

NEWSLETTER



What a change! This photograph was taken on 5 August. The pool has been completely dry since mid-July. Willow saplings are doing well!
Photo: Richard Stott

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From the Chairman

Harry Green MBE

It is with great sadness that I must report Harry's death. He died peacefully on 23 July. Harry was truly a force both of and for nature. He was a driving force behind much of the conservation work in the county and beyond for over 50 years.

In 2000 Harry was awarded an MBE for services to Worcestershire's wildlife and received the Christopher Cadbury Medal in 2008 for services to the advancement of nature conservation in the UK.

Harry had also been Chair of the British Trust for Ornithology, a trustee of Vale Landscape Heritage Trust and was a founder of Worcestershire Biological Records Centre. He was a modest man and an excellent naturalist. We shall miss him.

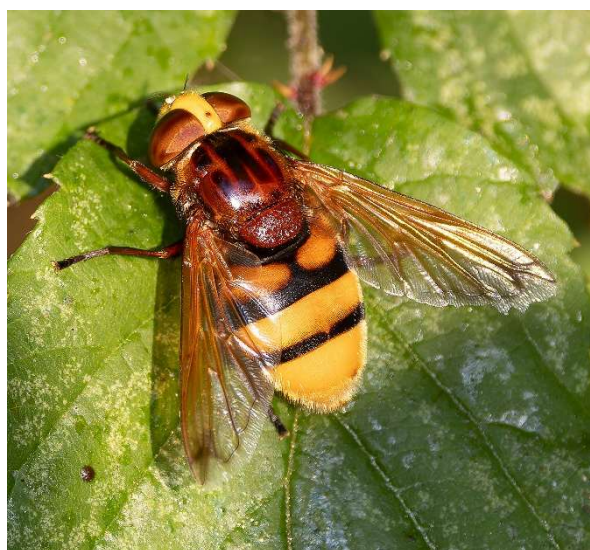
Heather Greenhalgh

Our good friend Heather died recently too. She was a founder member of the FoAM and one of our first trustees when it became a charity. Our sympathy goes to her family.

Members' Photographs

Hornet Hoverfly *Photo: Judith Fulton*

This handsome hoverfly, coloured to look like a hornet although it does not sting but it does hover. The Hornet Hoverfly is not uncommon on Avon Meadows but this excellent photograph taking advantage of the morning light shows this female off to its best. It is the UK's largest hoverfly which was first recorded in the extreme SW of the UK in the late 1930's. From 1995 on it has expanded its range considerably as far as northern England. Its larvae live in the nests of social wasps and hornets.





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The main area of the scrape is dry, the only water left by the time this photograph was taken on 5 August was in the excavated pool which is below the water table.

Photo: Richard Stott

From the Chairman (continued)

This Newsletter

You will notice that the presentation of this Newsletter has changed from recent issues. In its wisdom Microsoft has stopped its Publisher program so future issues will be produced using Word which is not so easy to deal with for this sort of project.

Progress on the Wetland

Wychavon Activities

The extraordinarily dry weather presents opportunities as well as problems. The main pool needs silt to be removed and access is much easier when the ground is rock hard! Additionally, some of the clay removed can be used on another project Wychavon are working on which helps both projects.

Many of you will have noticed that the boardwalk to the town has been removed. We understand that a contract will be let shortly to construct a new, wider boardwalk. It will be made of steel and wood which we hope will be more durable.

Wychavon also commissioned a botanical survey of the meadows by the Wildlife Trust. An excellent survey has been produced of which more in the Surveys & Sightings section.



Scrape on 31 Aug 26. Photo: Richard Stott

Progress on the Wetland (continued)

A haycut was taken in early July taking advantage of the dry weather.

Volunteer Activities

We are most grateful to Graham Avison for taking over managing our work parties. There is a loyal but small band of helpers so the scope of what we can do is limited.

