

Hampshire Ornithological Society
Meeting of the Management Committee
23rd November 2023, 7.30 pm at Upham Village Hall

MINUTES (draft)

Present:	Initials	Present:	Initials
Keith Betton (Chair)	KB	Carol Rawlings	CR
David Brookes (Treasurer)	DB	Tommy Saunders	TS
Dave Palmer (Secretary)	DP	Kay Shillitoe	KS
Janice Beck	JB	Roger Dickey (Guest)	RD
Andy Lester	AL	John Shillitoe (Guest)	JS

1. Apologies

Michael Chalmers	MC	Helen Schneider	HS
Andrew Colenutt	AC	Marcus Ward	MW
Barry Page	BP	Di Warner	DW
Martin Pitt	MP		

KB opened the meeting and welcomed Roger Dickey and John Shillitoe as guests to the meeting. KB noted that Jayne Chapman had resigned as a Trustee since the last meeting due to pressure of work, and recorded thanks for her input.

2. Matters arising from minutes of 4 July 2023

Minutes of the Meeting of 4th July 2023 were approved with one correction: Item 3 (Treasurer's Report), second sentence should read "The accounts are in surplus and this is expected to remain and subsequently reduce, being partially offset by charges for the Bird Report and Kingfisher, which arrive in the second part of the year".

There were nine actions from the July meeting: five have been completed and closed, one has been superseded and closed, one has been placed on hold and two remain open. For details please see the appended Action Tracker.

KB noted that MW has stepped down as Chair of the Scientific Committee and thanked him for his six years of service in that role. Prior to the meeting KB had suggested, and it had been agreed, that MW remain a co-opted Trustee until the AGM. KB will act as interim Chair of the Scientific Committee until a new Chair is identified.

3. Treasurer's Report

DB presented the Receipts and Payments Account for the period ended 16 November 2023 and gave the Treasurer's Report. Income is still to be received from DP World (Peregrine Box - £150), Swarovski (HBR advert - £200) and The National Travel Collection (HBR advert - £150). A statement of interest on the 100 day notice account from the Charity Bank is also outstanding. The year accounts are in surplus of £14,564, due principally to £8,000 from Forestry England for the Dartford Warbler Survey, a net income from Rare Birds of Hampshire book sales of £1,619 (now c. £450 in profit), "bid for an expert" donations of £985 from the AGM and a reduction in Kingfisher costs of £4,761 compared to this time last year. Overall, accounts are in surplus of c. £121k, which will be utilised to support appropriate good causes in the future.

AL asked if BTO had provided any feedback following the Bird Flu Grant. KB noted no feedback has been received, but the BTO have agreed to record a video that will be played at the AGM.

Action 1: DB asked that all Trustees submit any outstanding expense claims so they can be addressed before the end of the year.

4. Planning for Members Day/AGM 2024

KB the following speakers/agenda items have been confirmed for the AGM/Members' Day:

- Debbie Tann, Chief Exec of the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust;
- Pete Durnell, Reserve Manager for Hampshire County Council;
- Lizzy Grayshon, grant recipient for an Avon Valley breeding waders study;

- Tara Dempsey, grant recipient for Redstart studies in the New Forest;
- A video slot from Phil Atkinson of BTO on their Bird Flu work following the HOS donation;
- There will be reports from both the Dartford Warbler and Marsh Tit surveys; and
- There will be a panel discussion chaired by former broadcaster Guy Michelmore.

Provisional running order will be 9:30 opening, 10:30 AGM plus study reports (Lizzy/Tara), 12:00 Pete Durnell, 12:45 lunch, 14:30 Debbie Tann and finishing with the Panel Discussion. Panellists are likely to include Debbie Tann, Pete Durnell and Chris Packham (if present, if not KB). Young Member involvement in the day and possibly on the Panel was discussed. KB asked for suggestions.

Action 2: All to consider and provide suggestions to KB for how Young Members can play an active part in the Members' Day.

