

# Lavell's Wetland Trust (LWT) AGM Newsletter 2020

## Notice of Annual General Meeting

Welcome everyone to LWT's 2nd AGM newsletter, notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of Lavell's Wetland Trust is to be held via zoom on 22 September 2020 at 7.30pm. A link to join the meeting will be sent a few days beforehand. Please would you email [secretary@lavells.org.uk](mailto:secretary@lavells.org.uk) if you plan to attend, saying how your name will appear on your zoom login, as we need to record attendees at the meeting.

## Agenda for AGM

### 1) Apologies for absence

2) **Minutes** – for approval - The minutes of AGM held 18 June 2019 are available on the LWT website <http://lavells.org.uk/about-lwt/agm-minutes-and-reports/>

### 3) **Reports:**

a) Treasurer – Phil Kinch: Year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019

b) Membership – Les Blundell

c) Countryside Service Ranger Report – Simon Bartlam

#### i. **Management Tasks – many tasks are being caught up on due to Covid-19**

Hay/Grass cutting Teal & Tern Meadows and grazing are planned for late August Ride Management at the back of Lavell's and main island planned for late August Like LWT we plan to adopt a larger scale reed cutting programme in the coming 1-3 years. Tree management – Felling and 'pruning' will increase in the Autumn, Southern Electric will be back late 2020, or 2021 to once again cut the trees under the wires running parallel with Sandford Lane

#### ii. **General Rangering**

General work including cutting back path vegetation, Litter picking – post lockdown a significant increase in littering has been experienced across DPCS park areas, additionally swimming and illegal bar-b-q's have also had to be stopped. Much fly-tipping is typically in the laybys and this is now a highways issue, report an incident at

<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/roadworks-and-outdoor-maintenance/report-a-problem-with-roads-and-streets/fly-tipping/>

Lavell's car park is opened on an ad-hoc basis until such time as the DAC rebuilding plans are passed. Hide vandalism has dropped this year, no doubt due to them being boarded up during lockdown, boundary/site inspection & make safe dangerous trees

#### iii. **Volunteer involvement**

All volunteer group activities were postponed during lockdown, some have resumed, as always thanks go to the members of LWT for all their hard work.

### 4) **Election of Officers & Committee - Officers standing down/re-election**

LWT's constitution requires a third of the trustees to retire at each AGM. The following trustees will retire and are standing for re-election;

- Les Blundell [elected in June 2019]
- Angel Gunn [appointed secretary in September 2019]
- Renton Righelato [elected in June 2019]

## Notes

1. **The present officers & committee;** Chair – Jane Campbell, Secretary – Angela Gunn, Treasurer – Phil Kinch, Chief Visionary Officer – Fraser Cottingham, Les Blundell, Ron Bryant, Renton Righelato. Committee, Bob Bennett, Peter Scudamore
2. There may be a vacancy for a treasurer in the coming year. Are you able to help?

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3. ***Nominations for new officers or committee:*** *In these unprecedented times it is preferable for nominations to be emailed to [secretary@lavells.org.uk](mailto:secretary@lavells.org.uk) Postal members who do not have access to email should telephone 01189669584.*
4. **If subscriptions are in arrears, members are not entitled to vote at the AGM**

### **5) Chair's Report : Jane Campbell**

2020 has been a challenging year for everyone with flooding from the start followed by lockdown with everything closed. LWT like so many adopted a 'virtual meeting' approach and this has worked well, leading to the likelihood of interim shorter virtual meetings as the way forward to improve efficiency and speed up decision making. We have much to catch up on as well as to oversee our much-anticipated Network Rail funded conservation project. Having had no work parties from January through to July, but are extremely grateful for the many who turned out to get the site ready outside normal Sunday volunteer days.

A considerable benefit of the Lea farm project is that two LWT people will be trained for chainsaw use, meaning we are less dependent on the Countryside Service so reducing the pressure on them. As always we are indebted to Simon Bartlam who on top of everything he always does, has been incredibly helpful with preparing Lea Farm Lake for the excavations and getting the all-important Crassula spraying done. Thanks must also go to Summerleaze Ltd, in particular Ken Swan.

LWT's committee has worked hard and deserves my thanks. Angela Gunn has taken over as an extremely efficient secretary; Les Blundell and Phil Kinch have once again managed our members and finances superbly; Renton Righelato's huge knowledge of conservation has been invaluable in getting our projects going; Bob Bennett has published the latest bird news and photographs, Peter Scudamore has led our bird walks and many work parties; Ron Bryant is always there with practical skills and Fraser Cottington continues to inspire both the committee and our members with his enthusiasm and constant striving to do great things.

Fraser has decided it makes more sense to produce an annual bird report in January, so that our members can read about the whole year, rather than an interim report. With the website, WhatsApp group and Facebook pages, it is fair to say everyone can see what is going on currently very easily.

