Simon Boyes: WOS Trustee candidate

I learnt British birds as a teenager and developed a particular interest in birdsong. After graduating with a BA in Classics from Oxford and MSc in Environmental Conservation from Heriot-Watt, I spent the summer of 1976 as RSPB summer warden on Fetlar (working with Bobby Tulloch) and later at Minsmere. Here my duties included helping visitors in the hides identify species. From 1977 until 2017 I led 326 tours for Ornitholidays to all seven continents, with over 50 tours each in Africa, Asia and South America. From 2011 I also worked as ship's ornithologist on small expedition vessels to Polar regions, mainly to Antarctica (30 voyages) and South Georgia (17 voyages). I have seen more than 6,100 species of birds. I have been a WOS member since retirement in 2019, and have attended the last three conferences in Aberystwyth.

I have lived on a smallholding outside Middletown, Welshpool, since 1980 and am a founder member of Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust, serving as trustee from 2012 until 2018. My wife Clare is now MWT vice-chair. I declare no potential conflict of interest and I have not been disqualified from acting as a charity trustee. Now aged 72, I am active both in the field (volunteering most weeks on work-parties for MWT) and in my role as County Bird Recorder (since 2019). I meet as many of the county's birders as I can, and encourage them to send records. During the recent WOS Rook survey, I found 32 volunteers to cover the county's allocated tetrads.

I run the Montgomeryshire Bird Blog and started a WhatsApp group for bird sightings in the county, (73 members). I am chair of the Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust Bird Group, organizing outings to places such as Ynys Hir, Ynys Las and Dee Estuary; and finding speakers for 7 indoor meetings annually. I regularly compose new presentations for the group. I am a member of Montgomeryshire Field Society and Montgomeryshire Habitat Management Group. I attend events run by BIS, our Mid-Wales LERC. Hobbies include playing Irish jigs and reels on mandolin, with fellow musicians in a pub near Oswestry.

Our garden list includes Water Rail, Dipper, Goosander, Woodcock, Quail and Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (until about 2000). We have a recording device for nocturnal migration, and enjoy reviewing sounds which often include Barn Owl.

I take a keen interest in local and international conservation issues but can always find reasons to be optimistic despite the biodiversity crisis and ongoing climate change. I admire the principles of regenerative and nature-friendly farming and deplore the underfunding of NRW. I am passionately opposed to the pheasant industry, which I believe to be an important factor in declining Curlew breeding success in Mid-Wales, since it results in inflated numbers of foxes and corvids.

I hope my application is successful, and look forward to helping WOS in any way I can.