

# Friends of Weir Wood Newsletter

Newsletter No. 81

Summer 2018



## Welcome!

### OPEN DAY - Sunday 8th July Everyone Welcome!

Our Open Day will again be based at the Nature Reserve Car Park with guided visits to Whillet's meadows.

The main Car Park viewing area will have some volunteers with telescopes set up to show you the birds and wildlife on and around the water. This gives closer views of our birds, we already have several pairs of Common Terns at the rafts, and we hope there will be young to see by the time of the Open Day. We also have nesting Grebes, Herons & Cormorants.

We intend to have some moths to show from our moth traps (weather permitting). This has proven to be very popular at previous open days.

Refreshments & biscuits etc. will be available in the Car Park.

Guided visits to Whillet's meadows will include walking the flower meadow to see the flowers, birds, butterflies etc. with information charts to help you. You will be able to see our popular bird ringing demonstration by our bird ringers at the reed bed (weather permitting), with a chance to see birds close in the hand. Previous years have seen Kingfishers & Reed Warblers amongst others. You will also be able to visit our meadow pond and do some pond dipping with experts to tell you about the wildlife you find. Come and see the dragon and damselflies and the wonderful and varied aquatic life of a pond.

We open for visitors at 9:30AM. Park & meet at the Car Park in Legsheath Lane in the first instance. The event will be open until 4:00pm but the bird ringing will finish about an hour earlier. The event is freely open to all. Both adults and children alike will love the bird ringing and pond dipping.

Please come along and support us, bring your friends. The meadows are not normally open to the public, so this is an opportunity to see this normally private area.

*by Bob Johnson*

### Nesting Bird News within the reserve

**Grey Heron** – On the 16<sup>th</sup> Feb, 2 nests were seen active with birds sitting. By the 13<sup>th</sup> March we had 37 nests with birds sitting. We had reached 45 nests built at one point, but the active nest count dropped with some nests being deserted early, and by later in the season active nests had dropped back to around 38.

The first young noted were on the 6<sup>th</sup> April. By the 19<sup>th</sup> May we had been able to confirm 23 nests had produced 37 young, many of which have already fledged. By this date many of the nests had already become hidden from view, and that total is probably low. Further accurate recording after this date became near impossible with new tree leaf vegetation hiding any views of the nests. At the time of writing there were just a few nests still visible with young from some of the later breeding pairs.

**Cormorants** – Last year 3 Cormorant pairs nested for the first time at the end of the Heronry, they returned this year with 3 nests active by the 13<sup>th</sup> March. Over the coming weeks more nests were built and finally by May we had 10 nests. 8 of those nests produced 16 young in total, the other 2 nests were unsuccessful. We think one abandoned Heron nest was taken over by Cormorants, but otherwise they built all their own nests.

**Great Crested Grebe** – Much displaying but the high water levels deterred the birds with the early nests getting flooded. So far no young have been produced, but currently 5 nests have birds sitting.

**Common Terns** – 5 pairs are currently nesting on the rafts with birds sitting. No young have yet been noted, but it is still early in their nesting season.

We have also had good numbers of singing Blackcap, Garden Warbler & Whitethroat around the reserve, and at Whillet's we have heard Reed Warbler & Reed Bunting particularly around the reed-bed area. Our recorders have been seeing Whitethroats and a Garden Warbler taking food to probable nests, and the signs are generally good for a productive season for these species.

### NEST BOXES

**Tawny Owl** - There was one brood of 3 which fledged.

**Mandarin** - There was a total of 231 eggs laid in 14 clutches. We estimate 76 ducklings resulted, but 2 clutches are still being incubated. In one box the female's wings were found (and 9 eggs) and as it is where the mink are most often seen it was probably predated by mink while sitting. Mandarin sit tight as was seen on the members walk when one sat while several people went up the ladder to see her.

**Stock Dove** - 8 nest boxes have had clutches but most have been deserted and we think only 5 fledglings have been produced so far. This is not unusual as early nests seem to be very unproductive.

**Jackdaw** - One box had 4 eggs and 3 fledged.

**Barn Owl** - No eggs yet. Some pellets, some mice but very few sightings of the birds.

**Nuthatch** – 1 currently active box.

**Treecreeper** - Box with 5 young, but no confirmation of fledging, and could have been predated.

**Marsh Tit** – 1 Box with 5 young failed, however another successfully produced at least 7 young, which is a pleasing result.