PLEASE, if you have some free time to help get in touch so that we can let you know when the work parties will take place.

Our biggest task each autumn is to clear the scrape which, as you can see from the header photograph, is considerably overgrown. The scrape dries out every summer which allows terrestrial plants to flourish but allows us access too. Hard work by the work party volunteers has seen considerable progress with the clearance work. (photo above)



Sand Martins, rare recently, nesting this year near Wyre Mill. Photo: Judith Fulton



A young Cuckoo found running about in the reed beds! Photo: Craig Wright



A male Reed Bunting moulting after breeding. Photo: Judith Fulton

Social Media

Website

www.avonmeadows.org.uk

Facebook

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eMail

information@avonmeadows.org.uk

SCIENCE SECTION

Changing Weather

As you can imagine, there is a lot of research going on to estimate future weather patterns. Our present hot, dry weather is being driven by the *El Niño* effect in the central Pacific. Indications are that *El Niño* is particularly severe and will be more severe next year – be prepared!

It seems that the efforts to reduce sulphur in our atmosphere have had a warming effect! This is because there is much less sulphur dioxide in the upper atmosphere which, when there, forms aerosols which reflect heat back out into space.

A trial is to take place shortly see if the effect of aircraft vapour trails can be reduced. It has been calculated that making small adjustments to the flight paths of aircraft can greatly reduce the effect of aircraft pollution. The trials will be carried out on transatlantic routes just west of Ireland which is apparently, a very good place to do it.

SURVEYS & SIGHTINGS

Botanical Surveys

As mentioned above Wychavon DC commissioned a botanical survey by the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust. It is an excellent piece of work carried out by Francesca Beamish.

The survey took place in late June 26 and used a methodology used previously so species were identified from quadrat (1 metre x 1 metre) sample sites at the 10 dipwell positions. 117 species were recorded of which 9 had not recorded on the Meadows before which was very exciting. One species found, **Strawberry Clover**, is endangered in the UK.

She pointed out that some ditch clearance work carried out by volunteers earlier this year to help **Tubular Water-dropwort** had been successful. Also, phosphate nutrients brought onto the meadows during floods would reduce biodiversity by compromising efforts to reduce the vigour of dominant grasses. This must be done to help the introduction of wild flowers which are out competed by vigorous grasses. Cutting alone will not be enough.



A Willow Ermine moth whose caterpillars make the webs we see in many willow trees in spring. Below: Red Admiral. Photo: Judith Fulton.



A freshly emerged Red Admiral. Photo: Judith Fulton.

UPCOMING EVENTS

THURSDAY BIRD COUNT

Our Bird Count starts each Thursday

morning outside Cherry Orchard

House at 09:00am. All are welcome.

Bring binoculars!

