

Minutes - LBC committee meeting (via Zoom) agenda: 7.30pm July 18, 2023

1 The chair, Phil Espin, welcomed Jon Cooper, Andrew Chick, Phil Hyde, Mike Harrison, Phil Porter and Kev Wilson.

2 Apologies for absence

Bill Sterling (in PNG) and Jim Wright (in Scotland).

3 Minutes of February 21, 2023, meeting

These were confirmed as correct.

4 Matters arising from February meeting (if not included later on agenda):

a) Update on proposed installation of Motus equipment at Gibraltar Point

KW outlined progress to date and confirmed that arrangements were in hand for this to be installed by specialist engineers on the old coastguard station which has good bird detection clearance both out to sea and towards the Lincolnshire Wolds.

b) Update on scanning of past LBC annual reports

This has now been completed by Mike Rinfret of Woodhall Print Shop. The contents run to 40 gigs. The club will now discuss with its IT consultants arrangements for the material to be posted on the website.

5 Request for financial contribution - Gib Point

Following a detailed presentation by KW, the committee agreed unanimously to a proposal by PE that the club should approve a grant of £2,500 (for 2023-24) towards the £5,000-per-annum cost of the observatory's ongoing data-inputting project.

6 Feedback on arrangements - timing/location - for 2023 AGM (held in April)

It was agreed that these had been preferable to those of corresponding events in previous years. Following a comment from JC, it was agreed that, for future years, information needed to be provided about location of/ access to Whisby Education Centre. PP observed that WEC staff would be amenable to providing signage outside the venue. The committee will also look at a suggestion from Stuart Britton that name badges should be supplied to attendees. It was agreed that Stamford-based Tim Mackrill, of the Roy Dennis Foundation, should be invited to be guest speaker at the 2024 AGM with provisional dates of either March 24 or March 31.

7 Report on LBC's debut attendance at Lincolnshire Show

PE thanked MH for helping him set up the LBC stand on Tuesday afternoon and MH and BS for helping him man it on Wednesday and Thursday respectively. He described the event as enjoyable and an opportunity to fly the flag for the club, but (as with last year's Global Birdfair) sales of publications and recruitment of new members had been lacklustre. MH was encouraged by the interactive nature of the stand thanks to an initiative by Lincolnshire County Council which had supported and financed it. He felt the installation of a mock hide to view birds on a screen behind the hide would work well if the club decided to take a stand at next spring's Countryside Lincs show where there is likely to be a strong family attendance.

8 To consider January 2024 joint LBC/LNU meeting

PE asked members to reflect on who to invite as guest speaker. It had been hoped that Conor Jameson, author of a forthcoming biography on W.H. Hudson, might be available but he has advised that he is likely to be on holiday in January.

9 Events

PE welcomed the agreement of Sally Prescott to become Events Organiser. There was discussion about a barbecue event proposed for RSPB Frampton on September 3rd at 5pm after guided walks during the day and for a guided walk to be led by Owen Beaumont at Saltfleetby/Theddlethorpe on Saturday October 14 (7.30am). More information and booking arrangements for the event will be published in forthcoming editions of The Heron.

10 Curlews on RAF airfields in Lincolnshire - update on developments

Following a comment from MH, PE agreed to chase up the Curlew Recovery Partnership re our concerns about the fate of curlews at breeding sites on certain Lincolnshire's RAF airfields. In the meantime, he has been liaising with Gill Fisher of Natural England about a proposed LBC-led breeding survey, starting in March/April next year. It is hoped that the RAF Birdwatching Club, whose members have privileged access to airfields, will participate.

11 To consider whether subscription rates need to be increased in line with inflation

MH suggested a renewed scale: £18 ordinary membership, £15 senior citizens, £20 family members and £30 corporate. However, PE and PH felt there was no need to increase rates given that the club has a healthy bank balance. It was agreed to revisit this (and possible redesign of the membership leaflet) at a future meeting. The committee noted that any proposal would need to be put to the membership at an AGM.

