

Minutes for Lincs Bird Club committee meeting held via Zoom at 7.30 pm on Tuesday October 11, 2022

1. Chairman Phil Espin welcomed fellow committee members John Watts, Andrew Chick, Mike Harrison, Bill Sterling and Jim Wright plus Phil Porter as Lincolnshire Naturalists' Union observer.
2. There were no apologies for absence.
3. The minutes of the August 2022 committee meeting were approved.
4. It was agreed that the July 2022 (special committee meeting) and August 2022 minutes should now be posted in the Information section of the club's website.

5. Matters arising from August meeting

Following concerns highlighted by LBC member Alan Ball, via MH, at the August committee meeting, members noted with concern the high number of licences granted in 2021 by Natural England for culling of curlews/ removal of their eggs on RAF airfields in Lincolnshire, this being to reduce the chance of collision risk with military aircraft. After discussion, it was agreed that MH and JWr should pursue the matter further with the Curlew Recovery Partnership, Natural England and possibly other organisations, then report back to a future committee meeting.

6 LBC Treasurer

The committee noted with regret and understanding JWa's decision to step down as treasurer at the 2023 AGM, after 15 years in the post. He was thanked by PE and other committee members for his skill, efficiency, enthusiasm and helpfulness to club members in managing the club's finances. Regarding his replacement, an appeal will be included in a forthcoming newsletter if no one has been recruited by PE in the meantime.

7 Events organiser

Chris Gunn has confirmed other commitments prevent her continuing in the Events Organiser role following her greatly valued initiatives this year. An appeal for a replacement will be posted in a forthcoming newsletter.

8 Banking arrangements

Following ethical concerns expressed at an earlier meeting by JWa about HSBC's continued financing of global-warming fossil fuel projects, the club is considering switching to another financial institution. JWa cautioned against investing with one of the start-up banks following advice that some may be fragile, but he noted that Swedish Handelsbanken might be one worth considering. PE said he had been impressed at the personal service provided by Handelsbanken but noted that its charge of £10 per month was high. It was agreed to take no action until after the appointment of a new treasurer. JWa said it would be helpful to engage a bank with a branch accessible to the treasurer because face-to-face contact would be preferable to a telephone/internet helpline in the event of issues needing to be resolved.

9 Books

a) Update on *Birds of Lincolnshire*

In the last couple of months the club has donated 48 copies to the libraries of Lincolnshire (24), North Lincolnshire (17) and NE Lincs (7). Lincolnshire have said they could use another 28 copies and the committee authorised PE to make this additional donation. Stocks held are now in the region of 100 copies of 800 printed. Members discussed options for hastening the sale of stock. These included reducing the price or offering free club membership for a year with every copy sold. However, it was decided to take no action given that sales were still being made, albeit slowly.

b) Printing of 200 copies of a booklet, *Birds of North East Lincolnshire Past and Present*. (Paid for by Heritage Lottery Fund via North East Lincolnshire Council. A request by JWa for himself and BS distribute these in the most appropriate way was approved by the committee. AC asked for supply of a pdf document so the publication could be included on the website.

c) Update on sale of Colin Casey's library. PH confirmed that these had been sold and a cheque paid to LBC (see county recorder's report).

10 Liaison meeting with Charlie Barnes re data handling arrangements

PH confirmed that this had taken place and had proved beneficial.

11 LBC grant (£250) to Prof Martin Collinson/ Genetic Identification of Birds/ The Aberdeen Forensic Wildlife Lab

PH confirmed that the grant had been paid and acknowledged with thanks by the recipient. An article about this will appear in a forthcoming newsletter.

12 Reports from LBC events

a) RSPB Frampton barbecue (September 3)

PE and MH confirmed that this event had proved to be a well-supported and convivial occasion. The barbecue, held in the village hall, had been preceded by guided walks around the reserve. Some 25 members and relatives/friends had attended.

b) PE's talk (September 17) at Grimsby Town Hall on the *Great Bustard and Other Lost Birds of Lincolnshire* (Heritage Lincolnshire event)

Only 10 attended (one from as far away as Boston), but they proved to be a very engaged audience with plenty of questions afterwards. Two books had been sold. PE thanked JWr for setting up the event. JWr has emailed expressing thanks to Heritage Lincolnshire, for their support, and to NELC for allowing the Assembly Room in Grimsby Town Hall to accommodate the hour-long session at no cost to the club.

c) Gib Point NNR tour (October 1). Attended by about 18 members, this was conducted by LBC committee members PH and Kev Wilson (Gib warden). PH commended KW for his communications skill with the attendees in providing a "running narrative".

