



Pershore's Community Wetland & Local Nature Reserve

[www.avonmeadows.org.uk](http://www.avonmeadows.org.uk)

## Minutes of AGM held on Tuesday 29 September 2020 via Zoom at 6.30 pm

**Note:** This meeting is being held remotely under the provisions of *The Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020* which provides for some relaxation in the quorum requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### DRAFT 2

1. **Apologies:** Clive Bostle (who is relocating to Norfolk), John Boon, Peter & Kirstie Chippendale, Sue Clasen & Paul Jenkins.
2. **Minutes of last meeting on 12 June 2019** unanimously agreed as a true record.
3. **Chairman's Report** (attached)  
Chairman clarified that work on the dipping platform will commence early October.
4. **Treasurer's Report** (attached)
  - a) Independently examined accounts showing a total of designated and unrestricted funds of £3,811.13 were presented and agreed unanimously as a true record.
  - b) Thanks were given to Peter Dann of Clifton-Crick, Sharp & Co, for examining the accounts.
  - c) Thanks too, to Pershore Town Council for their ongoing grant and also to Waitrose, Guilded Lilies, Dumbreck Charity and members for their donations during the year.
  - d) £500 was received from Severn Trent as an apology for a pollution issue which was rapidly resolved.
  - e) The Treasurer remarked that although incomings were less than last year we had spent less.
  - f) Round Table and Rotary donations are expected once the invoices are to hand for work on the dipping pond and platform from the contractor.
  - g) Membership Secretary reported 22 Life Members to date, 14 members paying by standing order. 25 reminders to be sent out to members who have not renewed.
5. **Election of the Committee**
  - a) Election of Officers:  
Note: (T) after a member's name indicates that they are a trustee.

Election of Chairman - Richard Stott (T)  
Vice Chairman - K Pomfret (T)  
Secretary - Val Wood (T)  
Treasurer - Bob Gillmor (T)

All officers re-elected unanimously en bloc.

b) Election of the Committee:

Jim Burgin (T), Andrew Conway, Liz Etheridge, Tim Hutton (T), Charles Tucker (T), are standing again.

2 nominations have been received: Sue Comely, David Wilson.

All members including Sue Comely and David Wilson were unanimously elected/re-elected en bloc. Note that new Committee members are not normally appointed as trustees immediately.

The Chairman welcomed Sue Comely and David Wilson to the Committee.

**6. AOB:**

Ken Pomfret raised the possibility of having 2 separate work parties working simultaneously in separate locations.

Liz Etheridge and Jim Burgin to investigate the current requirements.

**7. Date of Next Committee Meeting:**

Via Zoom Monday, 19 October 2020 at 2.30pm.

**Meeting closed at 6.55pm**

## **Chairman's Report for 2020 AGM**

**Presented to the AGM held via Zoom on Tue 29 Sep 2020**

Welcome to the 10th Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Avon Meadows.

The year since our last AGM has been dominated by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The most obvious effect is that this meeting is being conducted remotely over Zoom software. With this in mind we have kept the meeting to its simplest form to comply with Charities Commission requirements. This is not a precedent and as soon as circumstances return to anything like normal we will have 'proper' meetings.

Unsurprisingly all general events have been cancelled. We even suspended Committee meetings for a while. However, these have now restarted via Zoom and the business in hand mainly concerns maintenance of the site. As we have no salaried staff and only rather modest outgoings our financial position is satisfactory, normal for this time in the financial year.

The weather always plays a part and after an amazingly wet winter during which the autumn sheep grazing had to be terminated after only a few days due to flooding a hot dry May came along. The scrape was fully dried out by the end of May so no water birds there for the summer. As we shall see however, nature, nothing daunted carries on.

Thanks must as ever go to the Committee for their support and hard work during the year. Nothing changes; the workload falls most heavily on our Treasurer, Bob Gillmor, Secretary, Val Wood, Work Party & Project Coordinator, Ken Pomfret, and Membership Secretary, Tim Hutton so particular thanks to them. Continued support from the landowners, Wychavon DC and Pershore TC, and particularly their representatives on the Committee, Jim Burgin and Liz Etheridge, is greatly appreciated and many thanks to them too.

