



Minutes of Committee Meeting

The Foyer of the Ellison Hotel

Saturday 29th November 2025 at 11:30hrs.

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

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

Minutes of last meeting on Saturday 27th September 2025. No amendments suggested.

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

Reports from Recent Events Reports from Mulranny and our Donegal visit to Inch Waterfowl Reserve with an overnight stay were circulated with the agenda and have been posted on our website. Rosemary felt that the Inch report failed to convey what a wonderful birding site Inch is. We did not have a sea watch this year.

Upcoming Events

- **Killala and Ross Strand, Sunday 14/12/25** Mick and Colm agreed to lead this.

Branch Membership

- We have 155 members on our contacts list but we do not know how many are BWI members.
- Revealing our contacts list to our members. Graham had accidentally revealed our list whilst forwarding a notice from his phone. Unfortunately, a member then copied that list and emailed our membership on his campaign against a proposed wind turbine scheme. He has apologised and no further emails were sent. Complaints were sent to BWI and Graham received a phone call from Niall Hatch (BWI).

Telescope, grant award and application

Mick outlined his grant application and subsequent reimbursement. We received a grant of €760 which was less than we applied for. Mick loaned the branch €1,000 to enable the purchase from Conn's Cameras, Dublin. Sheila Murphy, biodiversity officer at MayoCoCo, offered to make up the difference. Eventually she offered €500 which had VAT added when we

received this payment of €615. The process for these payments was complex and took almost 3 months. We learnt a lot about grant applications!

Events for 2026

- **Outdoor** - proposed calendar for 2026 discussed. Catriona, a branch member had done some research on an away day to Inishbofin with an option to stay overnight at the Doonmore Hotel. She could no longer run this outing but as the initial contacts are established we agreed to proceed but not the weekend she chose which clashes with the International Swift Conference which is in Mayo. Mick offered to assess Rostaff and Shrule turloughs for November. Graham had led Downpatrick trips for the last 3 years with ever decreasing attendance. He thought that similar birds can be seen around Aughris Head. He would check with the Sligo branch.
- **Talks and Presentations**
 - Nathy had spoken to Micheál O'Briain who agreed to speak on "Birds of Achill". Graham suggested that we have a brief AGM prior to his talk as Sligo do because we should have a good attendance. To be decided at our next meeting.
 - After much discussion there was outline agreement that there should be a mixture of formal presentations and short talks on all aspects of nature. A few committee and branch members had volunteered to speak. There are also a few eminent birders in Mayo who might be persuaded to talk. Venue, management, AV aids and frequency still undecided.
- **8th International Swift Conference** Nuala provided comprehensive details of this event occurring in the ATU Mayo Campus 26 – 29th May 2026. Three days of presentations and numerous field trips are organised. To our dismay BirdWatch Ireland had declined to support it!

Enquiries and requests for assistance Recently we had received requests for assistance with information including siting of nestboxes in Belleek woods which Colm has assisted. Colin had assisted a student and more recently an email from an environmental consultancy, which was circulated to the committee, requesting data to assist production of their report. In this situation the consultancy will receive a substantial fee and other BWI branches have contracts to submit to ensure that they receive some remuneration for the work they undertook. Opinions differed on whether we should provide the information freely for the benefit of biodiversity and the issue was undecided.

IWeBS John Milroy, first chairperson of the Mayo branch, currently organises the Clew Bay survey. He has requested our assistance in recruiting new surveyors. Graham will notify our branch in the next newsletter.

Any Late Notices None

Date of Next Meeting Saturday 10th January 2026 at 11:30 in the foyer of the Ellison Hotel.