**Blue Tit** - 21 successful boxes produced 152 fledged young with another 4 boxes still active with eggs or young.

**Great Tit** - 10 successful boxes produced 58 fledged young with another 2 boxes still active with eggs or young.

For both Blue & Great Tits it has been quite a good year, Blue Tit fledged numbers are up on last year with Great Tits slightly lower. Our nesting season experience mirrors that noted on the "BBC Springwatch" programme with very late nesting of some Blue & Great Tits, as we too still have active nests where some birds are still sitting on eggs or have naked young.

*by B Johnson, P Holland & A Caulkett*

### Data Protection and The Friends

New General Data Protection Regulations came into force at the end of May. They strengthen your rights to privacy under the law. We have updated our policy and practices covering:

- What data we hold
- How we store and use your personal details.
- How long we keep them for and how we keep them safe.
- Your rights to see, correct and delete the information we hold about you.

There's nothing you need to do now. A copy of our Policy and Practices for Data Protection is available on our web site - see the "Join The Group" page - or we will send you a copy on request. If you have any questions please contact the Membership Secretary at:-

[membership@weirwood.me.uk](mailto:membership@weirwood.me.uk)

**Little Grebe** – 1 on 3/4 & 7/4, 1 on 6/6.  
**Great Crested Grebe** – Regular (counts over 15), 22 on 15/4, 17 on 16/4, 47 on 22/4 & 23/4, 44 on 6/5, 31 on 10/5, 32 on 11/5, 43 on 19/5, 26 on 23/5 and nest building noticed, 40 on 31/5, 35 on 6/6, 40 on 8/6, 43 on 12/6 (5 nests seen).  
**Cormorant** – Regular – (counts over 14), 19 on 16/4, 35 on 23/4, 24 on 11/5, 27 on 19/5, 29 on 23/5, 25 on 6/6. (10 nests at Heronry – See Breeding bird report)  
**Little Egret** – 1 on 8/4, 19/4 & 20/4.  
**Grey Heron** – Regular & Heronry (General counts over 10), 14 on 16/4, 40 on 23/4, 15 on 8/5, 16 on 19/5, 11 on 23/5, 16 on 1/6. (Heronry news – See Breeding bird report).  
**Mute Swan** – 1 on 10/5 to 13/5, 1 on 19/5, 3/6 & 12/6.  
**Greylag Goose** – 3 on 5/4, then up to 2 intermittently (counts over 2), 3 on 22/4, 4 on 6/5 & 19/5, 7 on 25/5, 8 on 1/6, 13 on 3/6, 6 on 6/6, 42 on 8/6, 19 on 12/6.  
**Canada Goose** – Regular (counts over 6), 12 on 2/4, 9 on 7/4, 12 on 23/4, 11 on 1/5 & 6/5, 10 on 19/5, 8 on 23/5, 10 on 8/6.  
**Egyptian Goose** – 3 on 8/5.  
**Shoveler** – 2 on 15/4.  
**Mandarin** – Regularly up to 4 (counts over), 7 on 3/4, 8 on 7/4, 5 on 14/4 & 15/4, 7 on 22/4, 10 on 13/5, 13 on 19/5. .  
**Teal** – 7 on 16/3, 1 on 19/3, 2 on 28/3.  
**Mallard** - Resident - (counts over 8), 14 on 15/4, 15 on 16/4, 24 on 23/4, 26 on 24/4, 15 on 10/5, 21 on 13/5, 26 on 19/5, 20 on 23/5.  
**Gadwall** - 3 on 1/4, 1 on 2/4.  
**Tufted Duck** – 2 on 15/4, 23/4 & 24/4, 1 on 1/5, 6 on 11/5, 4 on 21/5.  
**Shelduck** – 2 on 21/4.  
**Red Kite** – 1 on 3/4 & 22/4, 1 on 6/5 & 19/5, 2 on 7/6, 1 on 13/6.  
**Sparrowhawk** – 1 on 3/4 & 16/4, 1 on 6/6.  
**Common Buzzard** – Up to 2 throughout the period (counts over 2), 5 on 3/4, 12 on 5/4, 3 on 7/4 & 16/4, 14 on 20/4, 4 on 22/4, 3 on 23/4 & 1/5, 10 on 13/6.  
