

Friends of Weir Wood Newsletter

Newsletter No. 80

Spring 2018



Welcome!

FRIENDS – 21st (2018) AGM

Thirty people attended the AGM formal business at the Community Centre, Forest Row on 16th March, with more attending later for the Guest Speaker's talk. My thanks to all those who came along and supported us. The business covered the following:

1. Apologies for absence
2. Approval of 2017 AGM Minutes
3. Matters arising
4. Chairman's Report
5. Membership Secretary & Website Editor Report
6. Treasurer's Report & Approval of 2017 Accounts and acceptance of the Auditor
7. Election of Officers and Committee
8. Any Other Business - Any Questions.

The full AGM minutes of the meeting are available on our website.

There were no major changes to the running of the Society or your Committee which remains unchanged:

Honorary Officers: Chairman - Bob Johnson,
Treasurer - Bob Hastings,
Website Editor – Tom Howard-Jones,
Membership Secretary – Tom Howard-Jones,
General/Minute Secretary – Vacant and currently being covered by the Chairman.
General Committee: Shaun Taylor, Glenn Tocher, Alan Caulkett, Peter Johnson, Phil Holland, Richard Lowe.

Our AGM was followed by a talk from our Guest Speaker. Nick Aplin – Chairman of the Sussex Fungi Group, and also the Sussex County Recorder for micro fungi.

Nick gave a very interesting illustrated talk, giving an explanation of the main groups of fungi, how they grow and reproduce, and some of the great variety that exist. He also included talking about some of the rarer species that he had found on his recent fungi visits at our own Nature Reserve.

My thanks to Nick for making it a very interesting and enjoyable evening for all.

By Bob Johnson

Renewed ESCC Ranger contract for 2018/19

We can confirm that the new contract with Southern Water & ESCC for the provision of Rangers to assist our Work Party volunteers is all signed and takes effect on 1st April 2018 for 12 months.

The Friends this year have also received a slight increase on the funds that Southern Water give ESCC to hold for agreed materials costs necessary for maintaining the site SSSI / Nature Reserve.

Reserve Open Day - Sunday 8th July

Our annual "Open Day" event is on Sunday 8th July and will be in a similar format to last year.

The marquee with refreshments & moth display will be set up at Legsheath Lane Car Park, from 10:00 to 16:00. There will again be telescopes set up to view the birds around the reserve from the Car Park viewing area.

Whillet's meadows will be opened for visitors to see. The bird ringing demonstrations will be in Whillet's meadows at the reed-bed, please note for those that are keen the bird ringers will be starting slightly earlier at 9:30am, but will also finish earlier in the afternoon. The pond dipping & meadow viewing at Whillet's will be ready for 10:00am.

All are welcome so come along and bring a friend.

Members' Spring Flowers & Birds Walk on 28th April

Remember our Spring flower & bird walk is on Saturday 28th April. We will have the same timetable as last year, leaving the hide car park at 9:15. The first part of the walk will take us into our woodland study area for spring woodland flowers and bluebells. We hope to also see some spring nesting birds before returning back to the car park for a short break. (Bring a flask) The second part of the walk at approx. 11:00 will be over Whillet's to have a look at the meadows, pond and reed bed, returning back to the car park for around 12:45. No need to book, just turn up. Please wear stout walking shoes or boots as the paths could be wet/muddy and are uneven in places.

Membership Renewal 2018

Your membership of The Friends of Weir Wood Society became due for renewal on 1st January 2018. With this newsletter some of you are now receiving a second reminder. We very much hope that you will re-join. The annual membership fee is still only £3 per person. Please let me know if you would like information on how to pay by Bank Transfer. Any additional donation you are able to make will be much appreciated and will greatly help our important conservation work. Thank you and best wishes for another enjoyable year supporting our nature reserve.

Tom Howard-Jones
Membership Secretary

Email: membership@weirwood.me.uk

Post: 10 Woodlands, Pound Hill, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 3DL

Little Grebe - 4 on 19/1, 2 on 22/1 & 28/1, 1 on 25/2 & 3/3.

