

## Lavell's Wetland Trust (LWT)

### AGM

Charity Number: 1176960

Zoom meeting on Tuesday 15 June 2021

### Minutes

**Present:** Jane Campbell (Chair), Angela Gunn (Secretary), Fraser Cottington, Bob Bennett, Les Blundell, Keith Boseley, Ron Bryant, Phil Kinch, Renton Righelato, and 22 others

- 1) **Apologies for absence:** Sue Charnley, Robin Dryden, Bridgit Gurney, Peter Scudamore, Sally Wearing
- 2) **Minutes** of the second LWT AGM held on 22 September 2020 have been publicly available on the LWT website for more than a year and no comments have been received. Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Alan Rymer and seconded by Ron Bryant.
- 3) **Reports:**
  - a) Treasurer – Phil Kinch:
    - The 2020 accounts circulated with the AGM notice were provisional. These have now been examined and accepted by a professional independent accountant, Delia Allott. We thank Delia very much for, once again, doing the examination for us.
    - Lea Farm Nature Reserve is now an asset of LWT.
    - From 2021, funds will be set aside annually for long term maintenance e.g. to replace fencing

#### Income

- A new column has been added to the finance report for donations towards the new hide at Lea Farm. This fund has now risen to £28K inclusive of expected gift aid.
- The balance of LWT funds has increased this year as some planned work has been delayed due to Covid-19 restrictions.
- £33K has been spent on the Network Rail Project and this has been reclaimed.
- There has been an increase in the annual subscription numbers over last year.
- We now also receive money through the Reading Community Lottery.
- The gift aid for 2020 is much greater than for 2019 as the 2019 claim was for a partial year following the establishment of LWT as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

#### Costs

- The cost of tools is high as we bought tools at the start of the year before the Covid-19 lockdown.
- Some work was carried out to improve our website.
- The costs for transferring ownership of Lea Farm Lake were incurred in 2020

Fraser added that Lavell's Bird News (LBN) now has 210 subscribers. It is estimated that there are 10 very large fish in Lavell's Lake and there is an agreement that LWT will receive

50% of the income from their sale which is expected to be approximately £8K Once the reed beds are established we will not be able to cut the reeds using brush cutters.

b) **Membership – Les Blundell: Year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020**

Membership held up well during 2020 with an increase of 6 and at the end of the year we had 450 members. We currently have 456 members: 10 new members and a few non renewals.

Q. Graham Hammond asked if we had considered increasing the subscription fee as he thought it was too low.

A. Fraser replied that members had donated generously to the new hide fund and an increase would be considered once the new hide was ready.

**4) Election of Officers & Committee**

There have been no volunteers to join the committee but we are always open to offers even if just for specific projects. The current committee will remain the same with the addition of Keith Boseley who has been co-opted. Keith has a wealth of experience and will be helping with the management plan and work parties.

As required by our constitution 2 members are retiring but are standing for re-election.

- Phil Kinch, proposed by Renton Righelato, seconded by Les Blundell
- Ron Bryant , proposed by Graham Hammond, seconded by Brian Bennet

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

Jane thanked the committee for their work. Thank you to all our members for staying with us and continuing to subscribe during lock-down when there was no, or at best limited, access to Ron's hide. Thanks are also due to Simon Bartlam and to all the volunteers who have joined the work parties, we have even had several new volunteers this year.

**6) Overview by Fraser Cottington**

Our future plans include lowering the vegetation around Teal scrape and cutting through a viewing screen to the north of Lea Farm Lake which is planned for later this summer. There have been discussions with Summerleaze concerning access to and viewing at Lodge Wood and Lodge Wood Lake.

Fraser showed an interesting video of a 3D map model from the view of an Osprey flying over the site.

The management plan was to have grazing cattle and we currently have grazing horses. There are some concerns regarding the effects of grazing on flora and fauna, grazing dates will be modified to protect butterfly fields. Once the new hide has been built we will look into the flooding issues. We will also talk to the farmer about converting the adjacent field to a wildflower meadow.

There are discussions with Summerleaze on access to the new hide via Lodge Wood. One element of the project is screening. Summerleaze have said they are considering disposing of Lodge Wood Lake within the next 3 years. If LWT owns Lodge Wood Lake we would have the potential for a separate footpath and a carpark.

Roger Cross asked about the timescale for the new North Hide. The drawings are ready to submit for planning permission and we can use some elements of the application for Ron's Hide. We still need to get carpenters to build the hide and need to lay the foundations. We hope to build the new hide in June 2022 but this is subject to not disturbing birds.

At Lea Farm we are encouraged by the activity of Terns (20 breeding pairs), we thought they might be overwhelmed by Black-headed Gulls. We had expected Plovers but flooding was an issue. There were breeding Oystercatchers and they are starting a second brood. The Sand Martins are also expected to start a second brood. It is probably better to allow reed beds to overtake Teal scrape, rather than reinstate the scrape, and to build a new hide to give a view of the Sand Martins. It is hoped that more waders will be attracted to the marshes along the eastern shore. We are getting a container to store our equipment thanks to Alan Rymer.

**A.O.B.**

- Bob Bennett asked if we should continue to report Barn Owl sightings. Renton said we should continue unless we are stopping in order to protect the birds. Alan Rymer pointed out that Barn Owls and Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers are visible from the footpath.
- Bob also reported that there were problems with including reports of insects as often people do not name insects whose photographs they are submitting.

Date of next meeting 21 June 2022