



NEWSLETTER

Water levels are dropping thanks to drier than average March and April. The shoots in the foreground are willow saplings which must be removed if we want a pool! *Photo: Richard Stott*

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From the Chairman

New Treasurer

I am delighted to announce that David Wilson has agreed to take over as our Treasurer following the sad passing of Bob Gillmor.

In an unconnected development TSB tells us that it no longer holds accounts for non-profit charitable organisations such as ours. So, we are setting up a **new bank account with Lloyd's Bank**. We will be contacting those of you, who are kind enough to pay your subscriptions by standing order, individually to ask you to **change your S/O details** to send payments to the new account.

New Steering Committee Members

I am delighted to tell you that four very active members have agreed to join the Steering Committee. They are: Julie Bowler, David Evans, Stuart Reading, and Craig Wright. This will give a considerable boost to the committee.

Trustee Resigned

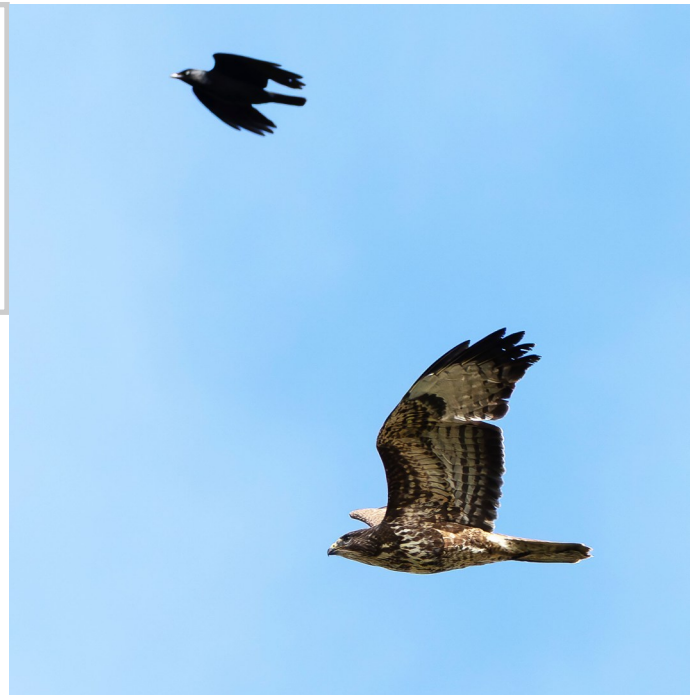
Sue Comely has resigned as a Trustee and Steering Committee member. She plans to take part in FoAM activities but needs to spend more time on other activities.

Members' Photographs

An interesting photograph of a Jackdaw and a Buzzard having an altercation!

Photo: Judith Fulton.

Often, when you see one or more birds mobbing another it is worth a look. In this instance, a Herring Gull was involved too. The gull and the Jackdaw were swooping at the Buzzard which lumbered on trying to ignore the attention.



Pershore Civic Society Donation

We are most grateful to the Civic Society making a donation allowing the replacement of one of the dilapidated riverside benches with a splendid new one. (see photograph on p.3)



By mid-April the scrape was losing water quite rapidly. Canada Geese are nesting there and it is a race between the chicks hatching and moving to safety and the scrape drying allowing predators access. *Photo: Richard Stott*

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Andy Miller

Richard Stott

David Wilson

Val Wood

Steering Committee

Julie Bowler

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Peter Penhallow

Stuart Reading

Craig Wright

Social Media

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Progress on the Wetland

WYCHAVON'S ACTIVITIES

Willow felling

A few willows have been felled recently as part of a long-term conservation plan. Without action, Avon Meadows character and habitat would change as pools would be taken over by a wet woodland. The recent Members' Forum indicated that one of the most valued features of the meadows was the area of open water and we have

VOLUNTEERS' ACTIVITIES

Bird call recording

Over the last 3 months one of the Bird Group members has been leaving a bird call recorder on the wetlands once a month for a week at a time. This has given us some interesting results.