Great Crested Grebe – Regular (counts over 10) – 14 on 22/1, 26 on 18/2, 22 on 25/2, 30 on 3/3, 12 on 16/3, 43 on 21/3.

Cormorant – Regularly up to 20 (counts over 20) 23 on 3/1, 48 on 4/1, 26 on 2/2, 54 on 18/2, 28 on 23/2 & 25/2, 44 on 3/3, 30 on 7/3, 21 on 10/3, 35 on 21/3, 36 on 27/3, 25 on 31/3. (7 nests at end of heronry).

Little Egret – 1 on 8/1.

Grey Heron – Up to 3 until 6 on 12/1, 12 on 13/1, 15 on 19/1, 18 on 22/1, 26 on 18/2, 30 on 23/2, 32 on 25/2, 30 on 7/3, 38 from 10/3 onwards (by 31/3 - 41 nests were active many with birds sitting), A leucistic very light bird is seen intermittently at a nest.

Mute Swan – 2 on 11/2, 1 on 25/2 & 3/3, 2 on 4/3, 1 on 6/3.

Greylag Goose – 72 on 30/12, (counts over 10), 28 on 3/1, 12 on 4/1, 50 on 6/1, 25 on 13/1, 60 on 25/2, 24 on 3/3, 39 on 5/3 then no more sightings until 1 on 16/3, 2 on 26/3.

Canada Goose – Regular, 4 on 13/1, 35 on 19/1 then up to 7 until 8/2, 23 on 18/2, (counts over 10), 93 on 25/2, 120 on 3/3, 86 on 5/3, 67 on 19/3, 63 on 21/3.

Egyptian Goose - 3 on 4/1, 2 on 22/1, 4 on 3/3, 2 on 4/3, 1 on 27/3.

Shoveler – 5 on 25/2, 2 on 1/3.

Gadwall - 5 on 1/1, 4 on 3/1, 7 on 19/1, 3 on 21/1, 2 on 8/2 & 18/2, 12 on 23/2, 7 on 25/2, 2 on 26/2 & 1/3, 23 on 3/3, 10 on 4/3, 5 on 6/3, 7 on 8/3, 9 on 11/3, 2 on 21/3 & 27/3.

Mandarin – Up to 2 Regularly (counts over) 17 on 1/1, 6 on 2/1 & 4/1, 3 on 22/1, 5 on 4/3, 6 on 13/3, 4 on 27/3, 3 on 31/3.

Teal – 3 on 1/1, 7 on 4/1, 3 on 13/1, 15 on 19/1 & 1/3, 2 on 3/3, 4 on 11/3.

Mallard - Resident - (counts over 10) 20 on 3/1, 30 on 19/1, 27 on 22/1, 23 on 28/1, 12 on 8/2, 15 on 18/2, 13 on 25/2, 45 on 3/3, 22 on 4/3, 12 on 7/3, 20 on 21/3. Also 1 Feral Domestic hybrid Mallard on 22/1.

Tufted Duck - Up to 3 from 1/1 to 3/1, 3 on 8/2, 2 on 18/2, 3 on 23/2, 2 on 26/2, 12 on 1/3, 20 on 3/3, 26 on 4/3, 6 on 10/3, 14 on 21/3.

Wigeon - 6 on 1/3.

Shelduck – 1 on 25/3.

Red Kite – 1 on 19/3.

Sparrowhawk – 1 on 1/1, 4/1, 12/1, 22/1 & 28/1, 2 on 29/1, 1 on 11/2, 17/2, 25/2, 1/3, 3/3, 7/3, 16/3, 21/3, 26/3 & 31/3.

Kestrel - 1 on 30/12, 1/1, 12/1, 13/1 & 28/1, 2 on 29/1, 1 on 4/2 & 17/2, 2 on 18/2, 1 on 25/2 & 4/3, 2 on 11/3, 1 on 14/3, 16/3, 18/3, 21/3 & 23/3, 2 on 25/3.

Buzzard - Up to 2 regularly (counts over), 5 on 13/1, 4 on 22/1, 3 on 17/2, 10 on 18/2, 3 on 25/2, 5 on 4/3, 3 on 8/3, 5 on 11/3, 4 on 14/3, 8 on 16/3, 5 on 21/3, 3 on 31/3.

