

Present: Peter Roseveare (Chair), Jeff Doodson, Sue Cope, Glynis Williams, Sigrid Collins, Emily Montague

Apologies: Charles Newman, Dave Clark, Steven Robinson, Sam Taylor, Angela Wilkes

Minutes of Meeting 20.9.22 Agreed as accurate record of meeting

Matters Arising:

Gallery Road Hedge: action in spring

Greendale: Judicial review imminent and news on progress of development awaited.

Dave Clark has reported that there is no immediate plan to change management or use of St Olave's playing field. The groundsman has however left.

Belair: Dulwich College pupils have been involved in maintenance work on the pond to improve water quality.

Artificial Grass: Jeremy Prescott is continuing representation to the Dulwich Estate to discourage residents from installing artificial grass. Emily said hopefully people would understand that it is unsuitable for south facing aspects because it becomes too hot to walk on, and additionally becomes smelly and unhygienic.

Reports:

Dulwich and Sydenham Hill Woods Woods. From Sam Taylor (in absentia)

New paths have been completed. Woodcock are present in Dulwich Woods. Dead Canada Goose was found and reported to DEFRA as suspected Avian Flu. Wrinkled Peach Fungus among the interesting fungi seen recently.

Bird Report. From Dave Clark (in absentia)

On recent bird stroll in the woods Dave saw a group of over fifty Redwings well as Kestrel, Sparrowhawk, Chiffchaff and Firecrest. Additionally Common Gull are in the area for winter and Shoveler pair are again on the park lake.

Peter said that there are more Redwings this year because this year the amount of Rowan berries in Scandinavia has been less than most years.

Several of us reported seeing Blackbirds in recent days which Peter thought were probably migrants coming with the migrant Thrushes from Scandinavia like the Redwings. Native Blackbirds remain in decline mainly due to the Usutu Virus.

Parakeet numbers remain stable, partly because Jackdaws are competing for nesting holes. This should allay concerns that Parakeet numbers might rise.

Nuthatch continue to visit Sigrid's garden bird feeder.

Dulwich Park From Emily Montague

Perennial wildflowers, including Oxeye Daisies and Wild Mustard have been planted in the wildlife area to enhance the habitat for butterflies. A native hedge of sixty new whips will be planted as part of tree week along the area backing onto Court Lane Gardens where new fences have resulted in some vegetation loss. Some of the concerns about the impact of drought on the Rhododendrons has abated as there is significant new growth, However it is too early to say how much damage has been done. Expert opinion will be sought before cutting back damaged plants. A high quality mulch will be used to promote regrowth. A grant has been applied for to provide funds for much needed maintenance work on the lake. Unfortunately the timing of grant allocation will only allow a very short window of opportunity for work on the lake and environs to be done before the bird breeding season. There is a need to undertake management of the vegetation on the

island and cutting of the reed beds with overall aim of improving the water quality and biodiversity.

Chair's Report from the Executive

Brian Green is retiring from editing the Dulwich Society Magazine and a new editor is being sought. We hope there will be continuity of regular wildlife articles by Peter under the new regime. Peter outlined his strategy in preparing his articles. As well as reporting on local sightings, he endeavours to add nuggets of information that will be of wider interest such as his current inclusion about Florence Nightingale and her pet Little Owl. The article by Czech Conroy on Dulwich Park Dragonflies and Damselflies is in current magazine. The Bee article in the current issue will highlight the competition between domesticated Honey Bees and wild Bumble and Solitary Bees.

General Discussion and Other Sightings:

Starlings on Peckham and development of the Aylesham Centre

Glynis drew attention to the Peckham Heritage grant development plans and reported that she raised concerns about the potential loss of nesting space for Starlings with the architects. The architects agreed to raise this with the owners of the buildings. There is legislation to protect or replace habitat at risk being destroyed by new developments. The group discussed the decline in numbers of Starlings over recent years but agreed they are common in the supermarket car parks in Peckham.

The behaviour of Sparrows in the Eastlands Crescent colony was discussed.

The group also discussed a shared failure to see flying ants this summer. Although there was a twitter report of the flying ant phenomenon locally from the entomologist Richard Jones.

Fewer Ladybirds were seen this year. There are concerns that invertebrate numbers were negatively impacted by the drought and heat of this summer.

We again discussed the pros and cons of bird feeding and noted that availability of water in ponds or plant pot saucers is of paramount benefit to birds in hot dry conditions.

AOB

Peter asked the group to discuss ways to promote an interest in wildlife among local residents. It was agreed to request a regular slot in the e-newsletter of the Dulwich Society. The slot could be used to promote a suggested action to benefit wildlife or highlight an interesting fact or story snippet that might be likely to stimulate interest. Encouraging participation the Big Garden Birdwatch was the first suggestion, with feedback later also on what local participants had seen. Another suggested example was encouraging people to not be too tidy in clearing leaves and cutting back winter vegetation in their gardens. Other suggestions for the e-newsletter to be sent to Peter.

Date of Next Meeting: January 24 2023