#### **i. Habitat Management, Work Parties & Events - Achievements**

- Ron & Alan serviced the rafts again, all Black-headed Gulls on one, the second had over 20 pairs of Common Terns, producing around 30 chicks
- DPCS finished the Stock proof fencing LWT began and did an excellent job of Middle Marsh
- Peter Scudamore continues with CROW with hedge laying along the LFGP section of the Lodon
- Lea Farm Lake (LFL), weeding in front of Ron's hide for good visibility and Willow removal
- About 10 pairs of Sand Martins are in occupation of the LFL wall; over 30 used the old Teal scrape wall for the first time in a decade.

#### **ii. Management Plans**

- Cattle grazing will be looked at to manage Willow scrub at LFL post the Network Rail project
- We have yet to get into an organised islands vegetation cutting regime on Sandford, but again long term we want to see path repair and protection of the islands from flooding by finding funding for a proper sluice.
- The opportunity to install a 'landfill observation area' at the bottom of the car park field awaits
- The sluice door in the ditch adjacent to Teal scrape, not yet repaired
- Thames Water Habitat Improvement Grant – A few remaining items
  - Posting and fencing the new reed bed and transplanting Phragmites rhizomes
  - Planting will recommence September for 3 years
  - Levelling off the ground by the new screening

#### **iii. 2020 Dawn Chorus Bird Walk – Cancelled due to lock down**

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### **6) Future Vision – Fraser Cottington**

The commitment to increasing our membership to 500 was somewhat set back until recently, but I am encouraged by several conversations I have had about banners, stand equipment, leaflet design, sponsored welcome pack documents, even the webcam for our new Barn Owl box.

To grow as planned will require a commitment to a variety of activities to reach new audiences and build the membership so we can make long term plans to ensure we cannot be built next to, or lose the neighbouring Lodge Wood Lake to an activity that was not compatible to ours.

Activities should include;

- Visiting schools and other groups to give talks, make them aware of the Barn Owl box webcam and 'sell' the membership and family engagement activities I am developing will all fall under an annual activity programme for which we will offer a;
  - I. Family welcome pack and website engagement offering
  - II. 4 in the field events held quarterly, likely to be;
    - Guided walks, birds, insects, etc.
    - Pond dipping, bug hunts, mini beast walks, junior work parties, bush craft
    - Moth trapping, bat watching, nights out under the stars
- Fund raising at local stores and other fund raising events
- Attending the Woodley Christmas Carnival costs £29.00 – Promoting membership, etc. would get us seen by many hundreds of people. We agreed to invest in the required equipment; we just need volunteers to help put ourselves out there.

#### **i. Website, Social Media & WhatsApp LWT Bird News (LBN)**

Our WhatsApp bird news group is now 183 of our members paying £2.00 a year for up to the minute Bird News. If you are not on WhatsApp, send your news by email [info@lavells.org.uk](mailto:info@lavells.org.uk) Please keep sharing at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1662435990723770/>

#### **ii. Greenway plans**

The proposed 'Greenway' running past Lavell's and Lea Farm appears to be off the table, residents favour the route running away from us if they can get the Bailey bridge open. A matter for Summerleaze Ltd, which we cannot pretend could mean a last minute change of plans by WBC. The footfall post full lockdown has increased by 500% and most people are adhering to our wishes, we need clear signs.

#### **iii. Network Rail Project**

We have everything planned, contractor booked, diggers due from 24<sup>th</sup> August, the ground marked out, but mid-September we will have the whole new marsh and reed bed 'footprint' dug, it will then take a few years to mature, with us helping the reed bed growth.



iv. **New subscription hide**

I launched a new appeal with GoFundMe and this has already raised over £2,000.00 towards the target of £20,000, we believe it will cost. Pledges are still coming in and I am totally confident that if we convey the clear message that we need everyone to offer a small donation and to ask 2 friends to follow suit, we will hit the target in time to commence planning and other consent applications. This being the case, by August 2021 we will be starting construction of our best hide yet overlooking our largest reed bed and marsh. The red ovals mark the proposed location of the hide and another fine viewing screen too. Click here to donate <https://www.gofundme.com/f/fraser039s-campaign-for-lavell039s-wetland-trust>

v. **The vision**

As I said before it's all coming together, the improvement of the NE & NW corners is set, everyone will soon be enjoying more Water Rail, Snipe, Jack Snipe, Teal, Bittern, Egrets in winter, we plan to have breeding Lapwing, Redshank, maybe ever Little-ringed Plover and so many more passage waders spring and autumn.

I am more serious than ever about LWT buying Lodge Wood and Lodge Wood Lake in 10 years and if not that having a benefactor buy it and give it to us like Ron did with Lea Farm Lake, this will happen.

7. **A.O.B.**

Date of next meeting 15 June 2021