

SACWG annual Public MEETING, All Stretton Village Hall, 25/02/20

Committee Members present: S Butler (chair), H Hathaway (secretary) L. Smith, J Bacon, I Carter, P Bienz. Andy Perry. John Baines (webmaster) and Will Priestly (Treasurer)

1 Apologies: John Bent and John Arnfield

2 Welcome: Steve Butler welcomed everyone, 27 people attended.

3 Minutes of the 2019 APM had been circulated and were approved by the meeting and signed, proposed by Mike Carter and seconded by Sandra Whitlock

4 There were no matters arising

5 Treasurer's Report: presented by Will Priestly. Please see attached. Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Isabel Carter and seconded by Andy Perry. All in favour.

6 Project Reports:

- **Butterflies** presented by Heather Hathaway. 2019 had been a very difficult year weather wise with extremes of wet and heat. However, the butterfly count had been very good, with more sightings of Brimstone and particularly Painted Lady. There is concern for overwintering butterflies in this very wet winter.
- **Stretton Wetlands** presented by Isabel Carter. It has been a quieter year. The Tree Group has done a survey. The board walk has been "wired" by the 3 ps as it had become slippery. The Mammal Society had found definite signs of Water Vole, holes, footprints and droppings. An Otter had been spotted. Bioblitz on 25/06/20 to which everyone is welcome which may be extended over 2 days.
- **Crayfish** presented by Steve Butler. He has done extensive work on the Cound Brook to find the White-clawed Crayfish which is threatened by the incursion of the Red-Clawed Crayfish which is more aggressive and carries disease, to which our native Crayfish is vulnerable. He had found no evidence of the presence of the Crayfish either torching at night and with accredited trapping, but had observed plenty of other wildlife
- **Grouse** presented by Leo Smith. Surveys had been carried out on the Long Mynd since 2011 for this amber listed bird. 54 territorial males had been recorded a drop in numbers since the year before of 10. This year's survey will be especially important because of the Heather dieback. Volunteers needed.
- **Lapwing and Curlew** presented by Leo Smith. This had been well supported, identifying 5-8 pairs of nesting Curlew and 5-7 pairs of nesting Lapwing. Work will be carried out to protect nesting areas, radio tagging chicks and ringing the young. 10 CWGs are involved in surveying Curlews finding 94-115 Curlews in Shropshire. The survey is to be repeated this year with a meeting in the Methodist hall on 17th March to organise tetrads.

- **Swifts** presented by Julie Cowley. 29 nest sites had been recorded, one down on the previous year. Will Priestley has made Swift boxes which have been installed in 13 sites. Isabel Carter had enabled boxes to be put in the Church Tower. None of the new boxes had been occupied as yet, but Julie hopes to install “calling devices” to encourage young Swifts to nest.
- **Botanical Surveys** presented by Mike Carter. 6 sites had been surveyed for vascular plants including Stretton Westwood Quarry, Houghs Coppice, St Laurence’s Churchyard, Hoar Edge, Leamoor Common and the Wettles and Hatton Meadows identifying many species.
- **Dormice** presented by Caroline Uff. There is a good population on Wenlock Edge where a training event had taken place with Kate Price. Signs of Dormice had been found up Batch Valley and the trainees had been encouraged to look for signs in other areas. It was hoped to extend the Dormouse highways with more hedge planting.

Full details of all the surveys can be found in the Annual Report on our website www.shropscwgs.org.uk

7 New Projects.

1 Ragleth Meadows Group presented by John Bacon. Comprising a group of small meadows and fields on the eastern end of Ragleth Hill, some of which are a Local Wildlife Site and in the vicinity of the National Trust's (ungrazed) Ragleth Wood. The meadows are not grazed during the summer months to allow the wild flowers to grow, flower and seed; and also to provide food plants and a source for nectar for the butterflies and other invertebrates. Grazing starts in the autumn to remove the growth of dominant grasses, and then continues periodically through the winter to produce a short sward ready for the herbs to spread again next spring. Moribund hedges will be gapped up and managed as wildlife corridors between the meadows.

2 Dipper population monitoring and nest boxes presented by Leo Smith. Boxes would be installed in suitable sites to improve breeding success.

Both projects were adopted by the meeting

8 Bumble Bees on the Mynd presented by Debbie Viviers is a project being run under the auspices of the National Trust. Members were encouraged to go to the training and to find the elusive Bilberry Bumble bee. See bumblebeesonthemynd@gmail.com

9 Stepping Stones presented by Andy Hearle and Charlie Bell. There was a short description of the award from the Peoples Postcode Lottery of £160,000 which is being divided by 10 conservation groups to promote Wildlife Corridors. A grant had also been won from DEFRA to work with farmers to enhance connections for wildlife.

10 Sleeping projects Steve pointed out that Tree planting and maintenance was still being carried out where possible and Sandra Whitlock will carry out another

Hedgehog survey in 2021, but in the meantime anyone was welcome to borrow the hedgehog tunnels.

11 Election of Officers The following members were willing to stand again

Chairman Steve Butler
Secretary Heather Hathaway
Treasurer Will Priestly
Publicity Officer Penny Bienz
Website and Mailing List Manager John Baines
Annual Report Officer Andrew Perry
Additional Committee Member John Bacon
Additional Committee Member Isabel Carter
Additional Committee Member Leo Smith
Additional Committee Member

Mike Carter proposed the election of the existing members of the committee en bloc, seconded by Caroline Uff, approved unanimously. Steve encouraged anyone from the meeting to join the committee.

12 AOB None was raised

The meeting was closed, followed by refreshments and an opportunity to sign up for surveys.