



Kent Ornithological Society

Minutes of the 74th Annual General Meeting

Held 7.30pm on 30th April 2024 (via Zoom). Attended by 34 members of the Society

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Stephen Overy and Barry Wright

2. President's address

Chris Cox opened the meeting. He reflected on how our hobby has changed in past 60 years. Back then monthly newsletters were sent in the post, every member's name and address were published in the Kent Bird Report (KBR), the KBR was much thinner and, of course, some birds were much more common. One anecdote was that a birder complained how difficult it was to find a Collared Dove among some 200 Turtle Doves at Oare.

The KOS has become much more professional and proactive: witness the now annual Migration Day and the planned days at Dungeness. Chris also reflected that we do more to support conservation and have made a contribution to the new hide at Dungeness. A special thanks went to Mike Henty who is standing down as Treasurer of KOS after many years. He is handing over with the financial accounts in excellent health. Chris welcomed Gary Howard in his new role as Treasurer. Finally, Chris thanked everyone committing time to the society.

3. Chairman's report

Andre Farrar welcomed everyone and thanked Chris for his kind words. The KOS continues to thrive and fulfil our core brief of recording the bird life of Kent. Publication of the Kent Bird Report is an eagerly anticipated annual event and never disappoints. It is a huge credit to our editor, Keith Privett and the team of writers that turn our deluge of records into a readable account.

Our programme of Online Zoom talks organised by Chris Roome and our outdoor meetings run by Ray O'Riley continue to be well supported.

The executive committee is keen to grow the Society both in terms of the level of support we enjoy but also in the range of activities we can offer. In September we organised the first Big Kent Bird Migration Watch which was based at Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory, Samphire Hoe and Dungeness RSPB reserve with support from Dungeness Bird Observatory and watchers at North Foreland and Bockhill. We had additional records of migration from across the country. From a relatively small start we plan to grow the event, and we will be running it again on Sunday 28 September 2025.

Andre concluded that it has been a successful year for the KOS and that we have great plans for the future. But we will need more active support at various levels to bring these plans to fruition – volunteering for our new activities is a great way to start.



Of course there are many ways our members, contribute to our mission – carrying our survey work is vital in so many ways and the Nightingale survey is an excellent example of that (see below).

Andre paid tribute to the contribution Mike Henty has made to the KOS – he’s stepping down as treasurer and that role will be taken up by Gary Howard. Gary has been on the executive committee for some time enabling a smooth succession to this important role.

On Sunday 11 May we have our first KOS at Dungeness day. We are planning these days for the next two years and hopefully this will become a permanent arrangement – it gives us a physical presence and a great opportunity to meet our members and, of course, recruit new ones.

4. Treasurer’s Report

Mike Henty described some of the key elements of the annual accounts. It has been another successful year. Subscriptions are up by £267, while we now receive over £1200 from gift aid (it is the first time this amount is above £1000). Thanks to higher interest rates, interest income is also up. Plus we made £1000 from providing data which is a new means of income. We continue to receive modest income from clothing sales.

In terms of expenditures, the KBR expenditure was a bit less than budgeted: £8700 vs £9900. The rest of the expenditures were very similar to 2023.

Overall, this gave us a significant surplus of £3961.

The balance sheet remained very healthy. It now includes five acoustic monitors which were purchased to support current and future survey work.

Mike thanked Keith Ellis who had once again audited the accounts. Copies of the accounts can be found on the Society’s website with the agenda for this meeting.

The Accounts were unanimously approved by the meeting.

5. Reports from other officers

Editorial and Records Sub-Committee

In Barry Wright’s absence, Andre Farrar gave an overview of the key developments of the Editorial and Records sub-committee. The committee has remained largely the same except for Richard Collins and Chris Hindle standing down from KOS Rarity Panel (KOSRP). We thank them for their commitment over the years in all aspects of the committee’s work, not just rarity assessment. They are replaced by Alan Fossey, who also continues in his role as secretary, and Jamie Partridge. Chris Hindle remains on committee continuing his role of collating the KOS rarity submissions for the KOS. Barry continues to work closely with BBRC communicating with Paul French as well as with the birding community in Kent, thanks to all those that help the KOS document the Birds of Kent and ultimately production of the KBR. Huge thanks to all committee members in their respective roles in the E&RSC. The Committee also noted that Ebird continues to be very popular with birders and adds to our ever-expanding database of records – of course other databases are available and BirdTrack is also a major contributor to our records as is our own online database.



Keith Privett added that the 2023 KBR is well underway with significant portion of writers having submitted their accounts.

Conservation and Surveys Sub-Committee

Murray Orchard described the work during the last year of the conservation and surveys committee. A key highlight was the presentation of the KOS 2023 Nightingale survey results: the population is still doing very well. The survey data was analysed by BTO, which concluded (conservatively) on an estimate of 857 males in the county with 95% confidence limits of 695 to 1,258.

