



Pershore's Community Wetland & Local Nature Reserve

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

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at 6.30pm**

Committee Room, Pershore Civic Centre

**Committee Members Present:** Richard Stott (Chairman), Val Wood (Secretary), Bob Gillmor (Treasurer), Tim Hutton, Andy Miller, Liz Etheridge, D. Wilson, G. Avison  
Friends present as per attached list.

**1. Apologies:**

A. Cother, J. Boon, J. Bugg, J. O'Loughlin, S. Comley

**2. Minutes of last AGM meeting on 22 July 2022 agreed as a true record.**

**3. Chairman's Report:** as per attached.

**4. Treasurer's Report:** 2022 independently inspected accounts as per attached.

- a. Total funds at 31 March £3271.22. None currently restricted.
- b. Designated £2655.14 which includes £750.00 remaining from the dipping platform funds.
- c. Life Membership funds: Life £1490. As Life Memberships are paid once only, we hold back part of each payment for future years. Thus, of the £50 paid as a Life Membership, £5 is added to the unrestricted funds in the year it is received. The remaining £45 is put into a Life Membership fund of which 10% is transferred into the unrestricted fund each year.
- d. Machinery - £414.93. We chose to fund the "beast" repairs £650 from revenue.
- e. Funds are healthy but membership income appears to have dropped due to life members paying in previous years.
- f. We are using online banking for almost all payments and many subscriptions – thanks to members for who use standing orders, "faster payments". Thanks too for the generosity of some members who make donations above the minimum.
- g. Working towards registration with HMRC in order to claim Gift Aid on subscriptions and donations.
- h. Thanks to Tim Hutton for handling the membership admin.
- i. Thanks again to Peter Dann of Clifton Crick for his thorough independent examination of the accounts.
- j. To clarify, Higher Tier Stewardship funding does not come to the Friends but is paid to the landowners.
- k. Tim Hutton (Membership) added that supporting member numbers are: Life Members - 46, Annual Subscriptions: 48 (of which 22 are Standing Orders). 13 people have already paid for next membership year - so there will 35 to collect in September.

**Approval of accounts proposed by G. Avison, seconded by K. Chippendale and unanimously agreed.**

**5. Election of Trustees:**

Trustees stepping down by rotation but eligible for re-election: Richard Stott, Bob Gillmor.

**Both trustees proposed for re-election by Peter Chippendale, seconded by Tim Hutton, unanimously agreed.**

**6. AOB:**

The question of a future litter pick including members of the public was discussed; LE announced there will be a hay cut shortly after which a litter pick would be sensible. Date agreed **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> August 10am.**

**Date of Next Meeting**

The next full Committee meeting is scheduled to take place on:  
**Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2023 at 2.00 – 4pm** in Pershore Civic Centre.

Meeting closed at 7.15pm and was followed by excellent photographic presentations by Jeff Steady and Steve McLaren.

## Chairman's Report for 2023 AGM

Welcome to this, the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Avon Meadows.

Introduction: First, the recent lowlight has been the shooting of a Mute Swan on Avon Meadows. We owe a debt of gratitude to the Vale Wildlife Hospital at Beckford for treating our swan and getting it back to us in good shape. Very many thanks to them. The police have stepped up patrols in the evening and the swan has recovered but it was a stupid and shocking event even so.

However, the news is not all bad. As ever, I would like to give personal thanks to the Committee for their support and hard work during the year. Nothing changes; the workload falls most heavily certain committee members; Treasurer, Bob Gillmor, Secretary, Val Wood, and Membership Secretary, Tim Hutton so particular thanks to them. Continued support from the landowners, Wychavon DC and Pershore TC, and particularly their representative on the Committee, Liz Etheridge, is greatly appreciated and many thanks to them too. Jim Burgin retired during the year and I thank him for his calm advice which will be greatly missed.

I would like to welcome two new members to the Committee, Andy Miller and Graham Avison. Andy has set up our Facebook page which is slowly gathering support.

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

Funding: For yet another year I have to report that our Government funding comes from the Higher Tier Stewardship Scheme which has been kept going as the Government's new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) continues to be delayed.

