

Dulwich Society Wildlife Group

24.1.23

Present: Peter Roseveare (Chair), Dave Clark, Harry Rutherford, Sigrid Collins, Glynis Williams, Jeff Doodson, Sue Cope

Apologies: Emily Montague, Angela Wilkes, Charles Newman, Sam Taylor

Minutes of Meeting 29.11.22. Agreed as an accurate record.

Matters Arising:

Greendale: Following the outcome of the judicial review the Greendale/ Dulwich Hamlet development is likely to be going ahead. There is no further information from Friends of Greendale regarding their recommendations. DC offered to contact John Best for an update on information. It is understood there is no longer a groundsman dedicated to the St Olav's sports field although there has been ground work happening on the field.

Artificial grass: The Dulwich Society Executive will be continuing to pursue discouraging use of artificial grass in gardens as it poses a wildlife and environmental threat. Dulwich Estate have been unwilling to dictate rules regarding back gardens but may object to use in front gardens.

Avian Flu: While there have been no further reports of dead birds in Dulwich or Burgess Parks, there have been dead birds in the Thames Estuary area including near Crossness. DEFRA are changing information on their website and will now only come out for three or more dead birds. Park managers have been advised to incinerate individual dead birds. The avian flu virus can survive in water of lakes i.e. outside of a host which means the progress of the avian flu epidemic is hard to predict. DC has put information on Dulwich Society website and in e-newsletter.

Chair's Report:

Wildlife Articles in Dulwich Society Magazine:

The next magazine will be Brian Green's final edition. The new co-editors will be named in near future. Peter Roseveare has written an article in every edition under Brian Green's editorship, a total of eighty articles!

Peter was congratulated on this outstanding contribution and it is hoped that the new editors will consider the precedent is set for continuing a Wildlife article in every edition. Peter shared information about some of the past articles and recurring themes. The fate of Pigeons at the claws of Sparrow Hawk being a very regular report to Peter over the years. A 2007 article by Dave Clark on encouraging garden birds might be updated and reprinted.

Sharon O'Connor is now including brief wildlife items in the e-newsletter and will be expanding some for inclusion on the website of the Society. Topics for next e-newsletter were discussed and recommendations were for cleaning bird feeders and hygiene of bird water containers. Flat bird tables need very regular cleaning to remove faeces while hanging feeders pose less risk of spreading infection. The current e-newsletter has recommendation of keeping log piles as habitat for Stag Beetle larvae.

AGM report

Peter had circulated his proposed report for the AGM and asked for feedback. Peter was commended for keeping the report brief but focussed. The report focusses on the knock on effect of loss of invertebrates and the benefits of gardening for wildlife. The AGM report carries a clear message to society members to consider adopting strategies to promote wildlife in gardens and in particular invertebrates. Dave pointed out that in addition to gardens a large amount of green space in Dulwich is taken up by the different school

sports grounds and green space. Glynis advised we should consider gardens and school fields as separate resources and for AGM focussing on gardening practices made sense. A discussion of advice for future newsletters and magazine articles followed. Regarding involving the private schools in promoting wildlife friendly policies Dave said that Dulwich College does have a strategy and that he has contact with a named staff member at JAGS but at present there is no communication with Alleyn's regarding a wildlife friendly strategy.

Wildlife Article for next magazine

Peter circulate a copy of his next article and spoke to the sighting of an interesting unusual spider *Zoropsis spinimana* in a Dulwich bathroom. Peter expressed some concern that this species might've negative impact. Sue advised that we should not jump to conclusions without evidence. Non flying species like spiders can be wind born and it may be this is an example of climate change resulting in changing distribution of a species. The changing distributions of invertebrates in particular is one of the exciting observations associated with climate change. She also said the concept of "native species" is imprecise as most so called native species were not always native. Monitoring of new species is nevertheless essential. *(post meeting info: this spider is known as False Wolf Spider in UK . it has been widespread in London since 2012 and it is now being monitored for spread beyond London)*

Dulwich Park

Funding is being sought for renovation and maintenance of the lake and rivulet. The Shovelers exhibit an interesting behaviour of swimming around the pump enjoying food churned up by the turbulence.

Woods

Daniel Greenwood told Peter that a grant application has been made to the Heritage Lottery Fund for over a million pounds for work on Dulwich Woods. Volunteer groups are currently building hedges in the woods.

Sightings

DC reported on local bird sightings. Firecrest regularly seen in Sydenham Hill Woods especially on the yews on the upper path. The Little Owl on the Oaks on Grange Lane is being seen regularly. Goldfinches are doing well but winter finches such as Siskin, Brambling and Redpoll have not been coming to Britain in previous numbers. Chaffinch are also seen less frequently and in smaller numbers than a few years ago. The Black Headed Gulls are back in Dulwich Park. Harry noted that a ringed Gull that has been an annual visitor from Norway since 2016 has not been this year. Dave pointed out that although this has been a relatively good winter for Redwing sightings, the species is red listed and numbers have been decreasing over a number off years. The return of some Blackbirds recently are probably birds coming with Redwings and Fieldfares from Scandinavia as was case with a flock of Blackbird at Rainham Marshes.

AOB

Website: Peter to invite Sharon O'Connor to next meeting to discuss Wildlife entries the website and to check Terms of Reference have been updated on the website.

Wildflower walk with Roy Vickery: After a general discussion of flora and ecology of wildlife in general Glynis offered to contact Roy Vickery to enquire whether he would be interested in doing a wildflower walk in Dulwich.

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 28th March 6pm