



# Kent Ornithological Society

## Minutes of the 75<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting

Held 7.30pm on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2025 (via Zoom). Attended by 41 members of the Society

### 1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Barry Wright, Eugene Hood, Janet Morgan, Trevor Merrington, Paul Moon, Robin Mace, Fiona G

### 2. President's address

Chris Cox opened the meeting, joining us from Spain so he started reporting on some very nice migratory sightings. He congratulated the KOS on another successful year. Chris thanked Mike Henty for all his contributions as Treasurer. Thanks also went out to Martin Collins who stepped down from the Executive Committee, but still remains very much involved at sub-committee level.

Chris highlighted the upcoming BTO Atlas (2027-2031), which is a huge project and will need support from many members. Chris reminded us how rewarding surveying can be, to go out to a square you know well, or one you have never visited before and try to find as many birds as you can. KOS has always had a significant contribution to the BTO Atlas, so Chris offered his hope we can continue this for the next one.

Chris thanked all the members who contribute to the society with bird records.

### 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. We have a good level of membership, but we would love to grow and do more for birds and birding in Kent.

Andre went on to say that his main agenda is for more people to step up for KOS. We have many roles where people can help, for instance organising events, writing for the KBR or conducting surveying work, especially with the BTO Atlas around the corner.

Andre highlighted some changes in the Executive Committee. Mike Henty and Gary Howard have used this year to organise a smooth handover of the Treasurer function. After looking for some time, we have now been lucky to find not one, but two new archivists, Gerry Thomas and Craig Sammels. Robin Mace is overseeing this crucial hand over in the coming year. The final change has been Martin Collins stepping down from the Executive Committee due to time constraints, but he has stayed a very active member of the Engagement Committee.

Andre also mentioned that Chris Roome is stepping down as chair of the Engagement Committee (but thankfully staying on as member), so the coming year we need to organise a succession plan.



Andre highlighted the successful KOS days at Dungeness, which are a very nice way to connect with members. The next one will be on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May. We also continue with our Kent Migration day in September, supported by Sandwich Bay, Dungeness RSPB, Samphire Hoe and others.

We are trying to increase our media exposure. Andre has been interviewed for some newspapers and has been on a radio show recently.

Andre thanked Keith and the team for producing yet another excellent KBR. We have changed the printer, without any hiccups.

The KOS continues to be involved in conservation, eg around the Broad Oak reservoir being developed, giving our views on any potential issues, but importantly also to help create a nature reserve within the reservoir.

Peter Eerdmans added a little bit of detail on the online Birds of Kent being developed. We are currently busy to create a website with for all bird species in Kent a species account giving a summary of the species status, current and historic, in Kent. It will show photos for each species, winter and breeding atlas maps, historic records for rarities and WeBS counts tables. We hope to allow members to suggest edits and upload photos. We are currently in the process of writing the species accounts and finding photos. We hope to go live around the turn of the year.

#### **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 £91, while we now receive over £1,200 from gift aid, with more members signing up to this scheme. Due to slightly lower interest rates, interest income is a bit lower at £1,386. We continue to receive modest income from clothing sales.

In terms of expenditures, the KBR expenditure was less than last year at £7,000, partly thanks to a change of printer (and thinner paper). This and an overprovision for earlier KBRs led to an impressive £7,094 windfall. Website expenses are higher than in 2024 at £3,677 as we needed to do a website upgrade and have started work on the online Bird of Kent. Sundry Expenditure was £1,369, which was predominately a payment to the BTO to analyse our Nightingale data, plus we bought a nice print for Andrew Henderson as thank you for all the work he has done. Depreciation of £742 represents one-third of the cost of the acoustic recorders purchased last year. The rest of the expenditures were very similar to 2025.

Overall, this gave us a significant surplus of £6,228.

The balance sheet remained very healthy, with total reserves of £41,696.

Keith Ellis has not yet been able to audit the accounts, but this will be organised in coming weeks. 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 remains the same, and thanks goes out to all the members. The Archivists (Robin, Gerry and Craig) are very important for the Committee and thanks was expressed. And Andre thanked all people contributing records. Barry continues to lead the liaison with the BBRC.

Keith Privett added that the 2024 KBR is well underway with significant portion of writers having submitted their accounts, hoping to publish by the end of August. We have a few new writers this year, there are 16 in total now. We can still do with more, would be great if we could get to 10 species per writer.