In terms of conservation, we were involved in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Kent, specifically setting a priority list of species. We also worked on a new National Nature Reserve in the North Downs. As of 25 March this new NNR has now been declared by Natural England: ranging broadly from Gravesend to Strood and south to Halling. We continue to support the Shellness conservation work, which now has 12 cameras and a part-time warden to protect Ringed Plover and Little Tern.

In terms of other Surveys, the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker survey has just completed, which included use of the 5 acoustic detectors. The Winter Gull Survey (WinGS) had good coverage and we are currently supporting the BTO Heathland Bird Survey, which in Kent will primarily involve a survey of Nightjars.

Murray thanked David Smith for his assistance in compiling the Rare Breeding Bird Panel report.

Membership Secretary's report

Chris Roome indicated that current membership stands at 754 members. This has been generally maintained in the mid 700s for the last two years. This figure includes 25 Under 25 year old members who pay no subscription and do not receive the annual Kent Bird Report. However, they have full access to the website and received last year a Christmas card and a copy of the facsimile of the first 1952 KBR which the society published in 2022 to mark the 70th anniversary of its publication and which was sent to all members in 2022.

Chris noted that compared with other county bird clubs our membership remains low – Sussex for example - has at least double our membership. It remains our ambition to try and reach at least the 1000 member milestone in the coming years. To further this aim we now have formed the KOS Engagement Committee.

The management of the membership records remains a time consuming task as the numbers of members shifts on an almost daily basis. IT has helped considerably in this, and the use of Member Mojo to facilitate online payments and keep records has been a welcome development. The system has built in reminders re subscriptions.

One of the pleasures of being Membership Secretary is the correspondence received from members over the years and it is heartening that this correspondence is almost always friendly, kind and courteous. Chris particularly thanked Kieron Palmer and Martin Collins who have been of great support in managing some of the more arcane aspects of the digital world. Also a big thanks was given to Mike Henty.



Engagement Sub-Committee Report 2024/5

Chris Roome gave an overview of the activities of the Engagement Sub-Committee, whose key goal it is to increase membership to over 1000 members. The current committee consists of: Gary Howard, Nicole Khan, Kieron Palmer, Martin Collins, Brendan Ryan, James King and Chris Roome. The committee aims to meet three times a year (via Zoom) to talk about and implement more engagement with the wider world of Kent Birding and to encourage more folk to join the society.

We were heavily involved with last year’s first KOS Bird Migration Day in September and are equally committed to the event later this year. We have learnt some useful lessons and hope we can make the 2025 event even better. We are of course supporting the KOS days at Dungeness this year and engagement committee members have been ordering materials and volunteering for the first day on Sunday 11th May. We hope to see many of our members there.

We initiated KOS small business type information cards for members of the exec to carry which carry a message about our aims and facilitate easy joining online.

A key goal is to improve our KOS social media offer on a number of platforms, and to make the website more interesting and lively. A special thanks to Peter Eerdmans for writing the weekly bird reports on the website now, and to Andre who has pushed us all to write more for the site and has led by example in his interesting blogs.

The challenge for us is always finding members who - as well as having excellent ideas - are also willing to take them actively forward so that things really happen.

The online ‘Birds of Kent’ will help further to engage with and attract new members. Brendan Ryan gave a brief update. Birds of Kent has been on agenda for many years and is now really being actioned. We have created a specification and appointed to consultant to develop and design a template. Once done, we can drop in all our data for all species recorded in Kent. We are particularly pleased it will include a photo gallery, so we can connect more with bird photographers around the county. We are hopeful we can go live with a first version this year.

Chris thanked the committee for their good humour, enthusiasm, ideas, and their patience and willingness to do stuff for KOS.

6. Minutes of the 73rd AGM (30th April 2024)

The Minutes of last year’s AGM were approved.

7. Election of officers.

The meeting confirmed the following as officers of the Society for the next year:

Nominations for Officers and Committee Members:	
President:	Chris Cox
Chairman:	Andre Farrar



Vice Chairman:	Chris Roome
Hon. Secretary:	Peter Eerdmans
Hon. Treasurer:	Gary Howard
Deputy Treasurer:	Mike Henty
Membership Secretary:	Chris Roome
Chairman of Editorial & Records Sub-Committee:	Barry Wright
Chairman of Conservation & Survey's Sub-Committee:	Murray Orchard
Editor of Kent Bird Report	Keith Privett
Archivist:	Robin Mace
Ordinary Member:	Martin Collins
Other Officers	
KOS News Editor	Norman McCanch
Outdoor meeting Organiser	Ray O'Reilly

8. Update to the Society's Rules for approval

The rules were updated primarily to reflect the greater use of virtual meetings. The new rules were approved and will be added to the KOS website.

9. Any other Business

There was no other business and Andre Farrar closed the meeting.