**Osprey** – 1 on 2/4 & 1/5.  
**Kestrel** – 1 intermittently throughout period with 2 on 22/4 & 13/6.  
**Hobby** - 1 on 17/5, 3 on 23/5, 1 on 7/6 & 13/6.  
**Pheasant** – Regular - (no counts over 4).  
**Moorhen** – Resident – Up to 2 occasionally.  
**Coot** – 2 on 1/4 then 1 regularly until 2 on 15/4, 1 on 16/4, 23/4 & 24/4, 2 regularly from 8/5 to 19/5, 1 on 12/6.  
**Little Ringed Plover** – 1 on 26/4 & 27/4, 1 on 25/5.  
**Dunlin** – 1 on 25/5.  
**Lapwing** – 4 on 19/4, 2 on 15/5.  
**Common Sandpiper** – 2 on 22/4, 4 on 23/4, 2 on 24/4, 3 on 25/4, 2 on 26/4 & 27/4, 8 on 28/4, 4 on 29/4, 3 on 1/5, 2 on 6/5 & 13/5, 3 on 19/5.  
**Black Headed Gull** – 1 on 7/4, 2 on 6/6.  
**LBB Gull** – 2 on 2/4, 4 on 5/4, 3 on 7/4, 2 on 15/4, 1/5 & 25/5, 1 on 23/5, 8/6 & 10/6, 2 on 12/6.  
**GBB Gull** – 1 on 21/5.  
**Great White Egret** – 1 flyover on 3/6.  
**Herring Gull** – 12 on 2/4, 5 on 15/4, 2 on 23/4, 6 on 24/4, 3 on 26/4, 40 on 1/5, 3 on 6/5, 2 on 23/5, 3 on 25/5, 6 on 6/6, 27 on 10/6.  
**Arctic Tern** – 4 on 26/4.  
**Common Tern** - Up to 3 from 17/4 to 21/4, 4 on 22/4 & 23/4, 5 on 26/4, 3 on 28/4, 7 on 1/5 & 6/5, up to 8 from 8/5, up to 9 from 19/5, 10 from 27/5, (5 pairs confirmed nesting on rafts by 31/5) up to 10 seen regularly until end of period.  
**Black Tern** - 10 on 6/5, 1 on 21/5 & 25/5.  
**Stock Dove** – Regular but no general counts over 4. (Pairs are nesting in the reserve).  
**Wood Pigeon** – Ubiquitous with no counts over 20.  
**Barn Owl** - 1 on 22/4.  
**Swift** - 5 on 26/4, 10 on 28/4, 3 on 1/5 & 17/5, 4 on 12/6.  
**Kingfisher** – 1 regularly throughout period (counts over), 2 on 19/4 & 6/5, 2 on 13/5 & 27/5.  
**Green Woodpecker** – 1 intermittently until 19/5.  
**Gt Spotted Woodpecker** – 1 on 6/4 & 23/4, 1 on 1/5, 11/5, 19/5, 25/5 & 3/6.  
**Skylark** – 1 on 2/4, 7/4, 8/4 & 16/4, 1 on 16/4 & 17/4.  
**Sand Martin** – 6 on 2/4 & 6/4, 4 on 7/4, 2 on 9/4 & 24/4, 4 on 6/6.  
**Swallow** - 2 on 5/4, 3 on 6/4, 10 on 7/4, 21 on 8/4, 34 on 9/4, then up to 8 from 14/4 to 19/4, 12 on 22/4, (Counts over 6) 8 on 24/4, 12 on 26/4, 20 on 18/4, c200 on 28/4, c100 on 29/4, 25 on 1/5.  
**House Martin** – 1 on 7/4, 5 on 8/4, 1 on 9/4, 2 on 14/4, 2 on 16/4, 6 on 22/4 (Regular - counts over 4) 10 on 26/4, 100 on 29/4, 10 on 1/5, 6 on 11/5, 8 on 12/6.  
**Grey Wagtail** – 2 on 2/4, 1 on 3/4, 22/4 & 25/4, 2 on 29/4 & 11/5, 1 on 19/5 & 25/5.  
**Pied Wagtail** – Up to 2 regularly (counts over) 3 on 2/4 & 26/4, 4 on 28/4, 3 on 6/5 & 11/5, 5 on 19/5, 4 on 25/5.  
**Wren, Robin, Dunnock, Blackbird** – Regular and resident reported in low numbers. (No count over 4).  
**Common Redstart** – 1 on 22/4. **Wheatear** – 1 on 19/4.  
**Song Thrush** – 2 on 8/4, 1 on 23/4, 2 on 6/5, 1 on 11/5 & 13/5, 2 on 19/5 & 25/5, 1 on 3/6.  
**Mistle Thrush** – 4 on 2/4, 2 from 3/4 to 8/4, 2 on 28/4, 2 on 28/4.  
**Fieldfare** - 10 on 3/4.  
**Redwing** – 1 on 3/4.  
**Nightingale** - 1 on 11/4.  
**Reed Warbler** - 1 on 22/4, 2 on 23/4, 1 regularly from 1/5 onwards (counts over) 2 on 6/5, 4 on 13/5, 2 on 23/5, 4 on 3/6, 3 on 10/6.

