

Dulwich Society Wildlife Group

26.4.23

Present: Peter Roseveare (Chair), Dave Clark, Harry Rutherford, Angela Wilkes, Sigrid Collins, Glynis Williams, Sue Cope, Stephen Robinson, Emily Montague

In attendance: Sharon O'Connor (Dulwich Society website and e-newsletter), Jane Roseveare

Apologies: Jeff Doodson, Charles Newman, Sam Taylor

Minutes of Meeting 24.1.23. Agreed as an accurate record.

Matters Arising:

Greendale: No information from John Best. The ST Olave's field has been leased to Dulwich Hamlet Football Club. It is not known how the scrub area around the field is being managed and whether chemicals are being used. Glynis reported that the latest planning application requires the developers to acquire a 125 year lease on the ST Olave's site to replace the astroturf area which will be developed into the new football ground before any building can commence on the current football ground. Glynis has raised an objection to the proposal and is aware that no objection has been raised on behalf of the Dulwich Society. It is expected that the new proposals will be agreed by Southwark council.

Peter reported that there have been developments on the Velodrome site which have gone ahead with retrospective planning. Valuable scrubland which has provided a breeding habitat for a variety of bird species has been removed. The scrub was removed just within the legal time frame before breeding season and has been done to make space for an off-road cycling area and to relocate the outdoor school on the velodrome site.

Sharon suggested our group invite Penny Stern to a meeting to discuss how to identify planning applications which have implications for wildlife so that the Dulwich Society can raise objections when appropriate .

Proposed Wildflower Walk: It was agreed that we would ask Roy Vickery to lead a wildflower walk at Greendale. Glynis to approach Roy Vickery. Peter to liaise with Chris Rowse of Friends of Greendale about this plan.

Avian Flu: No further local reports although one Canada Goose found dead in the park a week ago but cause of death unknown.

Wildlife Group input to Website and e-Newsletter:

Sharon was welcomed to the meeting and thanked for her support. Sharon has helpfully been including items about wildlife into every e-newsletter and will continue to do so. She reported that the website pages do get a significant number of views and has encouraged all of the society's committees to provide contributions for the website and in particular photographs. Photographs for the website and the journal should ideally be taken by us to ensure they are not subject to licensing fees. In addition to the website and e-newsletter, the journal, the notice board in the Village and YouTube are other ways of communicating with the wider Dulwich Society membership. While the Journal has developed a particular focus on local history, the wildlife articles by Peter will continue to be a feature and the new editorship due are interested in widening the focus of the journal and would be open to more wildlife and ecology contributions.

It is hoped that Sharon will take up the invitation to attend future meetings of the wildlife group. There was discussion around pictures and subjects that might be included on website. Topics covered included Dave suggesting using the media channels to lobby against the use of artificial grass; Harry's eleven minute video from trail cam footage; raising the awareness of importance of invertebrates.

Photographs and items for inclusion in the website or e-newsletter can be sent to Sharon at media@dulwichsociety.com. If members of the committee would like Sharon's personal email or phone contact she has indicated that Peter can forward this information.

Sightings and Reports:

Stephen told us about photographing the foxes on the St Olave's field. He has seen Sedge Warblers and a female Redstart in Burgess Park. He said we should be on the lookout for the return of the Swifts in near future but the local House Martin population has plummeted in recent years, so we are less likely to see House Martins.

Dave reported that Firecrests are still in the woods and Ravens have also been seen, which is an encouraging new development.

A Red Kite was seen over Dog Kennel Hill.

Harry has seen Redpoll in Dulwich Park and Siskin on his trail camera in his Village garden. The sightings of these winter finches is also very encouraging for local diversity.

The cold weather has not been good for seeing lepidoptera and Harry has not had much success with the moth traps yet this year. He has however been using pheromone traps to look for moth species not attracted to light. Two species of note mentioned were Spring Usher Moth and *Pammene giganteana*. The latter was lured to a pheromone trap commercially available for catching Coddling Moth.

Butterflies sighted so far this year have been Brimstones, Orange tips and Holly Blues.

Dulwich Park (Emily): After successful grant bids up to ten thousand pounds will be available to spend on improving the lake biodiversity. Emily is seeking contacts for advice on specific work recommended and will follow up contacting Daniel Greenwood as well as WWT and RSPB. A survey was done by a company recommended by WWT in 2019 and the findings from then are likely to still be relevant. The outlet from the lake needs to be lowered as the outflow is only adequate to control duckweed after high rainfall. The reeds will need managing by staggering areas being cut.

Sadly only one of the Egyptian Geese ducklings survived predation. Survival of young is better when there are more adults to protect offspring in a shared way. A single pair of Egyptian Geese are less likely to succeed raising a full brood.

Mallard numbers are down in Dulwich but this may reflect a more general fall in mallard numbers on inland waterways compared to areas nearer coasts.

General Discussion:

Peter shared his next article for the Dulwich Society magazine. The observations about Blackbirds being seen locally in the Big Garden Birdwatch was discussed. After the fall in numbers of Blackbirds over the last summer (probably related to the Usutu virus and also to difficulty getting enough food because of hard dry ground) the numbers are bouncing back and Blackbirds can be heard singing again this year.

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 27.6.23