We have been fortunate to receive a £1000 grant from the Welcome to Our Future charity particularly to help fund wildflower seed purchase.

Members continue to be attracted to the Life Membership option and several members have made generous donations during the year, for which we are extremely grateful. Membership remained substantially stable over the year with new members joining being balanced by some members leaving the area and other members sadly dying. Our Newsletter now goes out to 370 members a little down on last year.

It is one of our principles that we do not ask for subscriptions to become a member but there is no doubt that your subscriptions are extremely useful. We have 45 life members and at least 60 Supporting Members who make an annual donation of £5 each, some more than that. Of course we are delighted when a member is so enthused by Avon Meadows and the work carried out there that they elect to make a donation, but we are even more delighted if this can be done by means of a Standing Order as it does so much to simplify our administration.

There are a lot of new people moving into Pershore some of whom must be membership material. Please remember, all I need to enrol someone as a member is a name and eMail address. Regard yourselves as ambassadors for Avon Meadows and draw them in!

### Site Management and Development:

Wychavon District Council has taken over much of the amenity maintenance which includes cutting back nettles beside the footpaths and boardwalks and looking after gates and bridges. This will increase next year as most reed cutting activity and tree management will fall within its remit. This

has taken some time to get off the ground resulting in a hiatus for which I apologise. However, as recent visitors to Avon Meadows will have noted, path clearance has taken place.

Having been relieved of the heavy maintenance tasks this has given us the opportunity to plan more interesting tasks for volunteers. Some of these tasks will involve smaller or more tricky maintenance tasks that are more difficult to hand over to contractors, such as removing docks from the meadows, repairs to the bird screen and Sand Martin Bank.

#### Forum:

I have to apologise once more for the fact that the promised membership Forum has not taken place. We had been waiting for the reorganization within Wychavon District Council following the retirement of Jim Burgin but as this seems to be delayed we are going ahead, probably in September. This change has been prompted by the development of our new Management Plan. This plan is updated at 5-year intervals and covers all matters to do with the management of the site for wildlife. It will be both interesting and beneficial to discuss this with members before it is finalised.

Going over the plan has been both an interesting and stimulating exercise. For example, an interesting new initiative to look at more effective ways of introducing wild flowers onto the meadows will be explored. Thus far we have used seed from green hay, broadcast seed and plug plants. This has met with some success and, as reported last year, as you can now find Yellow-rattle, Knapweed and Ox-eye Daisies in the meadows, none of which were present before we started. However, the success is not as good as we would like and we have yet to establish Great Burnet in any new locations. We are now considering mowing small areas to plant/sow particular flower species. We will be able to pick ideal spots and provide more care as the plants establish themselves. We would hope to be able to appoint an individual volunteer to look after each patch. There has been a single Great Burnet plant growing since Avon Meadows was created but efforts to introduce it in other parts of the meadows, either with seed or plug plants, have not met with success. This may be an opportunity to increase the success rate for this species.

Climate change present challenges in this area with more severe, dry, wet and hot seasons. Plant root systems can extend for one or two meters below the surface and so the level of the water table at this depth is important. We have been collecting data from 10 dipwells for 8 years now so have a good understanding of the hydrology. Superficially, the meadows look quite uniform but small changes in the hydrology and make quite significant changes to the plants that flourish in a particular area. Using the small patch approach I have just described may help to mitigate some of these effects as plants become established.

If you want to encourage wildflowers, you might well ask, why is it that you mow the grass each summer? A fair question. The answer is not straightforward as there is a Catch-22 situation here. The grass is cut in order to reduce its vigour and remove nutrient value of the cut grass. If the grass's vigour is maintained, it will crowd out most of the flowers we would like to introduce, so we cut in summer and remove the hay and graze in autumn. This reduces nutrients although these are boosted by flooding events as fertilizers run off upstream farmland and then is deposited on Avon Meadows. So it comes down to a matter of timing. For example, the Yellow-rattle must set its seed before we take a haycut. This year, in another experiment, we plan to leave a number of unmown strips to see how the flower population compares with the mown areas.