**Whitethroat** – 2 on 15/4 & 19/4, 8 on 22/4, 1 on 23/4, 8 on 29/4 then up to 3 regularly (counts over), 4 on 6/5, 27/5, & 3/6.  
**Lesser Whitethroat** – 1 on 13/4, 20/4 & 22/4.  
**Garden Warbler** – 4 on 22/4, 1 on 23/4, 7 on 29/4 then up to 4 regularly until 13/5, 3 on 15/5, up to 2 regularly from 19/5 until end of period.  
**Blackcap** – 1 on 7/4, 2 on 8/4, 3 on 9/4, (counts over 3), 12 on 15/4, 8 on 22/4, 5 on 23/4 & 1/5, 6 on 6/5, 5 on 11/5 then up to 2 from 23/5 onwards.  
**Chiffchaff** – Regular throughout period (counts over 3), 5 on 1/4, 6 on 2/4, 10 on 3/4, 7 on 5/4, 11 on 7/4, 20 on 8/4, 6 on 14/4 & 15/4, 7 on 22/4, 5 on 23/4, 4 on 6/5.  
**Willow Warbler** – 1 on 29/4.  
**Goldcrest** – 4 on 8/4, 1 on 23/4 & 29/4.  
**Firecrest** – 1 on 6/4.  
**L.T. Tit** – 2 on 5/4, 1 on 22/4 & 23/4, 2 on 1/5 & 1/6.  
**Marsh Tit** – 1 on 1/4 & 3/4, 2 on 6/4, 1 on 22/4 & 24/4, 10 on 13/5. **Coal Tit** – 2 on 9/4, 23/4 & 6/5.  
**Blue Tit & Great Tit** – No counts over 5 but are common in good numbers.  
**Nuthatch** – 1 on 6/4, 16/4, 22/4 & 23/4, 1 on 1/5. **Tree Creeper** – 2 regularly from 5/4 to 8/4, 2 on 23/4, 1 on 1/5.  
**Jay** – 6 on 7/4, 2 on 8/4 & 1/5, 1 on 19/5.  
**Magpie** – Resident & regular - No counts over 4. **Jackdaw** – 1 intermittently recorded.  
**Carriion Crow** – Resident in low numbers (no counts over 5).  
**Rook** - 7 on 23/4 & 1/5, 2 on 19/5. **Raven** - 1 on 2/4 & 8/4, 2 on 16/4, 1 on 29/4, 2 on 6/5, 1 heard on 12/6, 2 on 13/6.  
**Starling** – 1 Juv. on 9/6.  
**Chaffinch** – **Up** to 2 reported regularly.  
**Brambling** - 1 on 1/4, 9/4, 14/4 & 15/4.  
**Lesser Redpoll** – 2 on 15/4. **Siskin** – 3 on 8/4.  
**House Sparrow** – 2 on 8/4, 1 on 10/5.  
**Goldfinch** – 12 on 2/4, 11 on 3/4, 3 on 8/4 & 16/4, 4 on 22/4 & 23/4, 22 on 29/4, 5 on 6/5, 1 on 11/5 & 13/5, 2 on 19/5 & 1/6, 1 on 10/6, 2 on 13/6.  
**Bullfinch** – 5 on 3/4, 1 on 5/4, 8 on 7/4, 10 on 8/4, 2 on 14/4, 2 on 29/4 & 1/5, 1 on 13/5, 2 on 10/6 & 13/6.  
**Linnet** – 1 on 29/4.  
**Yellowhammer** – 1 on 23/3 & 26/3, 1 on 3/5.  
**Reed Bunting** – 2 on 2/4 & 15/4, 1 on 22/4, 1 on 13/5, 19/5, 23/5 & then 1 regularly until end of period.