AGM

Please note in your diaries that the

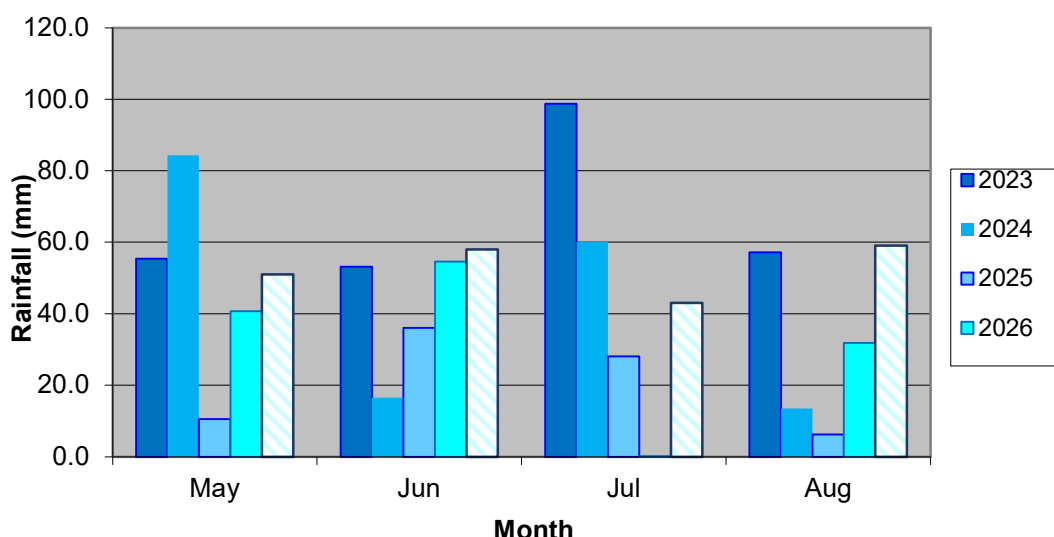
date of our AGM is **Wednesday,**

18th November 2026 starting at

6:30pm. This year it will be held in

St Andrews Hall.

2026 Third Quarter Rainfall



The result of the draught was just 3.4mm of rain from 17 June to 25 August, 61 days. Predictions are that we can expect the same for 2027. All that said, owing to the very heavy rain we endured in the first quarter of 2026, the average rainfall for the year to date is still a little above average!

SURVEYS & SIGHTINGS (continued)

Earlier Surveys

The first botanical surveys on Avon Meadows were undertaken by Bert Reid and John Day between 2003 and 2011, both expert county botanists, under the auspices of the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI). The recent survey prompted a review of these earlier surveys. I was surprised to discover that they had recorded 6 species of **Dandelion**! Further investigation showed that there are 240 species of Dandelion in the UK but, because they are very difficult to distinguish one from another, they are usually recorded as a single group Dandelion agg. (aggregate = too difficult!)

Dandelions are unusual (but not unique) in the plant world as they do not reproduce sexually (*apomixis*).

[Reference: Richards, A.J. 2021. *BSBI Handbook No.23. Field Handbook to British and Irish Dandelions*. Publisher: BSBI.]

Most Dandelion plants do not bear pollen and are regarded as female. The result of all this is that large numbers of microspecies evolve which are visually very similar.

Birds

Our regular surveys continue with occasional concessions due to very hot or very wet weather. An interesting record was for **Sand Martins** breeding nearby. This is a species that has been hard to find recently so having them close by was a real treat. Otherwise, counts have been lowered by the complete absence of waterbirds due to the draught and far fewer birds of prey.

Another interesting record was finding a young flightless **Cuckoo** during an exploration of the reed beds. We had seen a young Cuckoo flying a couple of weeks earlier so we can be certain that at least 2 Cuckoo chicks were brought up on the meadows this summer. The last adult Cuckoo was recorded on 26 June so these chicks will have to find their way to West Africa for the winter unaided!

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 you need to do is to fill in the attached form.

UNSUBSCRIBE

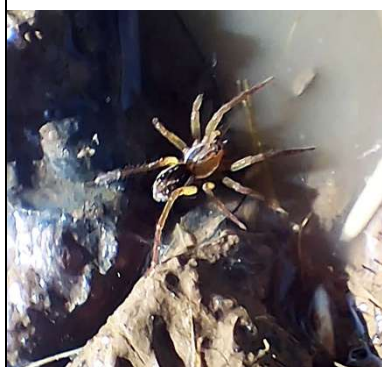
If you not wish to receive this Newsletter or other eMail communications from FoAM please get in touch via our website or eMail one of the officers.



Blackcaps have stayed with us all winter and have had a good year. This male is feasting on Elderberries on the bank just inside the main entrance, a favoured food.
Photo: Judith Fulton



A Rush Veneer, new for Avon Meadows.
Photo: Richard Stott



A Pirate Wolf Spider, new for Avon Meadows.
Photo: Craig Wright

After an absence over the summer **Tawny Owls** have been heard calling in their usual area behind Cherry Orchard.