Software analyses the calls recorded and reports the number of times a species has been recorded and the percent confidence that the call identification is correct. Clearly there is the possibility for error but this is limited because the program is told where we are. However, we are very cautious about suggesting that less common species are flying over the meadows at night.

At the easy end, Robins have been recorded over 3000 times per week!

Two species, not recorded visually, have been

taken this as one of our conservation aims. The aim is not to remove all willows but rather remove most of those that have grown since the wetlands were created.

Wychavon DC is managing the work using a qualified tree surgeon. Trees felled did not hold birds nests and were well away from the core area of Avon Meadows. The present work is complete.

added to the 2026 list. Wigeon and a Grasshopper Warbler in March. Neither had been recorded usually this year but they have been added to this year's list.

We have not added any new species to the Avon Meadows list that have not been seen and recorded on call alone. At this stage, any recorded call must be very clear and distinctive to be logged at all.

New Owl Box

Barn Owls have been recorded recently in the northern part of the meadows. A replacement owl box was needed after the tree holding the original one blew down and smashed the box. We are most grateful to the RSPB Worcester and Malvern Local Group who provided the new box and fixed it in place with help from our volunteers, particularly Craig Wright who organised it all.



Friends of Avon Meadows CIO
Registered Charity No. 1174083





↑ Four Black Poplar trees have been planted in a wetter part of Avon Meadows. This is a species of native tree that has become rather rare.
Photographs: Andy Miller and David Wilson

↑ A male Orange-tip on Lesser Celandine both species that appear in early spring.
Photograph: Judith Fulton



↑ Our wonderful new bench by "the beach" funded by a donation from the Pershore Civic Society.
Photo: Richard Stott

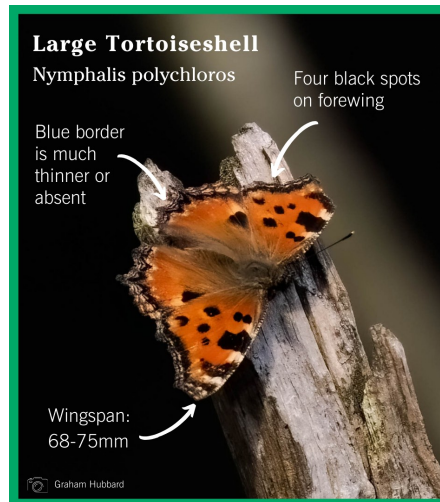
Science Section

Sunlight on Swift nest boxes kills chicks!

IMPORTANT! Do not put Swift nest boxes on the sunny side of buildings. If you do the boxes get so hot that the chicks will die of heatstroke!

Corn Buntings on solar farms

A recent paper in British Birds [British Birds 119—April 2026—pp.208–217) describes how this uncommon species benefits from the lack of disturbance around solar farms. They regularly leave their nests to feed at nearby solar farms.



Extinct butterfly returns to the UK

The Large Tortoiseshell butterfly has, until recently, thought to be extinct in the UK. However, this seems to be changing and Large Tortoiseshells have been found on a number of occasions in the southern counties leading to hopes that it might

re-colonise in the UK with warming summers.

As you can see from the photographs above the Large and Small Tortoiseshells are quite similar! As its name implies the Large Tortoiseshell is much larger and a little duller in colour. It is something to keep your eyes open for in summers to come.

Butterflies doing well in UK

Recent warm summers have been good for certain species of our butterflies. This particularly applies to species that do not require specialist habitats or food plants. Three of the species benefitting from

the warmth are common on Avon Meadows; Red Admiral, Comma and Orange-tip. There are two other species mentioned in the study, both of which are rare and local in the UK, Large Blue and Black Hairstreak.



↑ Male Reed Buntings are now very smart in their summer plumage.
Photo: Judith Fulton



↑ This Canada Goose has been sitting on a nest for a while. She left the nest soon after 7 May and we hope she took her chicks with her. Nobody saw what happened so we just hope!

Photograph: Judith Fulton



↑ These ducklings came originally from a brood of 15. Now there are just 6 left but they have been around for several weeks and are almost as big as the adults!

