



Minutes of Committee Meeting
In Lough Lannagh Sports Centre
at 19.00 hrs on Wednesday
12th April 2023

Present

Graham Cawdell (secretary)
Pádraig Kehoe (treasurer)
George Keegan (PRO)
Colm Madden

Apologies

Marie Comerford
Ruth-Ann Leak
Nathy Gilligan

Welcome and apologies

Minutes of last meeting on Wednesday 15th February 2023 had been received and read by all. Graham stated that he had inserted the actual figures for social media activity from the various platforms following our last meeting.

Matters Arising Funding and future meetings are on this agenda. Branch email to all registered BWMayo members for a chairperson and assistance with Instagram had received no offers. Website – Barry Murphy had sent the activity figures for the first year of our new website. 1,250 visitors and 3,600 views of the website with 1220 visits to the homepage, 390 to upcoming events, 280 to birds to look out for in Mayo, 130 to Co. Mayo and 90 to Irish names. Those categories comprised 69% of all views. Pádraig confirmed that he had received from Barry the receipt for annual website fees of \$82.41. Barry would inform him what he'd been charged in euro for reimbursement. Talk by Sean Lysaght – three committee members and their wives attended this interesting talk in Westport.

Recent Event Report of our Belmullet visit seen by all. Graham stated that he was surprised to find 9 attending despite the weather. 2 were local and they were able to identify the site of the dead dolphins which had attracted a couple of glaucous gulls. At least 3 were from a Facebook "Meet Up" group that had attended a previous BWMayo outing and were incorporating this event with lunch whilst watching the rugby. This emphasises the fact that local and social media broadcasting of our events is beneficial. Thanks to George.

Upcoming Events

Lough O'Flynn This Saturday meeting at the recreation centre on the east side of the lake. Graham had received an email that there is no boat hire on the lake. Ruth had contacted the Galway branch but her email to Roscommon was not delivered. Colm thought that Roscommon had joined the Sligo branch.

North Mayo Heritage Centre, Enniscoe House. Sunday 7th May at 7.00am for our dawn chorus walk. Last year this was our best attended outdoor event so we will probably split into two

groups. We will need to notify everyone about the catering situation shortly before the event as the café is not open but there has been a trailer providing tea/coffee and cakes in the car park recently.

Foxford River and Town Walk. Saturday 27th May at 7.30pm. Meet in the car park by Admiral Brown Promenade for a walk beside the river to see sand martins and other hirundine, then to the town to see returning swifts. Graham will not be able to lead this event.

Belmullet Peninsula. Sunday 18th June. Start time to be decided. Probably meet in Aldi car park as in March then car share +/- split into 2 groups depending on the number present.

Distribution of Mayo PPN notices and other information As secretary Graham receives many emails about training courses, resources, requests etc from various groups but particularly Mayo PPN. He asked the committee if he could delete those that he felt were not appropriate for a branch of a national charity and distribute others to the committee or our entire branch membership as appropriate. The committee agreed.

Branch Funding Pádraig confirmed that the cost for holding this committee meeting was €35. Although we may be able to negotiate a lower rate if we met regularly at this venue we will still incur costs over €200 to facilitate our committee meetings and run our social media and website annually. The committee agreed that we need to increase our income. Discussion followed around how we achieve this.

- Subscription for inclusion on branch mailing and WhatsApp lists Those present and those at our previous meeting felt that this was not the way to go.
- Donations for attending our outings and a charge for indoor events Graham said that at the Killala outing he had received offers of donations from a couple of attendees. Discussion followed on whether we should recommend non BWI members donate or include all attendees at outdoor events. It was agreed to introduce an honesty box donation system at all our outdoor events. As indoor events will incur significant costs then there should be an admission charge. No decision was made on the amount as this would probably depend on the venue, anticipated attendance and any refreshments etc..
- Funding grants Ruth had reminded Graham that to avail of these we would need a branch bank account. Graham informed the committee that a number of grants had been readily available provided one was familiar with the application process. In particular the increase costs due to energy prices, which we are experiencing, having had function rooms freely available in the past; and in relation to increased demand from refugee groups. Capital grants were also available for equipment and we could make a strong case for telescopes etc.. Pádraig agreed to investigate setting up a branch account.

20th Anniversary Event John Milroy was happy to give a brief presentation on the development of the Mayo branch any time in the autumn. Graham suggested that John's talk be followed by a tea break then a guest speaker with a presentation and discussion lasting around 1 hour. Debate followed on which day of the week, afternoon or evening. It was decided that we would contact BWI for some assistance.

Other Indoor Events These are a good source of revenue. Our neighbouring Sligo branch have many events most of which are undertaken by their membership. Graham mentioned that a

new recruit to our branch was going on a birdwatching holiday abroad and he asked her if she would be willing to share her experience and photos. This was received positively. He also stated that he could update a presentation on breeding in birds which would probably take up 2 sessions since there has been a lot of new research on the roles of parents.

Loan binoculars and branch telescope(s) At our Kilalla outing we had 4 telescopes lined up on the quay! (*Two were company property borrowed for the event.*) Everyone appreciated the benefit as we scanned the harbour at low tide. At Belmullet we had one though the weather was not favourable for its use. This is the scenario at most of our outings and with birdwatching in Mayo frequently being from a distance the need for telescopes is paramount.

Loan binoculars Occasionally attendees at our outings do not have binoculars or appropriate ones. Many of us have spare binoculars which we could consider donating to the branch for loan at our outings. Graham suggested that he email all branch members to request donations. The committee agreed.

Shooting season Graham had received an email from a BWI member who was requesting support in campaigning to reduce the species that are permitted to be shot particularly any on the red and amber list. This is being debated in government and the shooting lobby are pressing for “no change”. The committee agreed we should encourage BWI to lobby government and we should lobby our local politicians on a personal basis but not as BWI spokespersons.

Irish Raptor Study Group Conference Three branch members had stated that they planned to attend. Unfortunately, no one was available to report back today. Graham will ask if a Mayo related update could be compiled.

Late Notices RTE radio is broadcasting a dawn chorus programme hosted Derek Mooney in the early morning on Sunday 7th May, the day of our dawn chorus event.

Date of Next Meeting Wednesday 21st June 2023 at 7.00pm. The committee considered the branch's original intention to move the venue around the county. Castlebar was deemed ideal as it is central, has the amenities and is a public transport hub.