Pheasant - Regular and resident - (No counts over 5).

Moorhen - Resident (Counts over 2), 4 on 4/3, 3 on 31/3.

Coot - 1 regularly until 25/2, 3 on 3/3, 2 on 4/3 & 6/3, 3 on 8/3 & 10/3, 1 on 11/3 & 14/3, 2 on 16/3, 21/3 & 23/3, 1 on 27/3.

Water Rail – 1 on 29/1, 2/2, 9/2, 17/2 & 25/2, 1 on 26/3.

Dunlin – 1 on 3/3.

Lapwing – 52 on 1/1, 40 on 4/1, 122 on 8/1, 40 on 13/1, 2 on 19/1, 72 flyover on 22/1, 1 on 1/3, 298 migration count on 4/3.

Common Snipe – 5 on 1/1, 1 on 4/1, 2 on 22/1 & 18/2, 3 on 1/3, 9 on 4/3, 10 on 13/3, 8 on 21/3.

Black Headed Gull - (counts over 15) 68 on 3/1, c500 roost count on 4/1, 18 on 22/1, 22 on 8/2, 17 on 18/2, 65 on 3/3, 50 on 14/3, 46 on 18/3, 57 on 19/3.

Mediterranean Gull - 1 on 9/2 & 18/2.

Common Gull – 9 on 3/1, up to 3 from 4/1 to 8/1, 5 on 11/1 then 1 occasionally until 22/1, 1 on 17/2, 7 on 18/2, 1 on 23/2 & 25/2, Up to 4 from 1/3 to 4/3, 4 on 14/3, 14 on 18/3, 3 on 19/3, 2 on 21/3.

LBB Gull – 1 on 4/3, 2 on 14/3, 1 on 18/3 & 25/3.

GBB Gull – 1 on 18/2.

Herring Gull – 20 on 3/3, 22 on 18/3.

Stock Dove – Regular (counts over 2) 6 on 1/1, 3 on 3/1, 9 on 22/1, 3 on 4/3, 7 flyover on 31/3.

Collared Dove – 1 on 4/3.

Wood Pigeon – Ubiquitous (counts over 10), 150 flyover on 13/1 & 22/1.

Barn Owl - 1 on 25/2.

Tawny Owl – 2 on 8/1.

Kingfisher – 1 on 12/1, 2 on 13/1, 1 on 19/1, 2 on 22/1, 1 on 8/2, 2 on 17/2, 1 on 18/2 & 25/2, 2 on 4/3, 1 on 6/3, 7/3, 11/3 & 14/3, 3 on 21/3, 1 on 26/3.

Green Woodpecker – 1 on 12/1, 2 on 21/3 & 25/3.

Gt Spotted Woodpecker – 1 regularly (counts over) 2 on 3/1 & 22/1, 3 on 28/1 & 25/2, 2 on 1/3, 3/3 & 21/3.

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker - 1 on 25/2.

Grey Wagtail – 1 on 1/1 & 22/1, 1 on 18/2 & 4/3, 3 on 21/3, 2 on 25/3.

Pied Wagtail – 3 on 1/1 & 22/1, 1 on 3/3, 4/3 & 21/3, 3 on 25/3, 2 on 27/3.

Duncock - Up to 2 intermittently (counts over), 3 on 16/2, 6 on 1/3.

Blackbird - Up to 2 regularly (counts over), 5 on 22/1, 4 on 4/3.

Wren & Robin – Regular and resident reported in low numbers, (no count over 4).

Song Thrush – 2 on 1/1 & 29/1, 4 on 18/2, 1 on 4/3, 6/3 & 10/3, 2 on 11/3, 1 on 21/3, 27/3 & 31/3.

Mistle Thrush – 1 on 8/3, 3 on 4/2, 2 on 5/3, 25/3 & 27/3.

Stonechat – 2 on 29/1 & 6/3.

Skylark – 1 singing on 25/3 & 27/3.

Redwing – 6 on 1/1 & 13/1, 2 on 22/1, 4 on 1/3, 122 on 4/3, 9 on 19/3, 6 on 25/3, 4 on 26/3.