Photograph: Judith Fulton

Surveys and Sightings

BIRD RECORDS

The big bird news is that we have a new bird species for Avon Meadows, the 139th! The bird was a **Dipper** which was a huge surprise. Dippers are a bird of upland, crystal clear, rocky streams, rather different from the muddy River Avon! It seems that the bird was passing through as it was only seen once.

So far we have recorded 80 bird species this year.

Departing Birds

The last Teal were seen on the scrape on 2 April when there were 7 present. Earlier, 200 Lapwing flew over on 15 January and a pair were displaying over the scrape on 6 May. Stonechats have largely deserted us recently, there was a record of a single male on 5 February.

Unusual Records

A new dimension to our bird recording has been to use a bird call recorder to record 24 hours a day for a week. This has turned up several interesting records. A Wigeon was recorded on 22 February and a Grasshopper Warbler on 17 April, both new for the year.

A Bittern was heard calling in the evening on 29 January, only the 4th record for Avon Meadows.

More familiar records included brief visits by

Gadwalls on 25 January and 29 March, A Shoveler passed through on 15 January, a Barn Owl flew over on 4 April and our first Little Egret arrived on 29 March.

Breeding Birds

Breeding is well underway but it is not always easy to be certain of if particular birds have nests.

There is a pair of Little Grebes seen regularly in scrub beside the main pool. Water Rails have been heard regularly leading to hopes they too are breeding. There are up to 3 pairs of Linnets nesting. Cetti's Warblers are at full strength as are Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs.

Summer visitors

Reed and Sedge Warblers arrived from Africa on 9 April, followed by the first Cuckoo on 16 April. Our Cuckoos predate the nests of Reed Warblers and typically follow them from their wintering grounds a few days later.

The first Willow Warbler arrived on 22 April and Lesser and Common Whitethroats and a Garden Warbler had all arrived by 1 May. This group seem to have moved on and we await more arrivals. Swifts and Swallows have arrived but there have been very few House Martins.



↑ This Littoral Whiplash Rove Beetle was photographed on 16 April. It is the first record for Avon Meadows.

Photograph: Craig Wright



↑ An early Banded Demoiselle basking in the sun.

Photograph: Roger Mason

UPCOMING EVENTS

THURSDAY BIRD COUNT

Our Bird Count starts each Thursday morning outside Cherry Orchard House at 09:00am. All are welcome. Bring binoculars!



↑ A Wren that can be commonly found on Avon Meadows singing loudly at this time of year.
Photograph: Judith Fulton



↑ A 7-spot Ladybird enjoying some spring sunshine.
Photograph: Judith Fulton

PERHAPS YOU CAN HELP?

If you have interesting photographs taken on Avon Meadows we may be able to use them in the Newsletter. 'A picture tells a thousand words' and they are an important part of the Newsletter. We are always looking for new photographers to send us photographs.

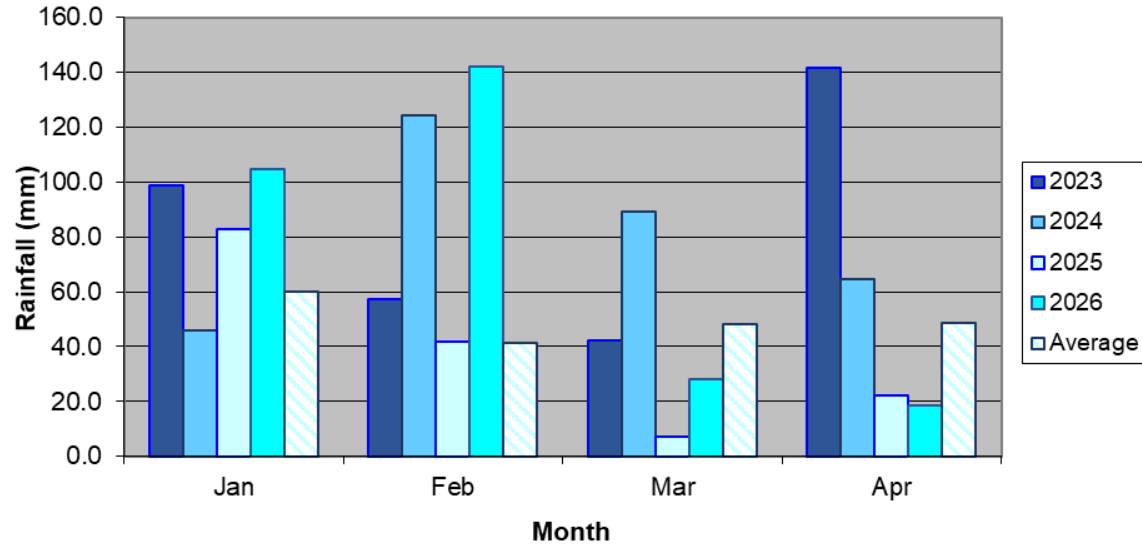
Please send the original, unedited, picture file, taken on Avon Meadows.

