



Newsletter of the Friends of Avon Meadows



Taken on 30 April as spring arrives in full force. The reeds on the left were cleared to expose the willow heron and the reed growth has taken place over the last four weeks.
Photo: Richard Stott

Newsletter No: 35

April 2019

Annual General Meeting

The Friends of Avon Meadows CIO AGM will take place this year on **Tuesday 11 June 2019** at **Pershore Civic Centre** starting at **6:30 pm**. You are all very welcome to attend.

Progress on the Wetland

The reed cutting was completed as planned by the end of January. Including the areas cut over this winter we have now cut the whole reedbed area once over the last 5 years. This is the result of a huge volunteer effort and we thank our volunteers past and present for their hard work over this period.

Early signs are that the wildflower regeneration scheme seems to be going well and once the flowers begin to appear we shall know more.

More bird and bat boxes have been put up around Avon Meadows. We are very grateful to Severn Waste for donating many of them. Several boxes have been installed designed specifically for Barn Owls and Tawny Owls. Barn Owls in particular have suffered in recent years as the farm barns they used to like to nest in have been redeveloped as desirable residences for human beings!

Funding permitting, work on reversing the reed encroachment into the pond dipping pool and replacing the burned platform will start in late summer, after the bird breeding season.

Work is also planned this summer to level the boardwalk running to the town which will be carried out at the same time as raising the surface of the main path.

Tree survey work will continue this summer, concentrating on Ash trees. So far we have not seen any 'ash die-back' on Avon Meadows but there seems to be little chance of avoiding it. The idea will be to record the trees that we have so that replanting resistant strains would be possible in future.

Member's Photographs



A nice photograph of a Fox enjoying the late winter sun on Avon Meadows.
Photo: Sarah Fowle

Funding

First, please note, Friends of Avon Meadows is one of the charities being supported by Waitrose Evesham throughout May. If you shop there please put the tokens you receive at the checkout into the Friends' box!

Fund raising is going well for the replacement pond dipping platform. More information will be available for the next Newsletter.

If you would like to make a donation to support the work of the Friends of Avon Meadows please go to our website at <http://www.avonmeadows.org.uk/>, scroll to the bottom of the first page and click the Donate button. All donations will be gratefully received!

Surveys and Sightings

BIRDS

New Birds

Another new species has been recorded since the last Newsletter; a **Common Redstart** on 10th April. This brings the total number of bird species recorded on Avon Meadows to 130.

Although not a new bird, the nest site of a Treecreeper has been found on Avon Meadows for the first time. Previously they have only been seen a few times each year.



Treecreeper with nest material.
Photo: Jeff Steady LRPS

Weekly Bird Count

After a good start to the year the number of species recorded is falling behind what was a stellar 2018. That said we did count 53 species on the morning of 18 April, equalling our best Thursday morning score.

A good number of our annual records are made by individuals sending in records of what they have seen on other days of the week as was the case with the Common Redstart. Species recorded in this way on Avon Meadows over the last 3 months include Mandarin Duck, Goosander, Oystercatcher, Wheatear, Yellow Wagtail, Siskin and Lesser Redpoll.

Spring Arrivals

A Cuckoo was first heard on Avon Meadows on 19 Apr and a single bird has been there on and off ever since. Swallows and Martins have arrived with us in lower than usual numbers so far but the warblers are plentiful. Walking round now you will be able to hear and quite often see, with patience, Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Sedge and Reed Warblers.

The first chicks of the year arrived on 25 Apr when a pair of

Coots with 3 chicks were spotted. Since then there have been some Moorhen chicks reported too.

With the spring arrivals 92 bird species have been seen so far this year.



One of the 4 scrape islands the volunteers covered with stones during the winter stones to encourage wading birds.
Photo: Richard Stott

As was mentioned in the last Newsletter, 4 of the scrape islands have been covered with stones. The idea is to tempt Little Ringed Plovers to breed here. Normally they lay their eggs directly among stones on a beach and rely on camouflage and parental attention to keep them safe. No beaches here but we are providing the next best thing. We were delighted to see a pair of Little Ringed Plovers arrive on 24 April. Now it is up to them!



Avon Meadows' first Common Cuckoo for 2019.