Post Meeting Note: Consideration is being given to getting the Young Members to provide a list of pre-prepared questions for the Panel Discussion.

KB noted that BP will be away and unable to attend the Members' Day, but will manage advanced preparations. KB will manage/oversee the day itself, but will need support for each key area. (e.g. KS running the reception desk, JB/DB managing parking, etc.). KS asked that there be a raffle ticket seller stationed at the reception desk (KS will ask Linda, the raffle organiser). KB asked for ideas for raffle prizes. DP stated DW would ask the Fleet Men's Shed for similar contributions to last year. AL kindly agreed to donate a free weekend guided birding stay at his lodge on the Solway Firth (including accommodation and food, but excluding travel to/from).

Action 3: All to consider and provide suggestions for additional raffle prizes.

KB noted that there is likely to be a similar "bid for an expert" arrangement as last year and also noted there will be an auction of framed Audubon prints.

5. Strategy Discussion

KB presented a draft strategy document for discussion, setting out the current and aspirational positions against 24 key areas for HOS. The following is a summary of the key points from the discussion: -

- AL suggested targeting nature reserves (with permission) for recruitment of new young members.
- AL suggested Mark Anderson and DB suggested Alex Yates as people who might play a role in HOS.
- AL suggested introducing a differential cost of membership on whether members take a copy of the Hampshire Bird Report.
- DP noted that HOS is actively pursuing diversity in areas of age and gender and asked whether we can also do so in the area of race. AL suggested targeting recruitment at a reserve where there is a significant, local ethnic minority community. RD noted the large Nepalese community close to Tices Meadow.
- CR suggested a piece in Kingfisher noting thanks for bequests/legacies to raise the profile of them among members.
- AL suggested attending Christmas Fairs to provide recruiting or fundraising opportunities. KB noted this would need a volunteer to arrange/run it and suggested this could be the Ladybirders. CR stated this would best include something interactive. AL noted other organisations offer a gift on joining, such as a calendar or small model.
- RD queried whether HOS has any links with Universities. KB noted he has written to those in Hampshire and offered data to establish research links.
- KB noted HOS would be bidding for the Woodlark survey contract in 2024.

Action 4: KB asked all committee members to consider the draft strategy further and provide any additional suggestions back to him.

6. Risk Review

KB noted the Safeguarding Policy circulated ahead of the meeting. Comments received included the suggestion of a deputy/second person to support JB as Designated Safeguarding Officer and expansion of the information on how the policy will be implemented. JB stated she should be contacted in the first instance if a child indicates to them that they are being abused. All present agreed to support this policy. DP stated the Charity Commission entry for HOS notes policies that are in place and said he would add this to the entry.

KB noted that a First Aid session was held on 18th November with a number of Trustees and Walk Leaders present.

7. Membership update

KS noted HOS has 126 new members so far this year, including 35 since the beginning of October. So far around 150 members have signed up to receive the digital version of Kingfisher. Only one new member has declined to receive the digital version.

JS noted he has looked at a number of bulk e-mail systems for suitability and stated the most appropriate is Octopus (similar to Mail Chimp), which is free up to a mailing limit of 2,500 addresses. Volume limit is 10,000 mails per month, which we are unlikely to exceed. All agreed to proceed with using this system.

JS noted the mails required over the next few weeks/months include: a subscription reminder, winter edition of e-Kingfisher and AGM flyer distribution, Members' Day reminder with promotions, final subscription reminder, spring edition of e-Kingfisher, advertising birdsong courses and walks. JS stated the contact mail list used for Octopus could be used to cleanse data on the membership list.

Kingfisher

Digital publication will be supported with the optimum version of Publuu (which has no design capability). Cost of the platform is £240/year and it can store up to 50 editions. The digital version will look exactly the same as the printed version. The next issue will be circulated as normal and then an e-mail will be sent with the digital version. All agreed the stance would be for members to need to opt out of receiving the digital version rather than opting in. CR will draft a mail on this for members, noting the quality of the digital version and the advantages (e.g. the hyperlinks in the digital text). CR stated that e-Kingfisher take up could impact the publisher's print run, which would need careful handling. CR noted the economic break point for continuing to print paper copies of Kingfisher would need to be determined.

