



Cambridge Conservation Forum

Minutes of Council meeting Wednesday 1st May 2019

Present ¹

Humphrey Crick (Natural England)

Judith Schleicher

Roger Mitchell (ARCT, ARC-ESL, RSB)

Josie Chambers (Dept of Geography)

Keri Russell

Chair

Vice Chair

Treasurer

Membership Secretary

Website manager

Louise Bacon (Cambridge Bird Club)

Richard Barnes (Knysna Basin Project)

Chris Bowden (Freelance – non-voting)

Alice Bücken (FFI)

Pete Carey (Dept. of Plant Sciences)

Lydia Collas (Dept. of Zoology)

Edward Darling (Redlist Revival)

Lizzie Duthie (FFI – non-voting)

Laura Friedrich (UNEP-WCMC)

Sam Gregory (FFI, CCF GIS group – non-voting)

Julia Grosse (CCF/ CCI – non-voting)

Joshua Harris (CU Nature Soc)

Roger Ingle (UNEP-WCMC – non-voting)

Toby Jackson

Vince Lea (CRT)

Jeremy Lindsell (A Rocha)

David Noble (BTO)

Jeremy Payne

Peter Pilbeam (Cambridgeshire Mammal Group)

Kit Stoner (Bat Conservation Trust)

Stephen Tomkins (Kingfishers Bridge)

Aunald Topling (CPARG)

Keith Virgo (TAA)

Angelika von Heimendahl (Cam Cattle)

Sue Wells (CCF marine group – non-voting)

¹ Organisational voting representatives are indicated in parentheses

Apologies

Nigel Cooper (Diocese of Ely), Monica Frisch (CNHS), David Gowing (OU), Pippa Heylings (Talking Transformation), Francine Hughes (ARU- retiring from post), Kevin Hughes (BAS), Annette Lanjouw (Arcus), Martin Lester (NT Wicken Fen), Dominic Lewis (CUP), Glen Mulleady (Cambridge PPF), Teresa Mulliken (TRAFFIC), Mark Nokkert (Cambs ACRE), Katy Scholfield (Synchronicity Earth), Thomas Starnes (RSPB)

1. Introduction (Humphrey Crick, HC)

HC introduced the committee, and those present introduced themselves and the organisational 'voting' members indicated which organisations they represented.

HC gave a brief overview of recent and upcoming events (see Annex 5)

2. Minutes of the previous meeting 27th November 2018 (Annex 1)

Actions from previous meeting:

- Tom Starnes has circulated information about room booking in DAB and issues have been resolved
- Work to produce a new CCF strategy still needs to be planned
- CCF member events will have support from Julia Grosse in future; organisation of a programme of joint events to be arranged
- The new constitution has now been published on the website

Points arising from the minutes:

- Roger Mitchell (RM) requested that the reference to him in the explanation of Rewilding Conference fees in item 3 was removed as he did not contribute to this discussion
- **RM** explained that the Great Ouse Valley and Washes AONB group has been disbanded but had become part of the new Great Ouse Valley Trust (GOVT). RM had spoken to a trustee of GOVT, who had expressed an interest in them joining CCF in the future.
- Peter Pilbeam pointed out that Cambridge Mammal Group should read Cambridgeshire Mammal Group
- Laura Friedrich pointed out that all references to UNEP-WCMC should be in full (not WCMC/ UNEP)
- Lizzie Duthie remarked that the vote on the new logo cannot have been unanimous as it is still under discussion.
 - **ACTION: HC to amend minutes accordingly and post on website**
 - **Action Completed**

Subject to these amendments, the minutes were proposed by Peter Pilbeam, seconded by Edward Darling and approved unanimously.

3. Treasurer's Report

RM briefly reminded council of the role & responsibilities of a treasurer i.e. to maintain an overview of the organisation's affairs, ensure its financial viability and ensure that proper financial records and procedures are maintained.

He explained the current position of CCF as an un-incorporated association:-

- As CCF has never become a Charity, Community Interest Company or similar, it is an Unincorporated Association. This is not strictly a legal entity but recognised in case law.
- As an Unincorporated Organisation, individual organisational members are personally responsible for any debts and contractual obligations. Also, individual members of committees can be held liable for contracts entered into on behalf of CCF.
- However, CCF has now taken out Public and Trustee Liability Insurance, and Professional Indemnity Insurance, effective from 01-May-2019 to 28-Apr-2020.
 - **ACTION: RM to publish policy schedule on CCF website**
 - **Action completed (published in the reports section)**

RM gave an overview of accounts (**see Annex 2**). As CCF had received more than £5K in one year, as an Unincorporated Organisation, it may have to register with HMRC and may be liable for corporation tax. He explained that if CCF become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) they would not be liable for tax on income so long as it is spent on the purposes of the charity and he recommended this course of action, given that in the past CCF has approved this. Regarding the potential receipt of the £11k+ from CZ, **RM** explained that it appeared legally feasible for a third-party charity to receive and hold this on CCF's behalf. He had explored this with his own charity, ARCT, but they were unwilling to do this without more assurance on the proposed action. **RM** thought that we might approach other appropriate organisational members of CCF and CCI too.

RM would, as appropriate, contact HMRC and explore options regarding tax payments for this year.

HC also suggested an option which he has raised informally with some of CCI council whereby CCF becomes a part of CCI for organisational purposes, with the benefits of receiving support from the EDO. **RM** was disappointed this had not been raised with committee first as this had previously been the subject of a long discussion between CCF and CCI, and which had been reported to CCF Council, but put on hold. **HC** explained that it was something the committee could discuss again if CCI raised no objections.

