

Minutes of the Warrington Nature Conservation Forum AGM

Saturday 1 December

Fiddlers Ferry Power Station Education Resource Centre

Present: Geoff Settle (GS), Chair; Roger Lamming (RL), Secretary; Brian Martin (Treasurer); Tony Parker; Paul Speake; Les Jones; Rob Smith; Ian Greaves; Anne Lamming; David Steel

Apologies: Eric Fletcher

1. Welcome and introduction.

GS welcomed all to the meeting and introduced David Steel, the speaker

2. Farming and Wildlife

David gave a talk, accompanied by a visual presentation, of how he became involved in wildlife and his interest in birds from a very early age. His continuous commitment maintaining bird records on the mosses to the north of Irlam and Cadishead, has allowed him to account for the decline in bird populations and report to BTO and GMEU. He accounts for the decline on a number of economic and social changes and impacts – the rush for cheaper food, ignorance of wildlife, people's detachment from nature, stewardship crops with limited timescale and budgets, nature having to pay its way, neat and tidiness, desire to clean up derelict ground, impatience with nature and the eradication of insects. The result is a lost diversity of habitat. He proposed a number of solutions – a permanent approach to nature with the recent Michael Gove MP (DEFRA Sec. of State) hopefully reversing the trend away from short term approaches, retain untidy land eg by 'islands' in farm fields, reduced pursuit of cheap food, greater conservation effort and better use of schemes tapping into a host of grants that are available. David's passion during his talk was clearly evident and was well received and members expressed thanks for his time and effort in preparing his talk.

3. Minutes of AGM 6 Dec. 2017

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting

4. Matters Arising

The Croft Grasslands LWS was surveyed but RS has still to circulate the results
(ACTION – RS)

5. Chair's Report

GS reported that there had been a degree of success with the publication of articles in the Warrington Guardian. More will be submitted in the hope that they will be included in the paper next year. Swift boxes have now been installed at St. Elphin's Church. GS and RL raised again the issue of lack of attendance by members of the Forum at meetings or events although the comment was made that some no longer thought that it existed. Thoughts on how to re-vitalise and raise our awareness will be the subject of our next meeting.

6. Secretary's Report

RL raised the response by the Croft community to the WBC Local Plan and that it had just published the Croft Parish Plan in which raising awareness of LWSs and other countryside and green belt matters were included. Other parishes are similarly in the process of producing their parish plans. The publication of the next stage of the WBC Local Plan for consultation, in which development sites will be announced, is now expected to be March 2019.

RL also raised HS2, reporting that consultation events were held the previous week. 2 ponds at the Silver Lane Ponds LWS are likely to be lost.

7. Treasurer's Report

BM reported that the bank balance stood at £915. The generosity of the Grappenhall Community Library in not charging the WNCF for meetings was much appreciated. BM was asked to thank the Library **(ACTION – BM)**

8. Election of Members for 2019

All present agreed to remain on the committee and continue with their present roles. Eric – are happy to carry on.

9. AOB

PS requested reports on LWSs for publication on the WNCF web site. **(ACTION – ALL)**

Dates for Next Meetings in 2019

At Grapenhall Library (to be confirmed)	Tuesday 5 th March 7pm
	Tuesday 4 th June 7pm
	Tuesday 3 rd September 7pm

AGM (venue to be confirmed)	Saturday 30 th November 10am
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Minutes taken by RL.