Action 5: CR to draft mail to members on adoption of the e-Kingfisher.

Action 6: CR to determine the economic break point for continuing to print Kingfisher.

Young Members

JB noted two recent trips to Bird World and the Hawk Conservancy, both of which went well. 3 telescopes have been provided to young members on a medium-term loan basis. A large, high quality Leica telescope has been donated and JB suggested this should be sold to fund two smaller/lighter ones to increase the benefit. All agreed. JB noted some new leaders have been identified for Young Member walks. These will need to be DBS checked if they haven't been already.

Ladybirders

JB noted the Ladybirders Group is running well at present and there is nothing new to report.

8. Sales Update

DP noted the summary report on sales from Nicola Whitmarsh. Total of £3,331.37 to date in 2023 (exclusive of sales fees), of which c. 30% was for clothing/DVDs, 20% for publications and 50% for Rare Birds of Hampshire (RBOH). Purchases of clothing remain unchanged at £633.38.

Since the last AGM (April), 7 copies of Rare Birds of Hampshire (RBOH) have been sold. 18 copies remain in stock with 14 on sale or return with bookshops, totalling 32. KB noted RBOH sales are now c. £400 in profit and proposed dropping the price from £38 incl p&p to £25 incl p&p. All agreed. KB stated this will now allow the procurement of the remaining 150 copies held by John Clark.

9. Scientific Sub-committee (TS not present for the first part of this section)

KB noted he is now chairing the Scientific Committee following MW stepping down. KB noted his thanks to MC for the publication of the 2022 Hampshire Bird Report.

(TS stepped out of the room at this point)

KB tabled the grant proposal from TS for partial funding of climbing equipment, as endorsed by the Scientific Committee, who recommended £500 be granted. All supported acceptance of this proposal.

(TS returned at this point)

KB noted the grant application from Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HWT) for £945.50 to repair the Tern rafts at Blashford Lakes, noting these were originally provided through a HOS grant. All supported acceptance of this proposal.

KB noted the success of the Marsh Tit survey, led by Ken Smith. Past estimates have put numbers around 2 – 3,000, but this has shown that there are c. 5,000 present. KB also noted the success of the New Forest Dartford Warbler survey, led by Nigel Matthews and Rob Clements. This identified 544 territories; the highest number

ever recorded in the area. KB noted a tender from Forestry England for a New Forest Woodlark survey was anticipated in December or January and he was planning for HOS to bid for this once again.

KB noted a wider public survey of more common species has been suggested by several people but stated this can't progress without an organiser.

10. Conservation Liaison

KB noted his grateful thanks for AL's contribution to HOS as the lead for Conservation Liaison, and wished him well for his future in Scotland. AL stated he has received c. 2,000 planning applications before passing them on to BP. Only around 1% are deemed relevant to HOS, so BP has a very onerous task. KB stated the work hasn't generated any significant finds. AL suggested parking the process in the New Year and relying on word of mouth and publication of the major applications. AL asked how HOS addresses policy issues that arise. KB stated he would prefer if HWT were able to take the lead, but this isn't always possible primarily for resource reasons. KB is concerned that systems such as e-Bird and Rare Bird Alert are publishing bird locations that should be protected. Both information suppliers have recently been contacted about this.

AL noted the requirement for a representative on the Havant Thicket Consultative Group. Doug Yelland was suggested. All agreed.

KB reported that following a representation from him, HWT has put up notices to dissuade people from disturbing Short-eared Owls at Farlington Marsh. JB reminded all present that if a wildlife crime is seen, it should be reported and it helps if all number plates in the location are recorded as information for the police on all who were present and might be able to provide information leading to a successful prosecution.