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**Members News****Summer 2018**

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**Proposed change to Section 21 of the Society's Constitution Rules**

by the Chairman

**Background**

The Society has operated satisfactorily for many years with just a bank account and cheque book which allowed us to purchase goods as needed.

However, this situation has changed. Many suppliers will no longer accept cheques from non-account customers and payment can only be made by debit or credit card. Increasingly Committee members have to purchase goods on their own cards and wait to be reimbursed by the Society. Recently a Committee member had to use his personal credit card to purchase over £2500 worth of building materials when we needed to replace the Whillet's meadows bridge decking. Even though the money was promptly reimbursed, the Committee feels that this is no longer an acceptable way of working.

Our bank account allows us to have up to 3 Debit Cards without charge. The Treasurer has taken up this option. To ensure that there is no inappropriate use of Society funds we need to add to our Constitution Rules. Additions to Section 21, which covers Remuneration of Expenses, have been discussed, and the wording proposed below has been agreed by the Committee.

**Constitution Rules – (Proposed Amendment 5) - Additional wording to Section 21 on Remuneration of Expenses & Ex-Gratia Payments.**

The proposed full Section 21 wording is below. The new paragraphs are inside [ ]. A full copy of the latest Constitution Rules will be put on our website. These will also be ratified at our next AGM.

**REMUNERATION OF EXPENSES & EX-GRATIA PAYMENTS**

21. The Committee may authorise remuneration of out-of-pocket expenses to any officer or member of the Society in return for services rendered to the Society. Where it is deemed appropriate, the Committee may also make an ex-gratia payment to any person who has provided assistance or given unpaid time to the Society.

[Where a Committee member has been issued with and signed in order to hold a FOWW Society Debit Card for the payment of approved Society costs, they will be responsible for the safe keeping and control of that card. The Treasurer is responsible for the administration and ultimate control of all cards operating on the Society accounts. Only a Committee Member can be issued with a card which must be returned on leaving the Committee, or when requested by the Treasurer or The Committee.]

[Note: At the time of every Debit Card transaction our bank will automatically send a text to the Treasurer. Thus the Treasurer will immediately be aware of every card use. Any unauthorised use will be identified and dealt with to protect the funds.]

**Friends of Weir Wood Society Members Spring Walk- Saturday 28 April 2018**

by Tom Howard-Jones

Some twenty friends enjoyed our annual spring walk through the study area and the meadows. Common Terns were checking out the rafts. Swallows, House Martins and Sand Martins were hawking over the reservoir. Great Crested Grebes have started nesting. Many young Grey Herons have yet to leave the heronry. There are 10 Cormorant nests - up from 3 last year. We watched an adult Stock Dove being ringed. In different boxes we saw some Jackdaw eggs and a Mandarin Duck.

The drifts of Bluebells were luxurious. The swathes of Wild Garlic flowers and Wood Anemones were an attractive contrast. Bob showed us: Marsh Valerian; Garlic Mustard; Wood Sorrel; Yellow Archangel and Adder's Tongue Fern.

In the wet meadows, under the refuge tins we saw: a Grass Snake; a Slow Worm; several voles and lots of Common Toads. Warblers were singing in the wooded areas, including: Blackcap; Whitethroat; Garden Warbler; Willow Warbler and Chiffchaff. A deer ran across the end meadow.

New members were surprised to see how big our reserve is. All were impressed by the work done by the Friends - especially the new bridges.