Records: Our survey work on the meadows continues unabated and thanks to all those that contribute records. The total species count for Avon Meadows since the last AGM now stands at 1,171 species, 7 more than last year. These include a Cattle Egret, 4 moth species and 2 insect

species. [Slender Pug, September Thorn, Dusky Sallow, *Bryotropha domestica*], [caddis fly *Oecetis ochracea*, Common Sponge Fly *Sisyra nigra*]

The dragonfly transects have been carried out again by Paul Jenkins and Kirstie Chippendale the butterfly transects, and I would like to thank them for their continued work in these areas. Numbers of both are a little down on last year although it is too early to say more at a July AGM which is still quite early in the season for these species groups. The Thursday bird count continues with a dedicated group of enthusiasts having recorded 94 species so far this year.

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

Richard Stott  
Chairman  
5 July 2023

## Treasurer's Report for 2023 AGM

### Receipts and Payments Account 2022 - 2023

£	£		£
2020-21	2021-22	Receipts	2022-23
£250.00	£0.00	Pershore Town Council Grant	£0.00
£250.00	£0.00	Pershore Rotary donation	£0.00
£1,985.00	£880.00	Members' donations	£555.00
£0.00	£750.00	Dipping Platform donations	£0.00
£0.00	£700.00	Worcestershire County Council grant (1)	£0.00
£0.00	£1.00	Sundry donations	£140.00
<b>£2,485.00</b>	<b>£2,331.00</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>£695.00</b>
<b>Payments</b>			
£515.74	£515.74	Insurance Premium	£515.74
£0.00	£799.79	Plug plants (funded by Worcs. County Council) (1)	£0.00
£0.00	£0.00	Dipping Platform	£1,964.00
£0.00	£66.04	Notice Boards	£0.00
£22.94	£113.23	Machinery Servicing and Repairs	£658.23
£193.56	£347.99	Work Party supplies	£91.66
£29.35	£67.19	Conservation and Recording project costs	£0.00
£32.93	£116.78	Stationery, postage and administration	£0.00
<b>£794.52</b>	<b>£2,026.76</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,229.63</b>
<b>£1,690.48</b>	<b>£304.24</b>	<b>Surplus/Deficit for the year</b>	<b>-£2,534.63</b>

#### Note to the accounts

WCC Grant specifically for wild flower planting - actual cost slightly more than grant amount.  
Dipping platform payment to Wychavon DC from donations in previous years.

Prepared from the Books of Account and supporting vouchers supplied by Officers of the Group.

Approved by Committee	R.D.E. Stott (Hon. Chairman)	<u>Original signed</u>
	R.J. Gillmor (Hon. Treasurer)	<u>Original signed</u>
	Date	<u>19-Jun-23</u>

#### ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT

I have examined the attached accounts for the year to 31st March 2023 and confirm that they are in accordance with the records and information supplied to me.

Peter Dann FCA	<u>Original signed.</u>
Chartered Accountant	
Date	<u>15-Jun-23</u>

**BALANCES at 31st March 2023**

<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>		<b>£</b>
<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>		<b>2022-23</b>
£0.00	£0.00	Restricted Funds	£0.00
£3,819.14	£4,740.14	Designated Funds (1)	£2,655.14
£1,682.47	£1,065.71	Unrestricted Funds	£616.08
£5,501.61	£5,805.85	Represented by:	Bank Account
£0.00	£0.00		Cash in Hand
<b>£5,501.61</b>	<b>£5,805.85</b>	<b>Total of restricted and unrestricted funds</b>	<b>£3,271.22</b>
<b>£1,690.48</b>	<b>£304.24</b>	Net Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	<b>-£2,534.63</b>
£3,811.13	£5,501.61	Opening balance	£5,805.85
<b>£5,501.61</b>	<b>£5,805.85</b>	Closing balance	<b>£3,271.22</b>

**Notes to the Balance Sheet**

- Designated funds are Machinery Reserve £414.93, Dipping Platform Fund £750.00 and Life Memberships Reserve £1490.21
- The Friends own equipment funded by Awards for All which cost £1992.84 in 2011-12 and £4506.98 in 2013-14; funded by Welcome to our Future £3784.41 in 2015-16. No value is shown in the accounts as it may not be sold without the donors' consent.