Fieldfare - 20 on 1/1, 1 on 8/1, 55 on 22/1, 21 on 29/1, 49 on 4/2, 19 on 18/2, 45 on 25/2, 5 on 3/3, 398 migration flyover on 4/3, 8 on 6/3, 46 on 10/3, 7 on 11/3, 1 on 19/3, 4 on 21/3, 67 on 25/3, 4 on 26/3.

Chiffchaff – 2 on 16/3, 3 on 25/3, 2 on 26/3, 1 on 27/3.

Goldcrest - 1 on 4/1, 6/1, 8/1 & 28/1, 1 on 4/2, 2 on 4/3.

L.T. Tit – 4 on 3/1, 7 on 6/1, 4 on 13/1, 1 on 19/1, 3 on 22/1, 2 on 28/1, 1 on 8/2, 3 on 12/2, 2 on 18/2 & 25/2, 1 on 4/3, 2 on 21/3.

Marsh Tit - 1 Regularly throughout period (counts over) 3 on 6/1, 2 on 2/2, 18/2, 4/3, 7/3 & 21/3.

Coal Tit – Up to 2 throughout period.

Blue Tit - Regular throughout in good numbers (counts over 9), 10 on 13/1, 20 on 21/1, 10 on 22/1, 13 on 16/2, 12 on 7/3.

Great Tit – Regular throughout (counts over 5), 6 on 21/1, 10 on 7/3.

Nuthatch – 1 regularly throughout period (counts over), 2 on 4/3.

Tree Creeper – 1 on 2/1, 2 on 4/1, 1 on 11/1, 8/2 & 16/2, 2 on 25/2, 1 on 4/3 & 6/3, 2 on 21/3 & 26/3.

Jay – 1 on 8/1, 22/1 & 29/1, 3 on 18/2 & 4/3, 1 on 11/3.

Magpie – Resident & regular (no counts over 5).

Jackdaw – (counts over 2), 50 on 6/1.

Rook - 15 on 4/1, 4 on 6/1, 3 on 25/2, 15 on 5/3.

Carrion Crow – Resident in low numbers (no counts over 5).

Raven - 1 on 6/1, 2 on 29/1 & 17/2.

Starling – Flyovers = c400 on 1/1, c300 on 12/1, c400 on 2/2 & 4/2 - 6 on 13/1, 16 on 4/3, 37 on 25/3.

Chaffinch – Regular (counts over 5), 6 on 4/1 & 11/1, 8 on 13/1, 10 on 19/1, 6 on 22/1, 7 on 18/2 & 25/2, 20 on 1/3.

Brambling - 1 regularly from 30/12 to 25/2 but with 2 on 2/2 & 9/2, 1 on 4/3, 8/3 & 21/3.

Greenfinch – 5 on 22/1, 1 on 17/2 & 4/3, 2 on 18/3.

Goldfinch – Regular in low numbers (no counts over 5).

Bullfinch – 1 on 6/1, 5 on 8/1, 4 on 13/1, 3 on 22/1, 1 on 4/2 & 8/2, 5 on 25/2, 1 on 4/3, 3 on 10/3, 2 on 11/3 & 26/3.

Lesser Redpoll – 11 on 22/1, 3 on 29/1, 2 on 8/2 & 9/2, 1 on 18/2, 6 on 25/2, 3 on 4/3, 13 on 11/3.

Siskin – 30 on 22/1, 28 on 29/1, 1 on 18/2, 3 on 23/2, 1 on 25/2, 8 on 11/3.

Linnet - 10 on 8/1.

Hawfinch - 2 on 4/1, 3 on 8/1 & 2/2, 1 on 4/2 & 9/2, 3 on 16/3.

Reed Bunting – 5 on 30/12, 1 on 10/3. Roost counts 20 on 4/1, 194 on 12/1, 20 on 19/1, 13 on 22/1, 12 on 29/1.

Nature Reserve News

Spring 2018

Whillet's Meadows Butterfly Survey Results – 2017

Each year since 2011 we have carried out butterfly recording where recorders walk a set butterfly transect path and record the butterflies seen.

