

Minutes of LBC committee meeting held via Zoom at 7.40 pm on July 23, 2024

1 Chairman Phil Espin welcomed attendees Sally Prescott, Phil Hyde, Jon Cooper, Mike Harrison, Bill Sterling, Phil Porter and Jim Wright.

2 Apologies for absence were received from Andrew Chick and Pete Short.

3 The minutes of the meeting held on February 13, 2024 (as posted on the LBC website) were confirmed.

4 Matters arising:

a) Update on breeding curlew on RAF airfields: PE said he was awaiting final data from this year's survey after which a final report will be compiled and published. Broods have been reported from Digby and Cranwell but not Scampton. No nests were discovered at off-airfield sites. MH suggested breeding may have occurred in the Horsington/Stixwold/Woodhall area on post-silage harvesting fields where as many as seven adult birds had been seen during the breeding season.

b) Update on construction of portable LBC hide for use at LBC and/or other events: Following an earlier demo in his garden of the hide, PE said it had been modified so as it could be accommodated/transported in a normal-size saloon car (with back seats down). He thanked BS for carrying out the alterations.

c) To confirm annual public liability insurance has been renewed: This was confirmed by JC.

d) To consider policy on making grants/ donations: After discussion, PE resolved to compile a draft with a possible upper limit of £2,500 on the amount of any individual grant payable by the club. He suggested this information could be outlined in a dedicated page on the website.

e) Update (if any) on future of Lincolnshire Naturalists' Union: PP announced that two volunteers had agreed to serve on its committee, thereby averting the risk that it might fold.

f) National Grid's proposed pylon route from Grimsby to Walpole via Lincolnshire: LBC did not take part in the consultation exercise, but the committee reserved the right to do so in the future, after consulting the membership, if there are any further public consultations. It is likely the club will also wish to comment when/if a formal planning application is submitted by NG.

g) Memorials for deceased LBC members: The committee resolved not to establish a formal policy, preferring instead to stay with the current practice of publishing obituaries of deceased members in the annual report which is the club's journal of record.

5 Recent events:

a) West Grantham Academy Church Of England School: Following a request by the school for a speaker, no one from the club was immediately available, so a representative of Boothby Wildlands agreed to give the talk. MH said he could consider giving a talk to a school in his area if a similar request were to be made in the future.

b) AGM/ Tim Mackrill talk on White-tailed Eagles: Members agreed that this had been a very entertaining and enlightening talk which had resulted in positive feedback from members. Reports have appeared both in the newsletter and in the Forum website. It was agreed that the

Whisby Education Centre location and Saturday-afternoon timing had been satisfactory. JW queried whether, in future, we might consider a) hiring a larger meeting room and b) generating more pre-event publicity with the intention of attracting a larger audience (ie 50-plus)

c) LBC/ Cairngorms trip (May 1-5): PE reported said he had heard positive feedback from this holiday. BS, one of those on the trip, remarked on the excellent weather. JW said Cairngorm Travel were keen to repeat the event next year. Illustrated reports have appeared on the website/ in the newsletter.

d) Richard Doan's summer migrant walk at Gibraltar Point on May 11: It was agreed that this had been an excellent day. PE commended Richard on his recent promotion to Warden of Gibraltar Point NNR

e) LBC's attendance at Festival of Sea in Grimsby on June 22: BS who set up our stand and attended this event said it had been extremely successful in spreading the word about LBC and birding. It had been a very busy day from 9am to 5pm. (A brief illustrated write-up has appeared in the General News section of the Forum.)

6 Future events:

a) August 31. Barbecue at RSPB Frampton - details to be published in August newsletter

b) 2025 joint annual meeting with LNU: The proposed date is 2pm on January 18, with a guest speaker to be confirmed.

c) 2025 AGM: The proposed date is 2pm on March 29 with location and guest speaker to be confirmed.

SP reported that she was exploring options for further outdoor events in 2025. Subject to further inquiries, these could include guided tours of Vine House Farm, RSPB Frampton, Snipe Dales, Far Ings, Wrendale Rewilding project and barbecue at Gibraltar Point (to coincide with wader roost). It was also suggested that a pelagic cruise aboard the Predator out of Grimsby (as in August 2022) might again prove popular. There are no plans for indoor meetings.

6) Membership leaflets: JC agreed to design a new membership leaflet with up-to-date subscription rates. PE said it was important that they should include a QR code for the benefit of smartphone users. MH favoured also a section allowing for written membership applications for anyone wishing to pay by direct debit.

7 Recent publications

a) Feedback on 2022 annual report: it was agreed that this maintained the high standard of previous years, and the feedback from members had been very positive. It was agreed that the print run should remain at 500 - 420 for distribution to paid-up members and 80 for new members, complimentary copies or casual purchases.

b) Publication of *Birds of Louth*: it was confirmed that LBC is the publisher of this outstanding title which has been proving popular since its launch earlier this summer. With sales approaching 250, it is already close to reaching break-even on the cost of printing. It was further confirmed that profits, after costs have been met, should go to the charity Brain Tumour Research in memory of the late John Clarkson, co-author with PE.

8) Prospective overhaul of club's website: In the absence of AC, this item was deferred until the next meeting.

9) Update on Peregrine webcams at a) Louth and b) Grantham: It was noted that a Bournemouth-based firm, Wildlife Windows, with experience of the Louth system had quoted £450 per annum to provide maintenance. In the absence of AC, further discussion was deferred until the next meeting.

10 MOTUS: Progress has stalled on further development of this migrant-tracking system because training has not been forthcoming for ringers in respect of tagging trapped birds. At the Gib receiver, part-financed by LBC, only one bird (a Yellow-browed Warbler) has been detected by the system in more than a year. In the absence of further information, this item was deferred to a future meeting.

11 Committee awayday event suggestion: Members expressed provisional interest in a suggestion by PE for a committee awayday package at Spurn Bird Observatory later in the year, to be partly funded from club resources.

12 Officers' reports

a) Chairman: PE reported on useful discussion with colleagues at Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership on various issues, notably the ongoing Lincolnshire Nature Recovery Strategy. He expressed hopes that this would have effective results and not just be a paper exercise. Among the species in focus are little Tern, Corn Bunting, Yellowhammer, Ringed Plover, Crane and Stone Curlew. In addition the Visit Lincolnshire Bird Trail website continues to be expanded.

b) Treasurer: JC provided a written update on the club's financial position (which remains healthy)

c) Secretary: None

d) Membership secretary: MH thanked JC for applying his IT expertise to updating membership records and dealing with member queries

e) Sales Secretary: BS provided a written update

f) County recorder: PH provided a written update

g) IT officer/ newsletter editor: None

13 Any other business: Pete Short, RSPB Humber Reserves manager, provided a positive report on recent activity, particularly relating to Redshanks and Lapwings. Fuller information will be published in the form of an approved press release at a later date.

14 Next meeting - this will be via Zoom at 7.30pm on November 12.

There being no further business, the chairman closed the meeting at 9.45pm.