There have been good records of less common summer warblers: **Garden Warblers** and **Common** and **Lesser Whitethroats** but they have not have nested on Avon Meadows.

Butterflies

Butterfly numbers down so far but there have been an unusually large numbers of **Painted Ladies** in the first part of the summer. This is a migrant species; most of those visiting the UK spend their winters in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco. They often travel in vast numbers across Europe, stopping to breed on the way. Thus the insects we see here may not be those that left Morocco but their offspring.

Another migrant species that visits is the **Clouded Yellow**. Several of these have been recorded on Avon Meadows this year, the last time we saw them here was 17 Sep 2015 so this is just the second record.

Dragonflies

The total number of dragonflies recorded to date is a little below average but the number of different species is a little above. Two **Willow Emerald Damselflies** have been recorded this year after our very first record last year. This species originates from the Mediterranean and has been expanding its range northwards. It is one of the few species of damselfly which hold their wings open when at rest.

Similarly, we have had several records of **Hairy Dragonflies** this year which were also recorded for the first time last year

Another notable trend this year is the number of **Ruddy Darters** we have recorded. The only year we have recorded more was 2019.

Moths

Not to be outdone, migrant moths have been much in evidence this summer. Many of you may have seen **Hummingbird Hawk-moths** sipping nectar from flowers in the garden. They migrate here from Europe.

Walking along the main path beside the river a small moth was spotted in the recently mown grass. The photograph (left) was sufficient for it to be identified as a **Rush Veneer** which was new for us, our 409th moth species. It is a fairly common European migrant to the UK, mostly between June and September. Its caterpillars feed on clover and various grasses.

Spiders

Spiders can be a tricky group to identify. During a recent work party on the scrape clearing reeds from one of the few wet areas this small spider was found. It turned out to be a **Pirate Wolf Spider** (photo left) the first record for Avon Meadows. Wolf spiders form a family of around 37 species in the UK. They do not spin webs but use their excellent eyesight and agility to locate and chase after their prey on the ground.

Identifying plants and animals

In the box on the side bar on p.4 we offer to identify your photographs. However, it may be you want to identify your own plants or insects. In recent years, identification has been made easier through much scientific research resulting in a wide range of excellent, illustrated identification guides. If you are interested in a particular plant or animal (including insects) and would like to know about available guides please get in touch. A number of members have extensive libraries covering a wide range of species groups and would be most willing to make helpful suggestions.



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: _____

PLEASE TICK THIS BOX IF YOU WOULD LIKE US TO RECEIVE GIFT AID ☐

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 ✓ ☐

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!



Pershore's Community Wetland and Local Nature Reserve

www.avonmeadows.org.uk

Gift Aid Declaration – multiple donation

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

☐ I want to Gift Aid my donation of £ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years.

Name of Charity – The Friends of Avon Meadows CIO

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

My Details

TITLE (Mr, Mrs, Ms etc.): _____ FIRST NAME or INITIAL(S): _____

SURNAME: _____

FULL HOME ADDRESS: _____

POSTCODE: _____ DATE: _____

Please notify the charity if you:

Want to cancel this declaration,
Change your name or home address,
No longer pay sufficient tax on your income/capital gains.

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.



Pershore's Community Wetland and Local Nature Reserve

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Membership Questionnaire

We would appreciate it if you would complete the following questions.

1. Why would you like to become a member of the Friends of Avon Meadows?

What draws you to the group?

2. Is there a way in which you would like to contribute?

This might include supporting the charity's aims, volunteer work parties, fund raising or helping shape the future of the meadows. Do you have any skills, experience or interests you would like to share with the group? - Practical, organisational, ecological, communication, fundraising, or anything else.

3. What aspects of Avon Meadows or wetland conservation are you most passionate about?

For example: wildlife, habitat restoration, community engagement, education, climate resilience.

4. Are you happy to receive updates and AGM information by email? ☐