Photo: Jeff Steady LRPS



STOP PRESS! 'Our' Mute Swans have chosen a nest site beside the boardwalk. Let us hope that everything goes well for them.
Photo: Richard Stott

BUTTERFLIES & MOTHS

The butterfly and moth seasons start on 1 April. Moths are slower to emerge and trapping sessions will not start before May. Butterflies are doing well on the sunny days, particularly over Easter. Orangetips can be seen often with Brimstone, Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell and locally Speckled Woods appear.

MAMMALS

Another empty nest of a Harvest Mouse was found during reed cutting in January making 3 in total. This is exciting news as Harvest Mice have been becoming increasingly scarce in recent years. We are very grateful to members of the Worcestershire Mammal Group in helping us find the first of these nests.

We believe we have an active Badger set on Avon Meadows which we will be monitoring carefully to estimate the Badger population.

Reports of daytime Otter sightings continue to come in every few weeks, the most recent about 3 weeks ago.

AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES

Some of our enthusiastic volunteers have started a Slow Worm monitoring scheme. To achieve this 44 mats, similar to that in the photograph below, have been set out around Avon Meadows. These will be inspected carefully by trained people so that we can estimate how many Slow Worms there are and where they like to go. Please resist the temptation to disturb any of these mats.



One of our Slow Worm mats. *Photo: Richard Stott*

A Toad was photographed crossing the main path on 21 Feb, it was a sunny day. Frogs can be heard croaking in the reed beds and Smooth Newts can be watched from the wooden bridge over the channel near the bird screen.

Diary Dates

Date	Activity	Date	Activity
Sat 11 May 19	Work Party 10h00-13h00	Sat 1 Jun 19	Work Party 10h00-13h00
Sun 5 May 19	Tiddesley Wood Open Day 10h00-17h00	Wed 12 Jun 19	AGM 18h30-20h00
Tue 7 May 19	Committee Meeting 14h30-16h30	Sat 6 July 19	Work Party 10h00-13h00

Work parties are a valuable part of our activities on site and start at **10:00am** from the **HQ** just inside the main gate. Without your help we cannot maintain the area properly.

It is a good idea to let Ken know if you can come (KenPomfret@btinternet.com) a few days before (in case there are last minute changes) but do not worry if you cannot, just turn up at the far end of Cherry Orchard at 10:00am on the day.