This year Frank Round has decided to stand down from the Committee so we have lost another founder member. I would like to thank him very much for his valuable contributions over the years. However, I am delighted to welcome Sue Comely and David Wilson to the Committee subject to the Committee election later in this meeting.

Finally, I would like to thank Peter Dann of Clifford, Crick & Sharp for inspecting our annual accounts.

**Pond Dipping Platform:** This work has been delayed by coronavirus and the bird breeding season. Now work on restoring the dipping pond to its original area and constructing the new dipping platform is planned to begin during September.

**Site Management and Development:** You will recall that we were concerned at our last AGM about Wales & West Utilities plans to re-route its gas main through Avon Meadows. We now have to thank Wales & West Utilities for modifying its plans and deciding on a simpler scheme to reinforce the bank on the opposite side of the river. The work is now complete without any encroachment on Avon Meadows.

The 2019/20 scrape clearance and reed cutting work was completed before any COVID-19 precautions came into being which was fortunate. Later, social distancing refuges were cleared beside the main path by volunteers initially and contractors cut them again in the summer. It is planned to maintain these for as long as necessary.

The total species count for Avon Meadows presently stands at 1189 and slowly continues to climb! It is extraordinary how many creatures are around us when you begin to look.

Paul Jenkins continued with the dragonfly transect so thanks to him for this valuable work.

Our Bird Group continues to monitor on Thursday mornings with an increasing number of observers. Again, the impact of COVID-19 is felt and we now count as individuals and these counts are coordinated centrally. To the outside world the results appear as usual. So far this year we have again logged 98 species. The Avon Meadows bird species count now stands at 131; the species added since the last AGM was a Tree Pipit flying over recently. The interest here is more in particular events; we had at least one pair of Grasshopper Warblers breeding in the reed beds. It is difficult to be certain how many as they are extremely retiring birds. It was a remarkable as the species has only been seen twice before in 11 years!

The late summer has seen an unusually large passage of migrant birds, particularly small ones. There have been Willow Warblers, Garden Warblers and Whinchats topped up with only our second records for Spotted Flycatcher and Common Redstart.

In order to guarantee social distancing at night the Moth Group has only had two outings involving two observers but have added another 4 species to the moth list which now stands at 388 species.

Possibly as a result of our changing climate we are seeing more extremes of weather and one of the fascinations of recording in Avon Meadows is watching how the creatures that call it home adapt to the conditions.

Management: The work to resurface the main path and extend the gravel path from the main entrance up to the public pavement to ease wheelchair access is complete as is the work to level the new boardwalk leading to the Riverside Carpark.

Plans are being put in place to use contractors to cut the reeds on the usual rotational basis and also thin out the stands of willow. Nature always wants to revert to type and maintaining a wetter area in one that is normally dry requires constant effort. For example, if the depth of the pools is less than about 1 metre the reeds are able to encroach so that within a few years there would be no pools, just a large reed bed.

If you have good ideas we are interested to hear, but be warned, you may be asked to help make the ideas happen!!!

It is your Wetland to use and enjoy and our goal is to help you do that.

Richard Stott  
Chairman  
August 2020

## **FoAM Treasurer's Report 2020**

A simpler financial year than the last two with less grants and project expenditure but more external donations; from the Dumbreck charity towards the new dipping platform, Severn Trent Water to apologise to Pershore for the sewer disruption, Waitrose and the Guilded Lilies.

We ended the year with £2129.14 designated towards the dipping platform project and £1681.99 in unrestricted funds, totalling £3811.13.

Turning to current events, our Life Membership offer seems popular. With the difficulties arising from the Coronavirus pandemic, Zurich Insurance have given clients like us a three-month free extension of our policy which will renew in November rather than August.

As well as the donors mentioned above, we are grateful to Pershore Town Council for their ongoing grant support and I must express my thanks to Peter Dann of Clifton Crick Sharp & Co. for independently examining our accounts.

R.J. Gillmor  
Treasurer  
September 2020