Send the date, time and approximate location of the image.

Contact: richarddestott@gmail.com

If you know anyone who would like to become a member of the Friends of Avon Meadows all we need is a **name and eMail address**.

2026 First Quarter Rainfall



A period of two parts, the first extremely wet and more recently very dry. February saw nearly 2½ times the average rainfall for the month. This contribution means that at the end of April the cumulative rainfall is still 148% of average. But now high water levels and floods of the late winter are a distant memory and both the scrape and main pool are drying out quickly.

Surveys and Sightings (continued)

Butterflies

Our earliest butterfly this year was a Peacock seen on 4 March. The first Orange-tip was seen on 6 April. This year does seem to be good for Holly Blues which have been seen on most sunny days since 7 April (earliest date recorded was 6 Apr 2017!)

Dragonflies

Our first dragonfly for this year was a Banded Demoiselle seen on 25 April. The first transect survey was carried out on 9 May when only our second record of Hairy Dragonfly was made. Oddly, our first was seen on 9 May 2025.

Mammals

Worryingly, 2 Mink were seen on 12 March, worrying as they predate young birds. They have not been seen since. A Muntjac deer has been heard barking and Roe Deer have been seen several times.

Other Insects

With the arrival of warmer days, more insects show up. A very early Roesel's Bush-cricket was discovered on 5 March. A Dark-edged Bee-fly was recorded on 26 March. The 9th April saw the

appearance of our first 7-spot Ladybird and 16 April saw the appearance of 2, 16-spot Ladybirds and a European Cinch-bug. More significantly and also on 9 April we found a Littoral Whiplash Rove Beetle (see photograph) which is the first record for Avon Meadows. So our species count for the meadows has now risen to 1,243.

Wildflowers

If there are any budding botanists out there among you, or people who would like to learn, please get in touch as we need some help surveying wild flowers and grasses on the meadows this year.

The Lesser Celandines are always the first flowers to appear in early spring, this year on 26 March. Marsh Marigolds are out now and the meadows are full of Meadow Buttercups. We had a fright when some Celery-leaved Buttercups appeared in the main pool, worried in case they were the extremely invasive Floating Pennywort—they were not!

Spiders

Spiders are a tricky group of animals to identify but we did find a couple of Nurseryweb Spiders on 16 April. The wolf spiders ran away before they could be identified!

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:

ACCOUNT NAME: **The Friends of Avon Meadows CIO**. SORT CODE **30-54-66** (Lloyds Bank),
ACCOUNT NUMBER **86146860** and **QUOTE YOUR SURNAME AS THE PAYMENT REFERENCE**.
Then **please** e-mail information@avonmeadows.org.uk with the details requested below.

If you would like to set up a standing order (we prefer this), 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 CIO** to:

Membership Secretary: Mr P Penhallow, 1 Manor Court, Broughton Hackett, Worcs. WR7 4BB

Individual subscription £10 per annum

Life Membership subscription a single payment of £250

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

ADDRESS: _____

TOWN: _____ POSTCODE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

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

If you are enjoying Avon Meadows please remember us in your will, it will be put to good use!

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Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate.

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box below.

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