



Welsh Ornithological Society

Minutes of the Council meeting at Plas Dolerw on Saturday, 7 March 2015

Present: Anne Brenchley, Mick Green, Bob Haycock, Julian Hughes, Kelvin Jones, Carlton Parry, Ian Spence, Steph Tyler, Alan Williams and co-opted: Keith Noble, Steve Sutcliffe

Apologies: Richard Facey, Rhion Pritchard, Reg Thorpe, Iolo Williams

KN and SS were welcomed to the meeting and they introduced themselves.

15.01 Minutes of the meeting of 22 November 2014

Accepted

To send out the previous minutes with the agenda for each meeting.	IMS
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15.02 Matters arising

14.21 Conference 2014

There has been no progress with contacting Tarmac/LaFarge.

14.35 Death of our Chairman, Derek Moore

BH had contacted Lizzie Wilberforce but she was not sure what a suitable memorial would be.

There was some discussion and it was unclear what would be suitable beyond the renamed Derek Moore Student Research Award and the provision of free places to 18-25 year olds that Council had previously agreed. Possibilities include considering how WOS could promote 'Pledge to Fledge'; targeting people of 18-25 years to introduce them to conservation work for birds; or linking with BTO university Ambassadors to encourage young people to engage with conservation.

To consider how to formalise our ideas and to email suggestions to all.	All
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To send the DVD of Derek's funeral to BH.	IMS
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AB has written an obituary for *British Birds* (in vol 108 (March)) and has prepared another for *Birds in Wales*.

14.36 Conference 2014 debrief

Still to do:

To acquire an amplifier and clip on microphone kit that we can take to conferences.	IMS
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14.42 WOS led bird surveys

Slow progress because of issues beyond control of AB or RT. BH volunteered to comment on any issues arising.

To arrange to meet with RT in near future.	AB
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14.43 BirdTrack

The cheque was sent to the BTO and was well received. An email of thanks from Andy Musgrove had been circulated to Council members. IMS informed the meeting that the files from the Recorders' Day which includes some statistics about BirdTrack use in Wales in 2014 were available as a download from the 'Other websites' page of www.cbrg.org.uk

To contact Nick Moran to ask that the option about having records made available to Recorders be set as 'to send them' as the default with observers having to opt out if they wish.	IMS
To check with Nick Moran if a person has ticked that records should not be shared with a Recorder are those records available for validation by a Recorder.	IMS

14.44 Small grant scheme 2015

BH suggested we use LRC and affiliate club newsletters to promote the grant scheme in 2016.

14.48.2 Greenland Whitefronted Geese

MG informed the meeting that NRW is now supporting a ban on shooting but the Welsh Government is only going to look at the issue again.

14.48.4 Consultation on the Nature Recovery Plan for Wales

A response was sent.

15.03 Conference 2015

There was discussion about the programme for the conference with the theme of 'Inspiring the next generation'.

To approach Kate Plummer about her talk on Blackcaps.	KHJ
To approach Holly Kirk.	SS
To follow-up emails to Lucy McRobert.	JH
To contact James Vafidis about a talk based on his study of Swifts.	ST
To approach IW to ask him to give a keynote speech about inspiring the next generation.	JH

Dr Rhys Jones was suggested as a possible speaker for a future conference, along with Ellie Owen talking about seabirds as a possible RSPB speaker and Viola Ross-Smith about her work with Lesser Black-backed Gulls on Flatholm.

To email to all an example of a conference evaluation sheet used in Pembrokeshire for us to think of using after our conferences.	BH
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15.04 Treasurer's report

AW talked through the Income and Expenditure Account that he had circulated prior to the meeting which is as it will be presented to the AGM in November. He talked through the income and expenditure to date in 2015.

To run a Twitter campaign with an offer to try to gain new members in April 2015.	JH
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IMS raised the issue of starting to save funds to enable WOS to engage as a partner with the BTO for the next national Atlas project. There was discussion about this and other related issues.

To prepare a strategic plan for the development of WOS within the objects in the constitution for work over the next 5+ years which should explain where WOS fits in with the range of voluntary organisations in Wales. To draft this and present the draft at the July 2015 meeting to announce publically at the conference in November.	AB, IMS, AW, SS, JH
To contact Andy Musgrove at the BTO to seek information about the contribution that might be expected of a partner organisation to become a partner organisation for the	IMS

next national Atlas.	
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15.05 Editor's report

The next issue of *Birds in Wales* is coming together with the main paper being about Choughs by Tony Cross and Adrienne Stratford. Other papers have been accepted. There are likely to be some pages with colour charts in this issue if the funding for those pages can be agreed.

The Guidance for Authors is being revised.

To ask RP for comments on the revised Guidance.	ST
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SS asked if we would be able to make *Birds in Wales* available to anybody, free of charge as has been done with the annual reports for Skomer and Skokholm. There was discussion about future possibilities including what could be downloaded free of charge.