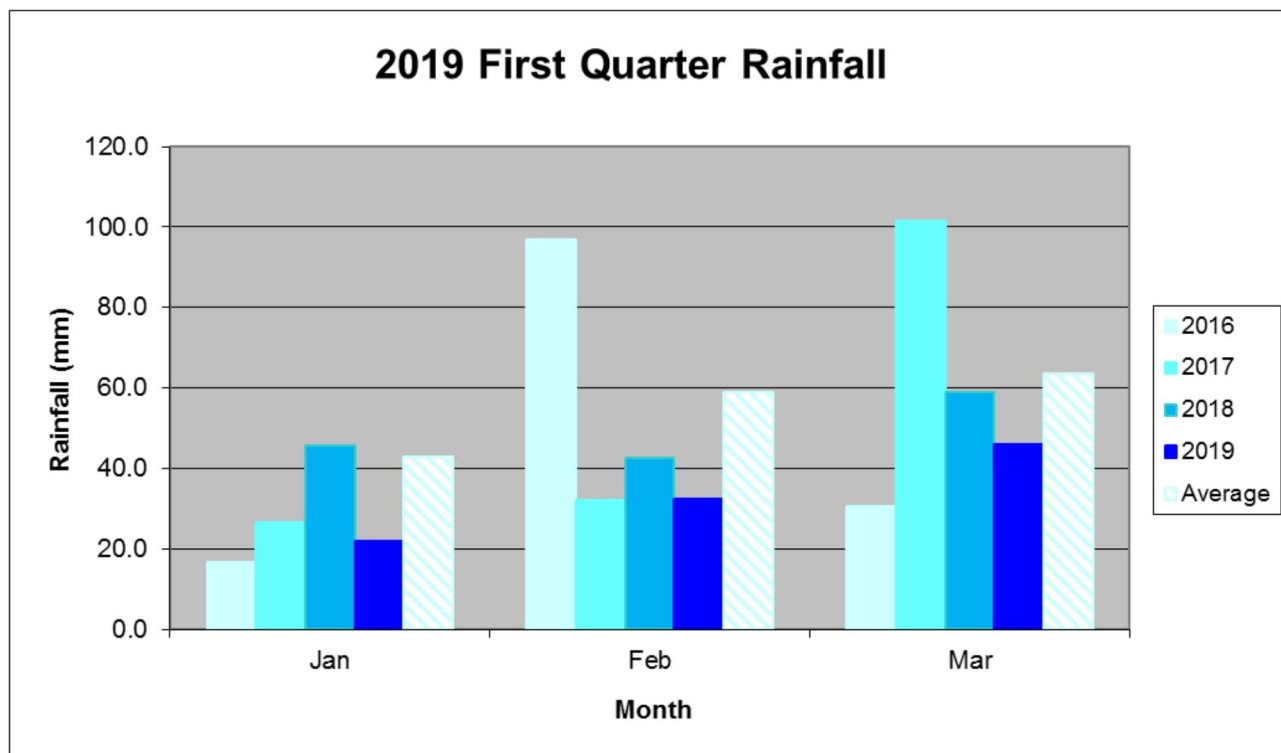
How you can help us

Work Parties - see Diary Dates above. Please come along, they are good fun! Cheaper than a gym subscription!

Interesting sightings - Take a picture. Send it to Liz, Bob or Richard with date, time and approximate location.

Newsletter Circulation - Know anyone who would like one? Let Richard have their name and eMail address.

Water Levels



Rainfall over the last quarter has been less than average and this together with a hot, dry April has resulted in the meadows being mostly dry and firm underfoot. Rain, when it has come, has been sufficient to keep the main pool and the scrape wet. A period of wet weather at the end of April will help to keep levels up. The tilting weir was raised on 27 Feb. It is lowered in the autumn to maintain late summer water levels so that reed cutting can take place.

Administration

Officers of the CIO Committee

Chairman - Richard Stott richarddestott@gmail.com

Treasurer - Bob Gillmor avon.meadows@btinternet.com

Secretary - Val Wood val@wood20.plus.com

Work Parties - Ken Pomfret KenPomfret@btinternet.com

Website

<http://www.avonmeadows.org.uk/>. The site will be kept current, check here first to see what is happening!

Coots Eye View blog: <http://cootseyeview.blogspot.co.uk/> is another way of finding out what is going on.

The Website holds a number of other interesting and useful links which are worth exploring.

Contacts

If you would like any more information about volunteering contact either an officer of the Committee directly by eMail or by telephone to;

Ms Liz Etheridge, Wychavon District Council.

Tel: 01386 565366

eMail: liz.etheridge@wychavon.gov.uk



Pershore's Community Wetland and Local Nature Reserve
www.avonmeadows.org.uk

Membership Application/Renewal

If you wish to join or renew by online banking, please use the following details:

SORT CODE 77-68-78 (TSB Bank), ACCOUNT NUMBER 01118468 and **QUOTE YOUR SURNAME AS THE PAYMENT REFERENCE**. Then please e-mail membership@avonmeadows.org.uk with the details requested below. If you would like to set up a standing order, please use the same details and again let us know by e-mail. We cannot currently handle direct debits.

If you wish to join or renew by cheque, please print and complete this form and send it together with your cheque, payable to **The Friends of Avon Meadows** to:

Mr. T.C. Hutton, 15 Green Close, Childswickham, Broadway WR12 7JJ

Family subscription £10 per annum ☐ **Individual subscription £5 per annum** ☐

FULL NAME: _____ TITLE (Mr, Mrs, Ms etc.): _____

ADDRESS: _____

TOWN: _____ POSTCODE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

Charity Governance/Fundraising standards and Data Protection (including GDPR)

I am happy to receive information from The Friends of Avon Meadows:

by e-mail ☐ please tick ✓ by post ☐ please tick ✓

We will never pass your details to any third party organisations.

Or:

Please do not contact me ☐ if you tick this box we will delete you from our records.