

**Lavell's Wetland Trust (LWT)**  
**AGM**  
**Charity Number: 1176960**  
**Earley St Peter's Church Hall on Tuesday 18 June 2024**  
**Minutes**

**Present:** Jane Campbell (Chair), Angela Gunn (Secretary), Fraser Cottington, Keith Boseley, Araba McMillan, Peter Scudamore and 22 others

**1) Apologies for absence:** 17 apologies were received.

**2) Minutes of the fifth LWT AGM held on 20 June 2023** have been publicly available on the LWT website for several months and no comments have been received. Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Fraser Cottington and seconded by Trevor Guyatt.

**3) Reports:**

a) Membership - Araba McMillan

The membership report was circulated in advance. This covered last year but the transfer to the new membership management system, Membermojo, was completed this year. We currently have 552 members.

*Question:* A small proportion of the membership attends and it seems to be the same group of people most years. The number of members seems high, how many people does family membership include.

*Answer:* Family membership is for 2 people. We currently have about 250 family memberships but less than half of these have a second linked member.

b) Treasurer – Peter Scudamore

The treasurer's report and the accounts for the year ending 31st December 2023 were circulated in advance.

Income from membership fees was down in 2023, as expected, due to the introduction of a new membership management system. We received a number of grants which are listed in the AGM notice.

Outgoings – most tend to be fixed. There is still money from the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE) to be spent. We have also received a grant from the BOC Dot Lincoln Memorial Fund to repair the Lea Farm Lake Sand Martin wall. Water levels permitting, this work will be carried out later in the year. £4.5K has been spent on planning and building control applications. We are still hopeful that the steel pillars to support the new hide will be installed this year. We expect the new hide to cost another £40-50K which is at least double the level of the current hide fund. Further anticipated costs include brush cutter & boat safety training and a webcam for the Barn Owl box which will be erected in the autumn.

**4) Election of Officers & Committee**

LWT's constitution requires a third of the committee to retire at each AGM. We are always open to offers of help and suggestions from our members for other things we could do or do differently.

The following members were elected

- Keith Boseley: re-elected as a committee member. Proposed by Jackie Leslie, seconded by Phil Sigley.
- Peter Scudamore: re-election as the treasurer. Proposed by Roger Stansfield, seconded by Phil Sigley.
- Ella Wheeler: elected as a committee member. Proposed by Keith Boseley, seconded by Bob Bennett.

***The officers & committee for June 2024 to June 2025 are***

Trustees: Jane Campbell (Chair), Ron Bryant, Fraser Cottington (Chief Visionary Officer ), Angela Gunn (Secretary), Peter Scudamore (Treasurer).

Committee: Keith Boseley, Araba McMillan (Membership secretary) Ella Wheeler.

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

Jane thanked the committee for all their work. Others who contribute to our work include Bob Bennett, who records bird and other sightings on the website, and Tim Alexander, who has been bird ringing at Lea

Farm Lake for many years. Keith achieves a lot, especially with the additional work parties. Thanks to all our volunteers, we could not have achieved as much without your help. Thanks to Phil Kinch who continued as the treasurer until the end of our financial year, and to Peter Scudamore who has taken over the role. Thanks to the secretary, Angela Gunn, who keeps us in order and to the membership secretary, Araba McMillan, who joined us a year ago. There have been no work parties for the last two months as we wanted to keep clear of the reserve but there will be one next Sunday when we shall be pulling up balsam. We supply tea, coffee, biscuits, and gloves, unless you have your own. We recommend long sleeves as balsam tends to grow among nettles.

#### **6. Chief Visionary Officer: Fraser Cottington**

The maturing reed beds has enabled Keith Seymour to photograph two Marsh Harriers. Looking at bird sightings, the numbers for last year were low but they are even lower this year. Kingfisher used to be a common sight but is now rarely seen. Chaffinch seem to be missing and the sightings for Bullfinch are low. Last year bird flu wiped out the Black Headed Gulls and Terns. Reed Warblers are now arriving in April, earlier than previously.

We held two successful corporate work parties with Mondelez International (November 2023) and a team from Reading Football Club Community Action Team (February 2024).

We have been working on getting the building specifications for the supports for the new hide at the north spit. One suggestion is to use concrete blocks for the steel supports. Once we are in a position to submit the application, the process is expected to proceed quickly.

The Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE) has approved a further grant of £35K (TOE2). The biodiversity net gain for the project needs to link with the TOE1 project. The calculations are complex (e.g. transplanting reeds scores points but creating an island for nesting birds scores zero points). Derrick Finnie has agreed to deal with the application. The water level needs to drop to be low enough for us to bring in a digger. If we do not get the application approved and the water level does not drop enough, we may not be able to carry out the project this year and may therefore lose the funding.

We have the funding to refurbish the Lea Farm Lake Sand Martin wall and the work is planned later this year. Before we can do this, we need to deal with a Thames Water leak as the ground is too wet to transport materials to the site. We need to hire a digger to make a trench, and Summerlease have agreed to give us some gravel to fill it. Two House Martin boxes will also be installed on the wall.

The second seasonal newsletter has now gone out to members. We held a rescheduled Dawn Chorus which attracted ten people and we received £56 in donations. 60 species were heard/seen and there was the added bonus of a badger sighting.

We had a stand at the Woodley Carnival this year. Visitors included Theresa May and the Mayor. This was our first attempt at a publicity stand and we need to include more attractions in future. Branded clothing has been suggested.

#### **A.O.B.**

- 1. Question:** re repairs to the riverside footpath. This is a public right of way and should be kept as a footpath rather than it becoming a 3m cycleway.
- 2. Question:** Is the water level an issue for building the new hide? The water level needs to drop at least 8" to allow the supports to be installed. Once built, the hide will be above the water level.
- 3. Question:** Will the new Barn Owl box be ours? Yes, it will be on Lea Farm. The other Barn Owl box is on Lavell's and belongs to Dinton Pastures. We plan on having a webcam for our box.
- 4. Question:** Are we doing anything, or enough in communicating with DAC to promote ourselves to schools and other visiting groups. No, but we now have resources, posters, to start and it is always about hosting events on weekdays.

The AGM was followed by light refreshments and a short and very entertaining talk by Sally Wearing on 'The Galapagos and Ecuador'

Date of next AGM 17th June 2025