12 Feedback on 2021 annual report

AC commended the sterling effort of PE and PH in producing the annual report which was due to be published the following week. MH agreed that as in 2022, of those not sent to members, a further 120 copies of the print run could be sent to his farm office for the purpose of general sales and supplying new members.

13 Zoom/ Microsoft Teams

It was agreed that, once the club's current contract with Zoom expires, the committee should switch to Microsoft Teams (for which there is no cost) for hosting future committee meetings.

14 Webcam/ peregrines - 2023 nesting season

a) St James, Louth

The birds have nested successfully, and four fledglings have flown the nest.

b) St Wulfram's Grantham
The birds again failed to nest.

A discussion ensued about camera arrangements at the two sites, and, following proposed conversations with interested parties, there will be an update at a future committee meeting.

15 Financial arrangements with GLNP

The committee noted that, under a longstanding arrangement, the GLNP pays 12.5 per cent of income from sales of data to the Lincs Bird Club. The GLNP now seeks to reduce this payment under the terms of the agreement. Following a discussion, it was agreed that PE should enter into negotiations with the GLNP's Charlotte Phillips.

16 Treasurer transition

a) PE said he had received a letter from former treasurer John Watt thanking the club and committee on his warm retirement send-off at the 2023 AGM.

b) PE and JC noted that updating the banking mandate arrangement to reflect the change of treasurer had proved complicated, but the process was close to completion.

17 WhatsApp Groups

The proliferation of WhatsApp birding groups within Lincolnshire (there are two just for Gibraltar Point) was noted. Some members without smartphones have expressed disquiet about missing out on sightings information. However, the prevailing committee view was that, if it members wished to take advantage of WhatsApp, they needed to update their communications equipment. A suggestion that a list of county birding WhatsApp groups/co-ordinators should be published on the club's website was rejected because these groups are mostly private arrangements not connected with the club.

18 Further reports from officers:

a) Chairman

PE noted that Andy Sims and Chris Grimshaw had volunteered to assist with a proposed stand at a Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust 75th anniversary event to be held at Doddington Hall on September 23-24, but someone was required to set up/remove our stand. MH said he might be able to offer his services but was not unable to provide a firm commitment. Following a suggestion from PH, it was agreed that an appeal should be put in the August newsletter.

b) County recorder

PH supplied the following written report:

1. Update on the 2021 report

At the printers. 550 copies on order. Should arrive in next fortnight. From the look of the proofs, we will have another excellent product, much kudos is due to the designer at Swallowtail Print. Bring on the 2022 report!

2. LBC Records Committee

Nothing substantial to report, all goes well.

3. LBC Database

- I have updated a few of the species databases where we had little in the e-archive before the 1980s, the latest being Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, for which I have extracted all records back to 1979 from the LBR datasheets (thanks to CB, once again).
- A feedback meeting with Charlie Barnes needs to be convened in the wake of finishing the 2021 LBR, and a provisional timetable set for uploading and sorting the 2022 data – another report beckons!

4. Lincs List update

I have added further updates to the Lincs List species accounts on the LBC website. This includes:

- expansion of the text where space was limited in the book
- inclusion of accepted records to 2022
- added around 65 Finders Reports, significant articles (e.g., 'Exceptional numbers of Long-tailed Skuas in Lincolnshire in 1988' by GPC) and some historical quotes/notes from sources such as The Zoologist and Bulletin of the British Ornithologists Club, regarding early/first records from the likes of Caton Haigh et al.

c) Treasurer

Nothing additional to report

d) Secretary

Absent

e) Membership secretary

Nothing additional to report

f) Sales secretary

Absent

g) IT officer/ newsletter editor

AC said our monthly newsletter, The Heron, was running smoothly but he was struggling to keep up with updating the website which needs refreshing, particularly the homepage. It was agreed that a renewed appeal should be put out to members in the hope that voluntary assistance might be forthcoming. He confirmed that there was a difficulty with the website link-up with Twitter, but this was to do with their software not our's.

19 Any other urgent business

None.

20 Date/time/venue of next committee meeting

Provisionally arranged for November 21, 2023, at 7.30pm, via Zoom

There being no further business, the chairman closed the meeting at 9.10pm.