11. Succession planning

KB noted JB will be stepping down as a Trustee at the next AGM. With JC having stepped down earlier in the year and both AL and MW also stepping down at the AGM, there will be a number of gaps. In order to maintain her role as Designated Safeguarding Officer, KB suggested JB should be co-opted back onto the Committee for a year and then could subsequently be appointed as a Trustee again.

KB asked RD if he would like to be involved in HOS. RD agreed and accepted being proposed as a Trustee at the AGM.

Mike Armitage was suggested to take over as Conservation Liaison Officer from AL. AL agreed to speak to him about this.

Action 7: AL to speak to Mike Armitage with a view to him becoming the HOS Conservation Liaison Officer.

12. Any Other Business

Confidential Minute

KS noted that Nicola Whitmarsh has provided 300 copies of the Hampshire Birds Checklist and has retained 90 copies. Copies are sent to new members in the welcome pack, so at some point soon a further print run will be required.

AL stated that working with HOS has been a pleasure and he will miss the organisation. All expressed their thanks for AL's work and support and wished him well for the future.

13. Forthcoming meetings

KB noted the next meeting would be a Zoom on in the first quarter of 2024. Various dates were considered and DP will circulate a poll to establish a consensus.

Action 8: DP to poll committee members to identify a date for the next meeting and make the necessary arrangements.

Action Tracker

No	Action	Owner	Due	Update	Status
Meeting November 2023					
A23/11-1	All Trustees submit any outstanding expense claims so they can be addressed before the end of the year	All	15/12/23		Open
A23/11-2	Consider and provide suggestions to KB for how young members can play an active part in the Members' Day.	All	15/12/23		Open
A23/11-3	All to consider and provide suggestions for additional Members' Day raffle prizes.	All	31/1/24		Open
A23/11-4	Consider the draft strategy further and provide any additional suggestions back to KB.	All	31/1/24		Open
A23/11-5	Draft mail to members on adoption of the e-Kingfisher.	CR	31/1/24		Open
A23/11-6	Determine the economic break point for continuing to print Kingfisher.	CR	31/1/24		Open
A23/11-7	Speak to Mike Armitage with a view to him becoming the HOS Conservation Liaison Officer.	AL	31/1/24		Open
A23/11-8	Poll committee members to identify a date for the next meeting and make the necessary arrangements.	DP	15/12/23		Open
Meeting July 2023					
A23/7-1	Advise if the position with Titchfield Haven changes significantly.	JC	-	HWT's plan wasn't accepted, so there is no change to the situation. The building remains on sale (until 1/12/23).	Closed
A23/7-2	Convene an extraordinary Management Committee Meeting if a decision on funding Titchfield Haven is required ahead of the next regular meeting.	KB	-	No longer required in light of the closure of the above action.	Closed
A23/7-3	Enquire whether the school would allow HOS to provide basic food at the next AGM.	BP	6/4/24	Enquiry mail sent to school. January date arranged to go there to start making arrangements. Risk of additional event on the same day can't be mitigated.	Open
A23/7-4	Change all committee members' preferences to receiving Kingfisher digitally.	KS	31/8/23	Noted complete.	Closed
A23/7-5	Obtain feedback and an update on Tipner.	CR	31/3/24	No further information obtained. Portsmouth City Council proposal was rejected. Revisit action in March 2024.	On Hold

A23/7-6	Sound out possible candidates for Conservation Liaison role.	KB	31/3/24	No candidates identified yet.	Open
A23/7-7	Investigate calling card options	DP	30/9/23	Calling cards printed, procured and handed to committee members at the meeting.	Closed
A23/7-8	Identify a date and make the necessary arrangements for the October meeting, and invite Grant Mintram.	DP	31/8/23	Complete. Grant Mintram's apologies noted.	Closed
A23/7-9	Investigate getting necessary DBS checks arranged.	DP	31/7/23	System relaunched and all checks raised to date completed.	Closed