



Minutes of
Zoom Committee Meeting
at 19.30 hrs on Wednesday
11th May 2022

Present

Barry Murphy (chair)
Graham Cawdell (joint secretary)
Ruth-Ann Leak (joint secretary)
George Keegan (PRO)
Jon Freestone
Colin Guilfoyle
Padraig Keogh
Colm Madden
Marie Comerford

Apologies

Helen Lawson (treasurer)
Nathy Gilligan
Kieran Flynn

Minutes of last meeting on Wednesday 16th March 2022 presumed read.

Matters Arising

Barry reported that all our social media platforms have at least 2 administrators. The issues with our email address and access to the group Yahoo account remain. Graham stated that he had difficulties accessing our new Gmail account. Barry said that once he had verified Graham's access request then future admission should be automatic. Ruth had emailed Niall Hatch (BWI) about the feasibility of linking to the BirdWatchIreland account. He said that the number of email addresses on their account are limited. He recommended that we try a Google account which many other branches use with multiple members accessing it.

Action: It was agreed that we should continue with our Yahoo account whilst developing our new Gmail account in conjunction with our YouTube channel.

Graham said that he is not competent in QR code generation but would be happy to produce a flyer. Ruth informed us that we did have a tri-fold flyer and that she and Graham could modify it for digital distribution. The committee reaffirmed that printing paper copies would not be undertaken by the Mayo branch for cost and environmental reasons. George asked if recipients could print the documents. The committee agreed.

Action: Graham and Ruth to revise the branch flyer in .pdf and .jpeg format for online and social media distribution.

Bonniconlon Show Graham had no response to his email and maybe this should be postponed to next year. The committee agreed.

Events

- **Belleek Woods - 23rd March** Colm reported that this was an excellent walk supervised by Hazel Doyle (NWPS warden) who identified many birds for the group. There were only 8 attendees unfortunately.
- **Enniscoe Dawn Chorus Walk – 8th May** 25 attendees who set off at 7.30 down to the lake and then split into two groups to return. Graham, Colin, Colm and Barry led the identification of the singing/calling birds. Hugh (NMHC manager) provided tea and coffee, scones and sausage rolls on our return for an honesty basket contribution.

Before introducing upcoming events George informed us that BWI had reduced the frequency of Wings magazine to 3 times annually and that notification for events to be published in Wings from mid June to September were needed by tomorrow!!! The committee expressed their dismay at this sudden and unannounced change.

- **Downpatrick Head – Sunday 12th June at 13.00** Flyer to follow.
- **Swifts: Talk and Viewing - Lough Lannagh Swimming Pool - Wednesday 15th June 2022 at 20.00** Talk by Lynda Huxley then viewing of the swift boxes. Flyer to follow.
- **Belmullet Visit with Dave Suddaby, Sunday 19th June 2022 at 12.00** Barry had arranged this visit under guidance to a restricted site with breeding phalaropes. The committee had agreed to reduce numbers on this occasion and to make it a BWI Mayo branch committee only visit. *(Our policy for our events has been to include all, not solely BWI members, and advertise widely without needing prior registration. This subject will be addressed at a future committee meeting).*
- **Seawatching at Kilcummin Head.** Date to be announced but no sooner than late August and dependant on the prevailing winds. Details to be announced on our social media.

Long term plan for events Barry suggested that the branch would benefit from a long term plan for events. The annual calendar of our BWI branch events was discussed. There was agreement that we should have fewer field trips in winter and more in summer, and that in our calendar we should try to coordinate with local festivals and events such as the Biodiversity and Heritage weeks.

Action Committee to communicate by email to develop an outline annual calendar of events.

Database, Email and WhatsApp

Ruth reported that the take up of our revised email notification service is low at just 39 and only 7, all of whom are committee members, have opted to join our WhatsApp group. Barry asked if Ruth had deleted her texting list now that this service had been withdrawn. She replied that would be a long task but would start doing so.

Branch Meetings

Graham suggested that we try to limit our meetings to 60 minutes and close meetings after 90 if the agenda had not been completed. Padraig asked if we could have face to face meetings. After discussion the committee decided that we should have at least 2 face to face meetings annually and that one should be our AGM. As our new committee was set up in December 2021 it was

suggested that our AGM should be in December, probably the first Wednesday. As for a summer one the committee decided that our next meeting be in Castlebar on Wednesday 20th July with the venue to be decided.

Bird Song and Call Recording

Graham said that he had recently completed a BTO Songbird course and that he was now recording songs and calls with a phone app and on a recorder. He asked if these sound files could be uploaded to our new website and social media. Barry said that he was not sure whether sound files could be uploaded on their own but with conversion to a video file it would be feasible. However he did wonder if this was necessary as there are numerous websites and apps providing this service. Graham and Marie felt that it was important as bird identification particularly at this time is often by sound alone.

Branch Hide

Barry asked whether our branch should build a hide. He said that an excellent community hide had been built in Balla with secure access. The group felt that hides are only useful in a well managed environment such as on a reserve and that there could be issues with planning and vandalism. Graham suggested that we could consider a camouflage tent hide which could be erected when an interesting bird has been seen. Discussion would continue when we have more information.

Running a course in making bird boxes was then discussed possibly linking it to the Heritage week. Getting children involved with their parents would be helpful in stimulating young interest.

Any Other Business

Ruth said that she has some items, notice boards etc., belonging to the branch but could no longer store them. She had spoken to Hugh (manager of North Mayo Heritage Centre) who had agreed to store them for us.

Graham suggested that only late notifications of events should be permitted under AOB. Any items requiring consideration should be added to an agenda. The committee debated this and agreed.

George said that tomorrow afternoon there was an arts event on the university campus in Castlebar to celebrate the return of the swifts. Jon had also emailed details prior to the meeting.

Barry then concluded the meeting by saying we had completed the meeting in 89 minutes! (Still work to be done there!)