To contact a designer about the cover of <i>Birds in Wales</i> with suggestions for improvement.	JH
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15.06 WOS Officers beyond the 2015 AGM

JH introduced the issues around avoiding the loss of key officers all at the same time. ST has agreed to stand down as Editor at the 2015 AGM and Council will propose that RP will be elected to replace her. Other officers are due to end their second terms in November 2016. A key person still needed is a new Chair.

To talk with IW about his views as to who may be the next Chair.	JH
To think seriously about who may be willing to take on which roles to enable some decisions at the meeting in July 2015.	All

15.07 Licences to cull fish-eating birds

There had been a useful meeting with Mary Chadwick, NRW, in December 2014 and we heard that NRW does not have appropriate data to make sensible decisions about the issuing of licences or about the effects of licences being used. The BTO is awaiting the conclusion of discussions about a contract to undertake a study of fish-eating birds across Wales over three years. There will be involvement of professional surveyors in Year 1.

There were discussions about the role of WOS in assisting the surveys. These could include encouraging more people to take up Waterways BBS or to do birdwatching along rivers and canals and putting the records into BirdTrack. We also need to think about repeating the FOI request to get the data for 2014.

To contact Mary Chadwick to seek the 2014 data.	IMS
To draft a dossier about the issues arising from the culling of fish-eating birds for possible publicity and awareness raising.	MG, ST, BH
To email RT to check the position of the RSPB in relation to this issue.	ST
To check if the BTO will consider that during the first year of the survey how volunteers can best contribute in future and add relevant data.	KHJ
To inform the RSPB about our dossier and how we intend to use it and seek their cooperation and support.	ST, JH

15.08 Recorders' meeting on 21 February 2015

IMS reported on the meeting and CP added some comments. Generally, the meeting had gone well and was appreciated by at least two of the Recorders who attended. It was agreed that WOS taking the role of assisting Recorders in Wales was a relevant and worthwhile activity.

To arrange another Recorders' meeting if sufficient wish it in 2016.	IMS
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15.09 Relationship between WOS and Affiliate Members

Given our discussion about a strategy document, earlier, we could use this as the main agenda item on a proposed meeting with Affiliate Members. The earliest we could now organise such a meeting would be early autumn. There was further discussion about how best to deal with the strategy document to seek Affiliate Member engagement.

For Affiliate Membership renewals/invoices to be sent to JH so that he can send them with a letter from the Chair of WOS.	AW, JH
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15.10 Small grant scheme 2015

Three applications have been submitted related to Swifts, Sand Martins and Kestrel. There was discussion about aspects of the applications. It was agreed that the first two should be supported this year and that each should receive £500.

To send details of the applications to JH so that they may be put on the website.	ST
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15.11 The Derek Moore Student Research Award

Draft revised paperwork prepared by RF was circulated at the meeting and agreed to be okay (with a change that it should be prepared in a sans serif font). Applications are now to be sent to a new email address: studentaward@birdsinwales.org.uk so that the enquiries go directly to RF.

15.12 BTO Cymru

KHJ reported that there were now more BTO members per head of population in Wales than in any other country in the UK!
About 300 BBS squares were completed in 2014, a slight reduction. He has been encouraging others to engage with BBS and explaining why we need records of fish-eating birds.
The House Martin survey which starts this year will take place over two years. RRs have been informed of the selected random squares and these can be booked from a page on the BTO website.

15.13 Subgroup reports

WRSG

IMS reported on a range of issues that had made progress difficult, particularly that there is no management committee so the load of dealing with all issues falls solely on him. IMS still thinks there should be a WRSG as a subgroup of WOS but he needs help to prepare a draft constitution.

To approach the WVCA, the Flintshire LVC or another organisation to seek assistance with the preparation of the WRSG constitution.	IMS
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15.14 WOS e-media

JH spoke about his report circulated to Council members before the meeting. The new domain names became available from 1 March 2015 and there is confusion, currently, about whether we have one or both of birdsin.wales and adar.cymru

There is now a need to revamp the website as it is now several years old. Funding is likely to be needed to help translate all the pages into Welsh so that we may have a bilingual website. Eventually, there will be two, linked websites, one English, one Welsh.

15.15 Dates of next meetings

18 July 2015
7 November 2015 (Conference at Carno)
21 November 2015

5 November 2016 (Conference at Myddfai)

15.16 Any other business

15.16.1 Special Protection Areas (MG)

There will be a formal consultation about extensions to the marine SPAs around Wales later this year. We would wish to support this when the time comes.

15.16.2 Tidal lagoons (AW)

Gwent Ornithological Society is concerned about plans for tidal lagoons along much of the coast of south Wales and at Colwyn Bay. The latest e-newsletter has a link to a RSPB blog about the issues around these lagoons. We need to keep a watch on progress with these developments.

8 March 2015
Ian M Spence