



Welsh Ornithological Society

Minutes of the Council meeting at Plas Dolerw on Saturday, 22 November 2014

Present: Anne Brenchley, Richard Facey, Mick Green, Bob Haycock, Julian Hughes, Carlton Parry, Ian Spence, Steph Tyler, Alan Williams

Apologies: Kelvin Jones, Rhion Pritchard, Reg Thorpe, Iolo Williams

14.33 Minutes of the meeting on 12 July 2014

Today's meeting should have been in the list of next meetings under 14.32. Accepted.

14.34 Matters arising

14.11 Birds in Wales

Guidelines have been updated.

14.21 Conference 2014

Wish to know if KJ did contact the power station on Anglesey and if they were willing to provide sponsorship.

To contact Tarmac/LaFarge to check if they would provide sponsorship.	CP
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14.28.1 WRP

The issue of records of Great Shearwaters in Pembrokeshire seems to have been resolved.

14.30 WOS e-media

To buy domain names birdsin.wales and adar.cymru when available.	JH
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14.31.3 Change of Minister responsible for wildlife matters at Welsh Government.

IMS apologised for not doing his action. It was thought now to be too late to pursue it.

14.35 Death of our Chairman, Derek Moore

It was reported that Derek received a good send-off at the Humanist celebration of his life.

His wife, Beryl, has asked for any donations to be made to the Suffolk Wildlife Trust to be the foundation of a fund to encourage young people to engage with wildlife. AFON, 'A Focus On Nature', is coordinated by Lucy McRobert and it will establish a Derek Moore bursary for young people in Suffolk.

There was discussion about ways that Derek could be remembered here in Wales too. It was agreed:

- That the student award be renamed as the 'Derek Moore Student Research Award'.
- To offer a number of reduced price places at the WOS conferences for young people.

To contact Lizzie Wilberforce about the possibility of establishing a legacy in Wales in partnership with the Wildlife Trusts.	BH
To contact Beryl about the availability of the recording of Derek's funeral.	IMS
To write an obituary of Derek for Birds in Wales.	AB
To have a conversation with Beryl about a Welsh legacy fund, no sooner than Feb 2015.	AB/IMS

14.36

Conference 2014 debrief

- To reconsider the order of talks so that both the morning and afternoon sessions end with a key speaker.
- A possible problem is not identifying a theme for the conference.
- One option may be to ask IW to make his contribution at the end of the conference.
- We need to ensure the catering staff know for whom the special food choices are for (a person took a special food for another, not having requested it).
- There were insufficient Council members present at the conference to do all the tasks, particularly when the overall organiser was also caught up with technical preparation.
- We need to take display boards and fixing materials to every conference to have them available, eg for the student poster display.

To acquire an amplifier and clip on microphone kit that we can take to conferences.	IMS
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- It was unfortunate that there was neither Wifi nor a good 3G mobile signal available.
- Most people were happy with the venue and so long as the costs are no more than anticipated, we would be willing to return there.
- Need to have a list of Bed & Breakfast establishments in the area available to provide for people who book conference places.
- Need to ensure the paper booking form is supplied to the BTO in time to go out with the September edition of BTO News (ie by early September).
- The RSPB and BTO short information slots must keep to time.

There was some discussion about the possibility of seeking other venues, though we may now have four, good venues for regular use: Rhuthun, Carno, Myddfai and Monmouth.

14.37

Conference 2015

There was discussion about a range of issues including a return to the notion of having a theme for the conference, to which we may ask speakers to show some recognition. There was discussion about the desirability of well-known speakers but concern if we could afford them. As ticket prices have been held for several years we need to consider increasing the cost of attending the conference so that it is more likely to produce a surplus, even if small.

It was agreed:

- That the winner of the Derek Moore Student Award be given a ten-minute slot to speak about their project (as well as present a poster).
- That the next conference would have an overall theme 'Inspiring the next generation'.
- For MG to talk about Ring Ouzels.
- To consider Andrew Dixon talking about Peregrines for the 2016 conference.

[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
To approach wind farm companies in mid-Wales to seek sponsorship.	MG
To reorganise the conference timetable to reflect changes discussed under this and the previous item.	IMS
To contact as other possible speakers: [REDACTED]	BH JH RF
To provisionally book Myddfai for the 2016 conference on 5 November.	IMS

14.38

Treasurer's report

AW talked to the accounts that he had emailed in advance of the meeting. These included the income from the 2014 conference but none of the costs. We await the invoices. It is likely that at the end of the year there will be a loss of about £600 partly because of the one-off donation of £1000 made this year.

There was discussion about membership categories, but any changes would affect the constitution so discussion was curtailed. However it was suggested that we should move to a single amount as the subscription regardless of the number of people involved, ie a 'household' membership, though we could not call it that currently. An increase does not need to be voted for at an AGM. There has been a modest increase in memberships so the number of Birds in Wales to be printed will need to increase to 340 per edition.

To put on the agenda for the July meeting a discussion about a possible increase in subscription rate.	IMS
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14.39 Editor's report

ST reported that if people provide what they have said they will there should be a substantial edition of Birds in Wales next summer. The Welsh Bird Report should, hopefully, be out by the end of the year.

