

CAMBRIDGESHIRE BIRD CLUB
CHAIR'S REPORT

Presented to the Annual General Meeting on March 11th 2016

I've been asked to keep this report short so that we can move to the speaker as quickly as possible! Therefore, I have kept mention of names as limited as I can, but rest assured I am extremely grateful to all those who have helped running the club in any way over the year.

Council had two main changes during 2015, firstly a new Membership Secretary replaced Bruce Martin, and Clive Sinclair has settled in well to the new role. Clive has introduced some technological innovations to help smooth the operation, both on the membership side and also tying in with the Treasurer's role; Roger Swain and Clive now have shared access to an online membership database which allows the two to check who's paid and how much. The list can be edited by these two officers, and may also be viewed by Bulletin editors and the Chair, allowing, I hope, better contact with our members. Secondly, Andrew Tongue stepped down as Research Officer, in order to pursue a PhD at Birmingham University. His main contribution during his tenure was the 3-counties Corn Bunting survey which appeared in the 2014 Annual Report. Rob Pople has stepped in to the role and is planning exciting investigations into Turtle Doves for 2016.

Other Council members have remained on the team and are warmly thanked for their hard work and support of the Club's activities.

We note the passing of long serving and distinguished member, John Parslow, who had expressed a wish for no obituaries to be published.

The biggest aspect of the Clubs work is production of the Annual Report, which begins with members and others recording and submitting information on our birds. 2015 itself lacked any rarity highlights, but the 2014 Report included details of a county first, two county seconds and a very strong supporting cast. Ironing out all the fine details of a busy year took longer than hoped, and the publication finally found it's way to members in early February 2016 but has largely met with praise once again; although I edit the report, there is an enormous amount of work from other participants with whom the credit is shared. Council has worked on a revised timetable to improve the speed with which reports are produced, aiming to consistently produce reports before the end of the following year.

Other seemingly routine aspects of the club's activities, such as these Indoor Meetings, maintaining the Website, producing Bulletins, running Field Trips, and adjudicating on Rare Birds have all continued without much outward fuss, but with a lot of time and attention spent on them by the various officers and volunteers involved; many thanks to all concerned.

The main new initiative that has been brought in during 2015 is the formation of a small band of members to act as a local Rare Breeding Bird group. We are trying to improve the recording of nesting attempts by species under this category, to enhance the reporting that the club undertakes to the national RBBP and, where appropriate, to help improve the safeguarding of this particularly sensitive group of species. A conference is being planned for 2016 to focus on various aspects of this.

2015 was also the year of the Spotted Flycatcher breeding survey. Originally planned by Andrew Tongue, Michael Holdsworth and the Research Committee, Michael took over running it and resulted in finding and monitoring a good number of nests.

Finally, a call for more membership participation in activities. In particular, we would like to have additional council members to deputise for standing officers, such as a Vice-Chair and assistant editor for the Annual Report. Membership is strong at about 350 or so, but we would like to see more involvement and recruitment of younger members and students. Anyone with ideas on how to increase this aspect of our membership is particularly sought.