



## Minutes of Committee Meeting

The Foyer of the Ellison Hotel

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2025 at 11:30hrs.

Present	Apologies
Graham Cawdell - secretary	Pádraig Keogh - chairperson
Mick Oates - treasurer (chair of this meeting)	Colm Madden
Nuala O'Malley	Marie Comerford
Colin Guilefoyle	Rosemary McCreery
Nathy Gilligan	Jon Freestone

**Welcome** Mick welcomed everyone and opened the meeting. Graham gave the apologies as above.

**Minutes of last meeting** on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2024. No amendments suggested.

**Matters Arising** No matters arising as they are covered in the agenda items.

**Resignation of Karen Hunt from committee** Karen had informed Pádraig and Graham that she wished to resign from the committee due to increasing work commitments. Mick offered our thanks to Karen for her contribution as assistant secretary.

**Reports from Recent Events** Circulated with the agenda. No amendments requested.

### Upcoming Events

- **Seawatch** To date the weather had not been ideal and it was now late in the migration. Graham to contact Darren again.
- **Mulranny - Sat. 18/10/25** This outing clashes with IWeBS but Colin felt that it could go ahead. Graham and Colin to check with John Milroy (organiser of Clew Bay IWeBS counts). Colin to lead this outing.
- **Away Day - Sat. 22/11/25** Graham reported that there have been some interesting sightings at Inch and he had looked into accommodation locally. There was consensus that we should try this outing. Colin undertook a WhatsApp poll and there was an immediate positive response for both an overnight stay and visiting in a day. Details of this visit to Inch Wildfowl Reserve in Donegal and the hotel will be sent out to all our members.
- **Killala & Ross Strand - Sun. 14/12/25** We need someone to lead this outing which is usually well attended.

### Telescope and Binoculars

- **Grant Application** Mick's application was successful but not for the full amount. Sheila Murphy (Biodiversity Officer, MayoCoCo) has offered to top up our funds with €300.
- **Donation of Opticron Field Telescope plus tripod and a pair of binoculars** Graham is donating a field telescope together with tripod and protective cover (Opticron ES 80 GA ED with HDF 20-60x zoom eyepiece) and his original RSPB Swift 8x40 binoculars.
- **Donation of Manfrotto Tripod** Rosemary has kindly donated a sturdy Manfrotto tripod.

### Indoor Events

- **Alternative venues** No one had come up with an ideal alternative to Grainne Uaile pub. Discussion followed on numerous possibilities. Mick had identified a room in Claremorris with good AV facilities but there is a small charge for its use. Nathy suggested the council room that we used for our AGM a couple

of years ago. However, this had involved a member of staff with additional duties. Nuala felt that the university campus could provide a venue. It was agreed that we'd look into this further prior to our next meeting.

- **Format** We discussed how long, who should present and the frequency and types of events that we should organise. We concluded that formal presentations should be no longer than one hour plus a few minutes for discussion, whilst short talks should be about 15 – 20 minutes followed by discussion such that 2 could be included in one meeting. The content could relate to any aspect of nature and its restoration, not just birds. Quizzes, discussion groups and bird ID training could be considered. Graham mentioned that we have a number of eminent birders in Mayo who do not attend our outings but are on our branch mailing list. Individuals were mentioned and Nathy said that he knew Micheál O'Bhrián who regularly posts rare sightings on Achill. Nathy said that he would speak to him.

**Calendar of Outings for 2026** Prior to producing our outings for 2026 we reviewed those of this year. Overall, there has been a drop in attendance. Our dawn chorus walk in Clonbur was a long way for people to travel and this has always been on the early May Bank Holiday weekend which recently has included Mayo Day. We agreed to try the weekend before or after and preferably with less distance to travel. Our best supported outing was Tourmakeady led by Colin. Graham will draft a calendar for 2026 prior to our next meeting.

#### **Any Late Notices**

- **International Swift Conference, Westport 2026** Nuala announced that this conference will be held in Westport. Further details to follow.
- **PPN Training Courses** Graham reported that he receives details of numerous free training courses to assist the running of voluntary organisations in Mayo. Currently he forwards these to our committee members rather than our entire membership. The meeting agreed with this action.

**Date of Next Meeting** Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at 11:30 in the foyer of the Ellison Hotel.