

**WARRINGTON NATURE CONSERVATION FORUM**  
**COMMITTEE MEETING TUESDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> NOVEMBER 2017**  
**GRAPPENHALL COMMUNITY LIBRARY, 7pm**

**1. Present:** Geoff Settle (Chair) GS

Brian Martin (Treasurer) BM

Les Jones (LJ)

Rob Smith (RS)

Tony Parker (TP)

**2. Apologies:** Roger Lamming, Paul Speake, Andrew Pearson

**3. Minutes of Meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> August 2017**

Accepted as a true record apart from an item under A.O.B. stating BM is to contact Phil Jones of Stobart Forestry. This was a matter to be dealt with by another member of the Committee.

**4. Matters Arising**

**4.1** Eric Fletcher has produced overlays of wildlife sites in Warrington likely to be impacted by the proposed Local Plan.

**4.2** Swithins Hill Wood, Rixton: BM had not so far contacted the Footpaths Officer, John Thorpe, but Roger Lamming and Les Jones had recently walked to the wood to assess the current position of the footpath into the wood. This does not appear to be a problem that should concern us and John Thorpe is apparently of the view that no change in the siting of the footpath should take place. BM to discuss this with John Thorpe. **ACTION BM**

**4.3** Future Projects: As no suggestions have to date been submitted this item is to be raised again at the next Committee Meeting, and members are urged to give serious thought to what projects could be submitted for Grant Aid. **ACTION ALL**

**5. Articles for publication in Warrington Guardian**

To date five articles written by Committee members have been published and one is in reserve and is available for publication. One written by Les Jones will be postponed until next year as it is only relevant to the spring. Publication had been a little hit and miss but at least WNCF has achieved a breakthrough in getting wildlife articles in print and a few more will need to be prepared.

## **6. Annual General Meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2017**

Jenny Griggs of The Carbon Landscape team and one of her colleagues will provide the main presentation at our usual venue, Fiddlers Ferry Resource Centre.

## **7. Feedback from Birchwood Mall presentation**

Thanks to the members of the Committee who manned our stand on the day. It was regarded as a reasonably successful day, with much interest in WNCF. Nine people signed up to the Group and will be invited to attend the A.G.M on 2<sup>nd</sup> December. The impressive display material was brought to the meeting by the Chair and will be laminated to protect it. At the Committee Meeting GS also handed out compliment slips with information about WNCF, which were available to hand out on the day. Other organisations present included RIMAG, Carbon Landscape, Wildwings Birds of Prey Centre, The Friends of Birchwood Forest Park, Friends Of Gorse Covert Mounds and the Friends of Woolston Park. **Laminating ACTION BM**

## **8. Planning Issues**

The application to convert a former church in Crosfield Street (Bank Park) into apartments is still a live issue since a member of the public who lives nearby had approached BM expressing concern that bats could be present. RS has become involved in this and reported that David Bell had recently carried out a survey which concluded that there was no evidence of the presence of bats. It seems, however, that he did not survey inside the roof and RS pointed out that a survey of the roof needs to be done in the spring to be absolutely sure that bats are not using the building.

RS reported that a proposed building development in Culcheth had been brought to the attention of Parish Councillor Jackie Johnson, who has information that hedgehogs are present there.

A short discussion followed on our relationship with Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, and in particular how involved they become on planning issues. No one present has ever been contacted by GMEU since they became responsible for scrutinising planning applications. The Chair agreed to contact GMEU to discuss this and how WNCF can provide input into the process. **ACTION GS**

## **9. Treasurer's Report**

BM has been contacted once again by the Co-op Bank asking for further details of officer posts on the Committee. The WNCF Constitution includes the posts of Membership Officer and Publicity Officer; details of neither have been provided to the Bank. The Treasurer is to advise that Roger Lamming is Membership Secretary and Paul Speake is Publicity Officer. **ACTION BM**

## **10. Sightings**

In the last month there have been large movements of Pink-footed Geese and unusually Hawfinches, although few of the latter have reached Warrington.

Approaching 600 Goldcrests have been ringed at Woolston this year, the majority this autumn. Two rarer Firecrests have also been caught. Bramblings have been arriving in small numbers from Scandinavia and one that flew into a ringer's net at Woolston had been ringed at Stavanger in Norway. Numbers of winter thrushes have also begun to build up, with several hundred Redwings seen, and a flock of over 400 Fieldfares feeding on hawthorns on the bank of the Ship Canal near Rixton. In contrast, wildfowl numbers have been low.

## **11. Any Other Business**

11.1 Tony Parker asked if up-dating of Data Protection legislation will have implications for WNCF. This needs to be investigated.

11.2 Wildwings Bird of Prey Centre, Risley. RS has been informed by the owners, Carole and Ian, that recent changes to the proposed HS2 route has led to them being told by WBC that a hedgerow that Wildwings had been ordered to plant will now have to be re-sited further into their site. They are, however, still receiving much support from Paul Taylor, the site owner.

11.3 RS reported a strange incident of two Mute Swans found dead near Silver Lane Pools. The birds had been moved on at least two occasions from behind fencing from where they could not escape, but inexplicably soon after were back behind the fencing, where they were eventually found dead.

11.4 The Swift boxes for siting on St. Elphin's Church are being made and hopefully will be in place in the near future.

11.5 The 'Wildlife in Warrington' film made by Padgate College student Kris Meredith, was well received. He has given permission for it to appear on our website.

## **Next Meetings**

AGM – Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December at Fiddlers Ferry Resource Centre

Committee Meeting – to be arranged

**Brian Martin**