Richard Barnes asked if the council members could have a summary of all options so that they could consider this and revisit at the next meeting; Louise Bacon agreed this was a good idea. Josie Chambers (**JC**) suggested a working group to explore this. Kit Stoner, Pete Carey and Edward Darling all expressed willingness to be part of such a group.

- **ACTION: RM to set up a working group to set out the pros and cons of the options available.**
 - **Completed**

The Treasurer's Report was proposed by Keith Virgo, seconded by Kit Stoner and passed unanimously.

4. Logo

Roger Ingle and JC gave an overview and background to the various iterations of the new logo. Roger suggested that a combination of the two most popular options was possible and he would produce a new logo taking this into account. Council were asked to email Roger Ingle (via Julia Grosse) if they knew of any existing logos which were similar to those proposed in order to avoid confusion.

It was suggested that a communications group should be set up and Keith Virgo, Lizzie Duthie, RM, Chris Bowden and Keri Russell expressed an interest in such a group.

- ACTION: KR to arrange for communications group to be advertised and set up

Council thanked Roger for all his hard work and time spent developing the logo.

5. Organisational matters

HC gave a brief overview of Julia's role and council welcomed her to CCF. The role description can be found in **Annex 3**; any questions or suggestions can be emailed to the committee.

HC reported that Angelika has resigned as secretary and Josie will be moving away later this year, meaning the posts of secretary and membership coordinator are available. Hannah Lintott, the social secretary, has not been very active within CCF recently (she resigned shortly after the Council meeting because she is moving to a new job away from Cambridge); Laura Friedrich reported that she may have a volunteer who could help with this.

David Noble asked for clarification of the make-up of the committee and whether there was still a distinction between executive committee and committee. Judith Schleicher (JS) explained that the definition of the committee had expanded to encompass membership, website and social coordinators.

RM requested that the constitution was checked to ensure it reflected this situation.

- ACTION: HC to check current constitution
 - HC reports that the Constitution, clause 12.1 and 13.2, describes that there is a Committee, as described by JS, but also a smaller Executive Committee of chair, Vice-chair and Treasurer that can act in a more agile manner, where decisions need to be taken quickly or to avoid burdening the full Committee.
- ACTION: Julia to follow up volunteer offer with Laura
 - Completed

6. Rewilding Conference

HC reported that this was a successful event, with an excellent programme of speakers and good attendance (see report in **Annex 4**). However, issues arising from the lack of clarity set at the beginning, to define the exact roles of CCF and its member, Citizen Zoo (CZ), who offered to provide financial administration, and organisational support for the conference. As a result, there was a fundamental

misunderstanding of roles – with CZ under the impression that they were solely responsible for the delivery of the conference, whereas CCF understood that it would be very much jointly organised, but with CZ handling the finances. This confusion over roles has proved extremely difficult and time consuming to resolve. **HC** handed over to Angelika von Heimendahl (**AvH**) to explain her views.

AvH described how she had worked hard to get the conference off the ground. She was sorry that CZ were not present. As a farmer herself, she wanted to involve the farming and land-owning communities in the event. Although initially working well with CZ, she became increasingly concerned because of the control that CZ took over the handling of the conference. For example CZ changed the passwords of the website which had been designed by CCF member Flora Tiley and the Eventbrite account, so that CCF could not access these. (Subsequently the website was deleted by CZ without consulting CCF). A couple of months before the conference, **AvH** involved **HC** to try to mediate with CZ, but she felt that many of the outstanding issues remain unresolved. In particular she is concerned about the lack of transparency in the finances and feels that CCF ought to be shown how much money was raised by the conference by the provision of a screen shot showing the final Eventbrite accounts. Citizen Zoo have offered a sum of £11.5K to settle the matter but **AvH** felt strongly that CCF should not accept this without having a full and clear reporting of accounts from CZ. **AvH** stated that if matters were not resolved satisfactorily then she would seek reimbursement for her services to the symposium.

There followed a lengthy discussion of matters arising from these reports and some votes on the way forward.

In summary, council agreed to accept the offer of £11.5K dependent on receipt of a screenshot or similar as record of ticket sales on Eventbrite. RM suggested that if issues persisted with CZ, then the ultimate arbiter might be the Regulator for Community Interest Companies.

- **ACTION: HC to make request to Citizen Zoo for Eventbrite information in the form of a motion tabled by the council, and communicate the acceptance of the money offer on condition of receipt of this information.**

In conclusion, **HC** expressed regret that the excellent conference had been overshadowed by the financial and organisational issues, but felt sure it would be resolved satisfactorily for all.

7. Website

It was confirmed that work to develop a new website will begin as soon as possible; Keri Russell will initially liaise with Flora Tiley on this.

- **ACTION: Keri to update committee on progress after the end of June**

8. Library Committee

Jeremy Lindsell (JL) conducted a brief survey on use of the Leventis Library on behalf of the library committee. The library is moderately well used by the members for advice, space (hotdesk) and reading materials. Lizzie Sparrow, the librarian also offers training in a variety of skills such as information management, referencing and data management. Many were unaware of this, so it was suggested that opportunities to attend this training are more widely advertised in the newsletter and website.

- ACTION: JG (in liaison with JL) to approach Lizzie for information about the training sessions, and to ask if her slides can be linked from CCF website
- ACTION: Library group to share the slides and survey as an annex (JG to check with JL)

The council thanked Jeremy for his work on the library group.

Date of next meeting to be arranged.

HC closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance