

From the 1st of August 2022 a new era will begin for the Dorset Bird Club (DBC) and the Christchurch Harbour Ornithological Group (CHOG) with the beginning of a joint venture in helping to inspire the next generation of birdwatchers and wildlife enthusiasts with the release of our free <25s joint membership.

Over the past few months CHOG and DBC have been working with the Dorset branch of the BTO Youth team in order to devise a plan on how to increase their engagement with young people in the county and how to get over some of the barriers that currently exist to young people getting involved.

The first barrier that we are addressing is the cost that bird watching and membership has associated with it. In order to help with this, we are pleased to say that we are removing the fee of joining the bird club to those under the age of 25.

The second barrier that we are addressing is the need for targeted youth only events and we have already seen the huge potential that these can have by running events alongside the BTO Youth Team with recent successful trips to Poole Park & Baiter Park, Portland and the Weymouth Wetlands with a total of around 25 young people joining us for these events. This is just the start and we are hoping to run different types of events in the future in collaboration with different organisations, such as Birds of Poole Harbour and the Dorset Wildlife Trust. With talks, walks and BioBlitzes in the pipeline. All these events will help to increase the representation of young people across the bird clubs and help us create a more welcoming environment, while encouraging our young members to help us shape our events and membership so that they get the most from their experience.

So, what would be the benefit of joining as a young member of the bird clubs? You will get a free pdf copy of the bird reports, access to the current list of events run by the bird clubs, as well as newsletters and information about the upcoming BTO Youth events. As well as the chance to be a part of the Dorset Young Birders community.

We look forward to seeing this exciting initiative grow and hope to see a positive outcome from this joint venture.

Samuel Levy  
BTO Dorset Youth Team