2014