13 Update on forthcoming LBC events

a) To note joint LBC/ LNU meeting: January 14, 2023. PE has agreed to reprise his talk on the Great Bustard. It is hoped this can be held at the education centre at Whisby but Phil Porter cautioned that, if Covid again became widespread and virulent, the event might need to be held via Zoom.

b) PH advised that Nick Williams had agreed to give a presentation to the AGM about nesting success of uncommon birds such as Bittern, Marsh Harrier and Long-eared Owl in the southern fens of Lincolnshire. Following disappointing attendances at the last two in-person AGMs, held in the evening at The Golf hotel in Woodhall Spa, it was agreed to trial a daytime event, probably at Whisby education centre subject to its availability on the proposed date, Saturday March 25. It may be that the event can be combined with a tour of the reserve, either before or after the indoor meeting. It is hoped that arrangements can be confirmed at the next committee meeting in December.

PE noted that Conor Jameson had also offered to give a talk to coincide with publication in April next year of his biography of the naturalist, W.H. Hudson. It was agreed that he should be considered either for our 2024 AGM or for an earlier meeting next year.

14 Officers' reports (if any)

a) Chairman

PE said he was continuing to pursue an initiative with printers Renfrit of Woodhall Spa re proposed scanning of past bird reports for publication of past annual bird reports on the club website

b) Treasurer

JWa presented his quarterly report. He reminded the committee that the club had awarded a grant of £1,000 to the Lincs Wildlife Trust towards installation of Moulton migrant-tracking equipment at Gib Point and queried what progress had been made. PE replied that the matter was pending. JWa further noted that he was currently chasing up Lincolnshire County Council invoices via the Corby office of its external contractor, Serco.

PE was pleased that LBC finances had increased thanks to data sales via the club's longstanding arrangement with Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership, but was concerned that the club was not spending any of its resources on research/conservation projects. Following comments made by AC about cuckoo tracking, PE resolved to telephone Dawn Balmer at the BTO to establish if LBC could assist with any of its projects. It was agreed that this should be an agenda item for a future committee meeting.

c) Secretary

Nothing further to report

d) Membership secretary

MH updated the meeting on membership activity

e) Sales secretary

BS reported that sales of publications, particularly of past bird reports, had "dried up" compared with the previous year. The figure to date was 36 compared with 128 the previous year. PE observed that this was a reflection on people, including birders, becoming "less and less keen to buy paper".

f) County recorder

1. Update on the 2021 report

- i. Draft systematic list completed & LBRC/BBRC validated records written up.
- ii. James Siddle has kindly agreed to write the Review of the Year in the near future.
- iii. Articles for inclusion so far
- iv. Louth Peregrines – update (Geoff Mullet)
- v. Nest recording in Lincs (P. Hyde)
- vi. Stonechat taxonomy – an update (P. Hyde)
- vii. Baillon's Crake – Finder's report (W. Gillat)
- viii. White-tailed Lapwing – Finder's Report (G P Catley)
- ix. Continental Coal Tits in Lincolnshire (A J Bentley).

x Rarities

Apart from the Baillon's Crake and WT Lapwing, both county firsts, the other accepted BBRC rarities for 2021 were:

Red-breasted Goose, Wrangle marsh 21-25/09/21

Lesser Scaup, Chapel Pit and Manby Flashes, April-May 2021

Pacific Golden Plover, Frampton Marsh (2) Jul-Aug, and Deeping Fen, November.

Bonaparte's Gull, GPBO, Nov 3rd.

Caspian Tern, Barton Pits (2), June 19th-20th and Baston GP (20-21st June)presumed one of the Barton birds).

Black Stork, Tetney/Freiston/Frampton, August 9th-September 15th.

Pallid Harrier, Bonby Carrs, May 7th.

A Gull-billed Tern at Cress Marsh found/photographed by Chris Atkin will be accepted in due course (late circulation).

Vin Fleming has dropped out of this year's writing but hopes to be available for next year. Anthony Bentley has volunteered his services.

2. Ringing Report

Carl Soulsbury has volunteered to write a ringing report. He is an active ringer in the county.

3. LBC Records Committee

Nothing substantial to report, all goes well.

4. LBC Database

PE and PAH met with Charlie Barnes to discuss the way forward with the new data upload. The meeting was short but productive and CB will distribute the data in the same way as last year.

5. CRC bird book library

Sales completed and £141.50 transferred to the LBC account.

6. Lincs List update

PH is updating the Lincs List on the LBC website with text from the *Birds of Lincolnshire* and with some extra photographs from the cache which CRC amassed during the book production process. He asked committee members to scan the revised content and report any errors.

g) IT officer/ newsletter editor

AC confirmed that, after 30 years' living in Lincolnshire, he and wife Caroline had decided to move to Troutbeck in the Lake District for the foreseeable future. His offer to continue with editing the monthly newsletter and managing the website was welcomed by colleagues. As is the case currently, this will be done remotely but AC will no longer be able to attend meetings in person. He described the club's website as "the most complicated website in Britain" but,

with support from our maintenance contractors, he was steadily getting to grips with it.

15 Any other urgent business

None

16 Date/time/venue of next committee meeting

This was set for December 20 (7.30pm) via Zoom

There being no further business, the chairman closed the meeting at 9.15pm.