The table shown alongside gives the maximum monthly number seen on a single visit during March to October 2017 for each species seen. We try to carry out a walk at least once a week throughout the season.

In 2017 we recorded 22 butterfly species within the meadow. It was a good year for Small Skipper, Ringlet, Meadow Brown, Comma, Holly & Common Blues and exceptionally Gatekeeper, these are all later emerging species. It was a poor year for the earlier emerging species particularly Orange Tip. Others were down or no more than average, and we suspect the cold wet weather in that Spring was a factor.

With the exceptions of Brown Argus, Brown Hairstreak, Silver-Washed Fritillary, & White Admiral all the species listed have over the years been seen at least once within Whillet's meadows.

We also recorded 4 day flying moth species – Burnet Companion (most common), Cinnabar, Mother Shipton & Silver Y.

WHILLET'S BUTTERFLY PATH - MONTHLY PEAK COUNT - 2017

SPECIES	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
Dingy Skipper								
Essex Skipper					1			
Small Skipper				21	42	2	1	
Large Skipper				9	3	1		
Orange Tip		2						
Large White					2	1		
Small White					3	3		
Green-veined White			3		5	5	2	
Marbled White					1			
Clouded Yellow								
Brimstone	1	3	1					
Speckled Wood		1	1	3	1	4	2	1
Small Heath						1		
Ringlet				66	38	1		
Meadow Brown				90	66	8	3	
Gatekeeper					67	20		
Silver-washed Fritillary								
White Admiral								
Red Admiral		1	1	1	1	1		3
Purple Emperor								
Painted Lady			1	1		1		
Peacock	1	2	3		2	1	1	
Small Tortoiseshell		4	1					
Comma	1	1	2	4	8	1		
Small Copper			1	1	3	2	2	1
Brown Hairstreak								
Purple Hairstreak								
Holly Blue		1			5		1	
Common Blue			3	6	7	5		1
Brown Argus								
COUNT DAYS	3	5	20	12	13	14	5	2

Whillet's Meadows Grass Snake Survey – 2017

The first Grass Snake Survey sighting of 2017 was on 11/4 with 3, and the last with 2 on 12/9, the maximum numbers recorded were in July & August when a maximum count of 16 was recorded from our refugia tins. These are laid throughout the three meadows. We have relatively late first sighting dates and early last seen dates at this site compared to others. We know they move off site towards areas north of our meadows, because the later sightings are always on the north side. The north side land beyond the reserve is less liable to flooding and therefore drier and more protected for hibernation during the winter.

At the Dam end - The new reedbed on South bank is now on hold awaiting the water levels to drop sufficiently to allow all the willow stumps within the reed planting area to be suitably treated by Southern Water contractors to prevent them from further growth.

At the picnic area we have installed two new seats, the costs for this were kindly paid for by the East Grinstead Rotary Club as a donation, so our thanks to them and their volunteers who are also helping us by maintaining that area. We also carried out a litter pick along the North bank meadows.