### Conservation and Surveys Sub-Committee

Murray Orchard described the work during the last year of the conservation and surveys committee. He started with a brief description of the function of the committee split over three streams, Developments, Conservation and Monitoring/Surveys. The RSPB and KWT are permanently represented and in 2025 we also worked with KCC (LNRS) and NE (Nightingale Projects)

The Committee met twice in 2025. John Young left the committee while Hayley Taylor from Birdwise and Jonathan Dodds joined.

Murray described the major development threats that are ongoing are large scale housing at Lodge Hill; uncertainty over future of Old Park at Canterbury; National Grid power cables and converter station/pylons at Minster Marshes and huge solar farm on Walland Marshes. Kent is under great pressure!

He then focused on the conservation projects. The Shellness project (Brian Watmough and Birdwise) is ongoing to monitor and protect Ringed Plover and Little Tern. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) launched on Nov 28th. KOS has supported this with indicating priority bird species. And the third key development was the launch of the New Kent NNR (North Kent Woodlands and Downs) which launched on March 28th. KOS supported this with bird data.

There were several successful surveys in 2025:

- BTO Heathland Bird Survey
- KOS Lesser Spotted Woodpecker survey (thanks to Heather Mathieson and team)
- BTO Winter Bird Survey (from Sep 25-Feb 26)
- Thanet Fulmar survey (thanks to Stuart Harris)
- Ongoing BBS & WeBS surveys (thanks to Bob Knight for BBS and the Local Organisers for WeBS).

The Kent Rare Breeding Bird reports were submitted for 2023 and are being submitted for 2024 (thanks to Dave Smith).



Murray concluded by mentioning the forthcoming National Bird Atlas 2027-31 which will need support of all in Kent, as we are intending to extend coverage for Kent breeding and winter atlases. This will eventually provide updated distribution maps for forthcoming online BoK. Existing maps will otherwise be 20 years old! Everything above relies on data, and that means people submitting records! Murray thanked all that contributed over 2025.

### **Membership Secretary's report**

Chris Roome indicated that current membership is stabilising in the high 700s. The goal remains to grow this number so we can do more.

A special thanks goes out to Mike Henty, as he has helped so much with the payment side of the membership work.

### **Engagement Sub-Committee Report 2025/6**

Chris Roome gave an overview of the activities of the Engagement Sub-Committee. The Committee has met three times since the last AGM. The Membership Secretary (And Vice Chair of KOS) has acted as Chair of the Committee since its inception in 2024.

The Committee seeks to further effective engagement with the public at large about the work of KOS; to inform and enhance our conservation message; to raise the visibility of the society in general, using all available forms of media as well as increasing membership. An Under 25s section of KOS has been created, but more needs to be done in this area to encourage younger members to get involved with the society. Two of our younger members, James King and Ravi Grewal, have won the UK Young Birder of the Year award in recent years at the Spurn Mig Fest.

Chris highlighted a number of KOS activities that took place during the course of the last year; 2 Dungeness Open days hosted by the society, as well as the all-county Migration Day in late September 2025 – the second time this event took place. It is planned again for September this year. We also ran a successful programme of online Winter Talks in 2025/6. A very popular programme of KOS walks has been delivered regularly throughout the year thanks to the energy and enthusiasm of Ray O'Riley.

The Engagement Committee has been involved with both the organisation and the active delivery of some of these events, especially the open days and the Migration Day, and has - to a lesser extent - reported on them afterwards.

The creation of the committee has proved to be a helpful and valuable extension of the society's activities, but there is now a need to clarify its exact purposes, and to strengthen and enlarge its membership.

The committee will need a new chair too as Chris Roome is stepping down from the role but wishes to remain as a member of the committee. Further detailed discussion as to the committee's future role, its core purpose and effectiveness will hopefully be discussed and implemented in the coming



year. Chris made an appeal for people to join this Engagement Committee, either as chair, general member, or focused on developing the younger membership of the KOS.

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

**6. Minutes of the 74<sup>th</sup> AGM (30<sup>th</sup> April 2025)**

The Minutes of last year's AGM were approved.

**7. Election of officers, including change of Archivist**

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

<b>Officers and Committee Members:</b>	
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:	Gerry Thomas
Archivist:	Craig Sammels
Other Officers	
KOS News Editor	Norman McCanch
Outdoor meeting Organiser	Ray O'Reilly

**8. Any other Business**

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