

Dulwich Society Wildlife Group

12.7.22

Present: Peter Roseveare (Chair), Stephen Robinson, Jeff Doodson, Harry Rutherford, Sigrid Collins, Angela Wilkes, Sue Cope, Sam Taylor

Apologies: Emily Montague, Charles Newman, Glynis Williams, Dave Clark.

Minutes of meeting 5.4.22 Agreed as accurate record of the meeting.

Matters Arising:

No evidence that the little grebes bred this year.

Gallery Road Hedge:

Sigrid has collected together all the documentation from ten years ago when the hedge was planted including public information leaflet and details of liaison with Southwark and College Estate. It is not clear who is leading on this. Sigrid's folder on original work given to Peter. Peter to liaise with tree committee and executive and share this information.

Greendale:

PR has been visiting and described some of the vegetation in the undeveloped areas. There is an excess of Goats Rue which has taken over a lot of the open wild area. This is a leguminous historic garden escape but there is native Common vetch in the residual uncut grassland. The St Olave's field was unmown and unused with a monoculture of a single grass species. In Greendale there are Ox-eye Daisies, Knapweeds, Red and White Champion and Tufted Vetch planted some years ago by a local school. Stephen reported there had been encroachment the wildlife area relating to the Dulwich Hamlet project. Peter to enquire whether Friends of Dog Kennel Hill or Greendale have drawn up new proposals.

Belair:

No further information. We need further contact with the Friends Group. Ask Emily if more information.

Reports:

Stephen Robinson described some of the work he has done over the years to protect Swifts particularly when building works destroy or disturb nesting sites. He described instances where builders have been willing and anxious to protect the birds and his experience of hand rearing a swift saved by a builder. This involves two hourly insect feeds. In due course the Swift will be placed in a foster nest. Swift numbers are at risk in the UK as a result of modern building works such as fascia replacement. In East Dulwich numbers are essentially stable which is reasonably reassuring currently. SR is involved in encouraging inclusion of swift boxes in local new developments wherever feasible. Stephen left the meeting early to feed his Swift.

Sam Taylor (LWT) reported that the woods are very dry. The small artificially made pond in the glade has dried up but the Dewy pond is maintained by water inflow from the Ambrook. Although the Dewy pond is eutrophic and will need maintenance work done in near future, it is maintaining a significant amount of life including several species of dragonflies and damselflies and beetles with newts but no frogs.

AW suggested Sam might find out about Wimbledon Common drainage work done on Beverley Brook as there might be relevant overlap in needs.

Fund raising has currently reached 35K of 50K target. The Dulwich Society donated 5K which was match-funded by the Big Give in the sum of £5k (£10K in total).

Sam reported that proposals for the footbridge and oaks will be presented at a meeting in a few days time. The understanding is that the bridge can be repaired without felling the trees and that the work may commence in October this year. There will be compromises to the appearance and access to the bridge in order to preserve the trees.

Bird sightings of note: Little owls on Grange Lane. Little owl has also been seen in Dulwich Park coppice. SR reported seeing a peregrine and a red kite over his home in East Dulwich.

Harry Rutherford reported on moth trapping. Among many moths found of note he mentioned one elephant hawk moth, a scarlet tiger moth, small purple-barred moth and poplar hawk moth. He reported that there has been an influx of striped hawk moth from Spain into southern England but no sightings in Dulwich. His personal highlight has been seeing a hornet moth in the park and evidence of them in the hybrid poplars on the south circular side of the path. He described holes around the tree base from where they emerge.

PR reported seeing Commas, Speckled Woods and Meadow Browns in Sydenham Hill Woods and also a colony of Marbled Whites and Ringlets in West Norwood Cemetery.

AOB:

Promoting wider engagement with nature

Peter introduced his suggestion that we might encourage and facilitate Dulwich residents in keeping diaries of wildlife in their gardens. He circulated an email he has received from Dr Gavin Siriwardena of the BTO Head of Ecology who is coordinating research on urban wildlife. The email says "we are planning major volunteer survey of green spaces across the whole country." the aims are both to increase knowledge base about parks and gardens and species attracted but also to promote public engagement.

In the absence of detailed proposals it was agreed that further discussion should take place when Dave Clark is with us. There was discussion pros and cons of citizen science projects and recognition that a variety of projects are underway, any or all of which might be promoted. HR also said that i-record has the facility to set up local shared groups to share records. For development of proposal at next meeting.

Fake grass in gardens

The possibility of joint working of the wildlife group with the gardening group has been discussed at the executive in the recent past. Sue suggested that one area of shared work might be to jointly discourage Dulwich residents from using Astroturf/plastic grass in their gardens (notwithstanding its place in sports facilities). Those present considered this worthwhile. Peter to discuss with the gardening group chair as to whether that group would like to share in a campaign to ask people to think twice before resorting to artificial grass.

Friends of Dulwich Park Moth Event 10am July 30 at Francis Peek Centre with Steve Bolto

Date of next meeting: September 20th