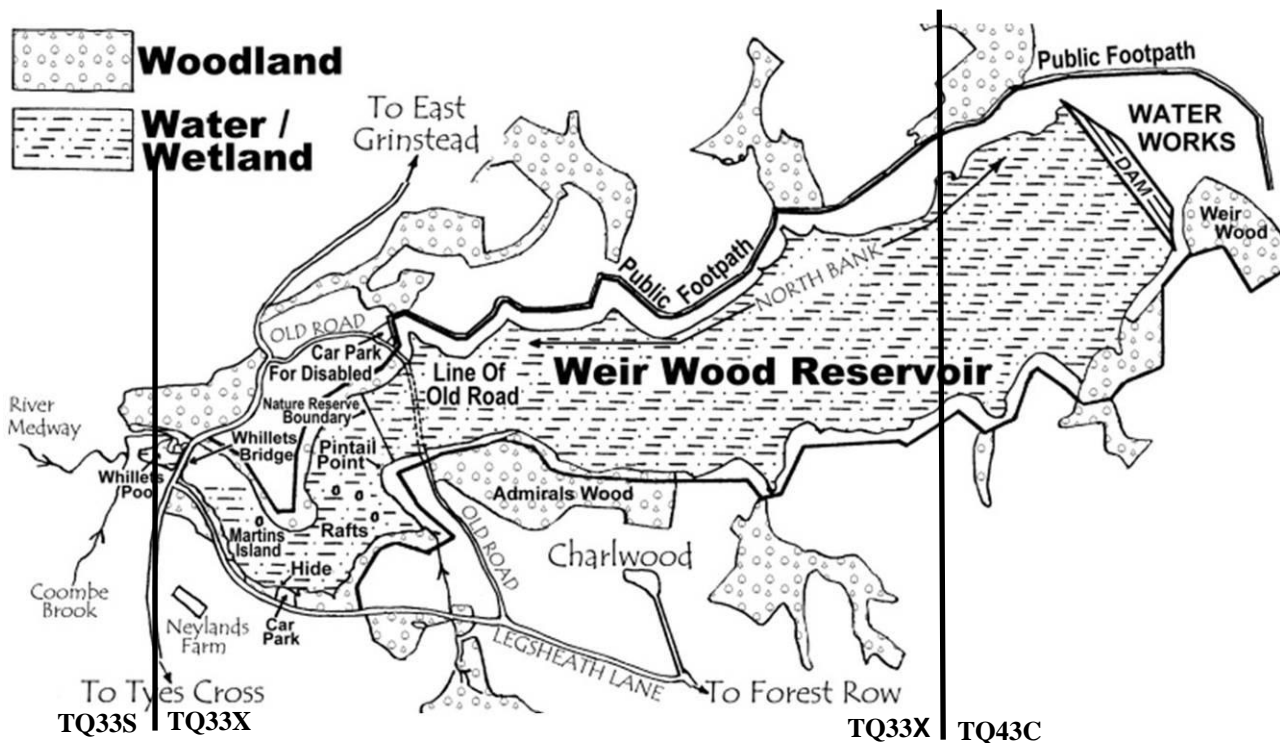
At the West End – The new Tern raft launched in January has now had some final work completed and is ready for the Terns. The hide car park had 4 large trees that were dead/dying and there were concerns that these were unsafe, being alongside both the road and car park. These were checked by ESCC who decided they needed to be topped on safety grounds, this work has now been completed.

The heronry is in full swing with 41 nests showing some activity, with many now sitting on eggs. There are also 7 Cormorant nests at the righthand end of the heronry, already an increase on the 4 nests we had last year. A few pairs of Great Crested Grebes can be seen displaying, but no nesting has been noted. Several Stock Doves are now nesting, the earliest already have young. Many of the passerines are singing, and the nesting season for them is now starting, despite the continuing cold weather.

Along North bank the view point from the “Lecomber” seat had become overgrown, so we cleared some unwanted tree growth to allow improved views towards the water, and although not strictly our responsibility, some minor repairs were carried out to the boundary fence.

We will be taking down the feeders at the hide car park very soon, traditionally we stop filling bird feeders at Easter / Early April and then resume in October.

We are aware that during March there have been some mink sightings, and if you do see a mink please record and send it to us. This is the time of year when breeding starts, and numbers can multiply quickly!!! This alien pest is very destructive to our native species and needs to be controlled.



Friends of Weir Wood Society General Information

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|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Chairman: | Bob Johnson, 01892 661548 | E-Mail: info@weirwood.me.uk |
| Membership Secretary: | Tom Howard-Jones, 01293 883039 | E-Mail: membership@weirwood.me.uk |
| Treasurer: | Bob Hastings, 01825 763573 | E-Mail: treasurer@weirwood.me.uk |
| Newsletter Editor: | Peter Johnson, 01892 661548 | E-Mail: newsletter@weirwood.me.uk |
| Website Editor: | Tom Howard-Jones, 01293 883039 | E-Mail: sightings@weirwood.me.uk |

Other Contact Information

- Tuesday Work Party Volunteers:** work@weirwood.me.uk **Website Photos:** photos@weirwood.me.uk
Friends General E-Mail address: info@weirwood.me.uk
Facebook Group: Friends of Weir Wood

Friends of Weir Wood Website Address: <http://www.weirwood.me.uk>