MG raised the issue of updating the style of Birds in Wales to be more modern and cover all editions: Birds in Wales, the Welsh Bird Report and the Scarce and Rare Birds Report. Unfortunately, we are not currently able to go for full colour printing because of the cost.

To send format suggestions to ST.	MG
To produce guidance about producing figures, charts, etc to the same standard.	IMS

14.40 Council membership, officers and potential new Council members

JH reiterated that he is willing to act as Chairman until the November 2015 AGM but a new Chair will need to be elected at that time.

There was some discussion about the timing of change of officers so that we do not all change at the same time in future. It was agreed:

- ST would stand down as Editor in November 2015. It is anticipated that RP will stand for election to this role.
- AW would stand down as Treasurer and IMS as Secretary at the November 2016 AGM.
- AW would be willing to stand as Membership Secretary at the November 2016 AGM.

Therefore, we need to find people who are willing to stand as Treasurer and Secretary in two years' time.

Various people have been suggested as potential Council members and most have been approached with the following outcomes:



It was agreed to invite those willing to attend the next two Council meetings as co-opted members.

To contact those willing to be co-opted.	JH
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14.41 Licences to cull fish-eating birds

There will be a meeting in Aberystwyth with Mary Chadwick, NRW. Those attending will be ST, MG, BH and IMS.

To inform Mary of bird-related questions in advance of the meeting so that she may consult with Sian Whitehead.	ST/ MG
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After the meeting, if there is no appropriate action from NRW we will need to consider a change of tack and approach politicians.

To report to Council after the meeting.	ST, MG, BH, IMS
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14.42 WOS led bird surveys

AB and RT have been working on a paper to present to Council but it is not yet ready. RSPB Cymru and BTO Cymru are working on Atlas data to inform conservation efforts in Wales. The paper will look at appropriate species for all-Wales, region or county level surveys based on what is known to be happening at each of those levels. There is a concern about over-loading WOS members and others with requests to undertake regular BTO surveys and other work for the WOS surveys. AB is now involved with work to produce the 'Status of Birds in Wales'.

To produce the paper by Christmas 2014.	AB/ RT
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14.43 BirdTrack

IMS spoke about the paper produced in time for the July meeting and developments since. There was discussion about BirdTrack and those developments we have heard about. It was agreed to make a donation of £1000 for the further development of BirdTrack, at the start of the next financial year, in January. We will continue to request Vice County boundaries for all of Wales.

To inform Nick Moran and Andy Musgrove that the donation will arrive at the BTO early in the New Year.	IMS
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14.44 Small grant scheme 2015

The conservation awards will be advertised on the website with applications to be made by the end of February 2015.

To make a link to the scheme in the Pembrokeshire e-newsletter.	BH
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14.45 BTO Cymru

In the absence of KJ (who was attending the meeting of Regional Representatives in Thetford) AB reported that there will be a House Martin survey next year, possibly just a sample survey, then a full survey the following year.

KJ wishes to have a series of meetings to encourage people to engage with inland WeBS and BBS and to have a RR meeting in Wales before the end of March.

14.46 Subgroup reports

14.46.1 WRP

The Scarce and Rare Birds Report is now available from the website. JH thanked Jon Green and RT.

14.46.2 WRSG

IMS reported on meetings about Schedule 1 licences and their conditions held in October and this month. He reported on some developments within the WRSG.

14.47 WOS e-media

JH presented his report emailed to all before the meeting.

14.48 Any other business

14.48.1 Derek Moore Student Research Award

To continue to take the lead with this award.	RF
To draft guidance on completing the application form.	RF

14.48.2 Greenland White-fronted Geese

Tony Fox has written to the Minister but there has been a reply. We do not understand why the Welsh Government remains intransigent and will not ban the shooting of these birds, especially if the members of bird clubs say they will not shoot them and their numbers continue to decline. It is not clear what else we can do about this issue. No further action for now.

14.48.3 Recorders' Meeting

After a successful meeting with Recorders in South Wales arranged by Mark Holling about RBBP issues, it was agreed that a meeting of all Recorders across Wales would be welcome.

To arrange a meeting of Recorders in February 2015.	IMS
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14.48.4 Consultation on the Nature Recovery Plan for Wales

There was brief discussion about this consultation and a proposal put by MG was accepted. JH reported that a RSPB Cymru campaign to encourage people to write letters to the Minister was underway.

To prepare a response to this consultation on behalf of WOS.	MG
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14.48.5 Draft minutes of the 2014 AGM

Unfortunately, Council members had not received the email with this attached prior to the meeting.

To send any corrections or amendments to IMS as soon as possible.	All
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14.48.6 Letter from GOS re Derek

IMS read a letter he had received (as WOS Secretary) that expressed condolences on behalf of the Gwent OS. A copy of the letter has been sent to Beryl.

14.48.7 Issues for future meetings

- To discuss:
- The calendar of future events for the website.
 - Relationships with Affiliate Members.
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To meet with JH to discuss the calendar in the near future.	CP
To consider arranging a meeting in early April, possibly at Ynys Hir, of WOS and representatives of Affiliate Members to explore how we may best help each other.	JH/ IMS

14.49

Date of next meetings

They remain as in minute 14.32 with the exception of the July meeting. This will now be on:
18 July 2015

Ian M Spence, 23 November 2014