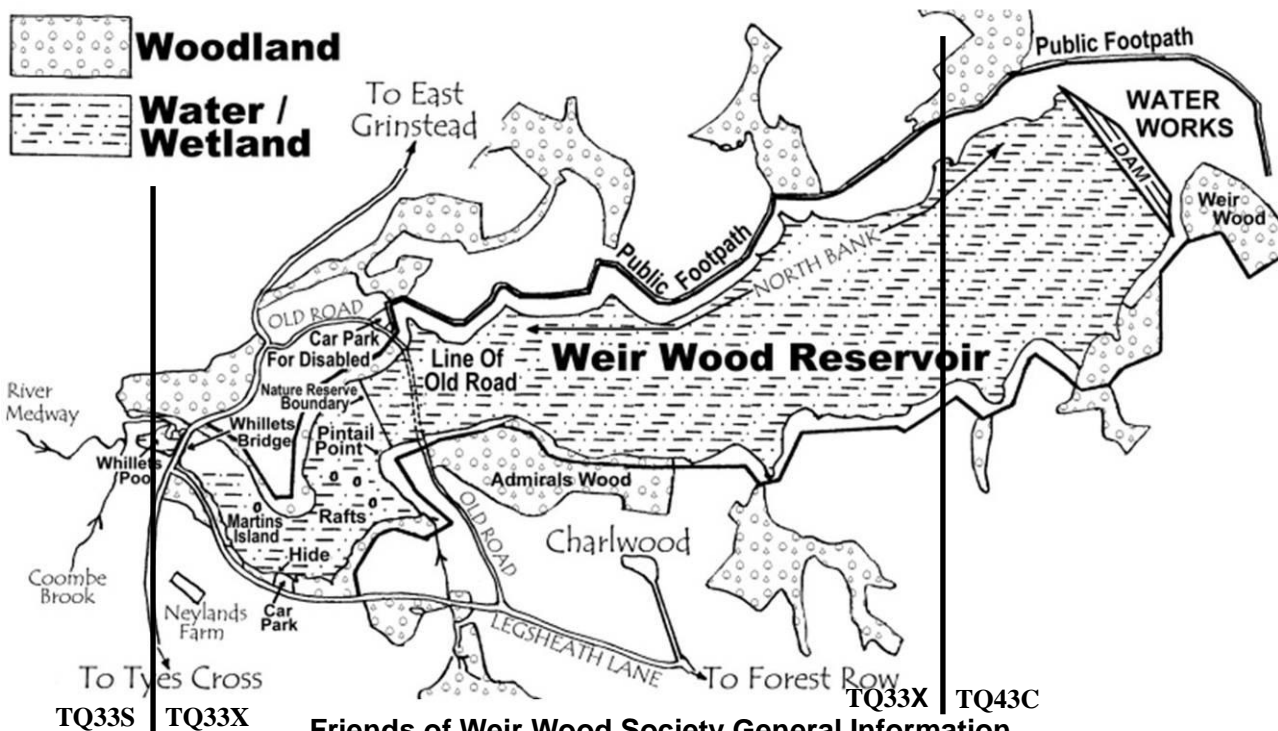
**Birds:** Common Tern, Great Crested Grebe, Canada Goose, Mallard with 5 ducklings, Mandarin, Grey Herons at heronry, Cormorants at nests, Moorhen, Barn Swallow, House martin, Sand Martin, Reed Warbler (H), Blackcap, Willow Warbler (H), Chiffchaff, Garden Warbler (H), Blue Tit, Great Tit, Marsh Tit, Pheasant, Blackbird, Jackdaw, Stock Dove, Woodpigeon, Crow, Magpie, Pied Wagtail, Nuthatch, Whitethroat.

**Plants and Flowers:** Bluebells (blue and white), Wood Anemones, Marsh Valerian, Marsh Marigold (Kingcup), Wild Garlic (aka Ramsons), Garlic Mustard, Wood Sorrel, Yellow Archangel, Adder's Tongue Fern, Greater Stitchwort, Common Spotted Orchids but not yet in flower, Red Campion, Wild Redcurrant & Raspberry, Cuckoo flower, Dogs Mercury, Common Dog Violet, Lesser Celandine, Bugle, Primrose, Cowslip, Lords & Ladies, Ground Ivy, Herb Robert, Opposite Leaved Golden Saxifrage.

A more detailed report with photographs is available on our web site - see the "Members News & Events" page.

**Legacy Donation from the "Sussex Ornithological Society".**

We are delighted to have received a donation of a £1,000 to be spent on bird-related projects. It is part of a legacy left to the SOS by Barbara Mortlock. Barbara and her husband were enthusiastic supporters of Weir Wood and founder members of the Friends Society. She was our SOS bird recorder and a Committee Member for many years. The SOS generously felt our site should also benefit from her gift.

**Friends of Weir Wood Society General Information**

**Chairman:** Bob Johnson, 01892 661548  
**Membership Secretary:** Tom Howard-Jones, 01293 883039  
**Treasurer:** Bob Hastings, 01825 763573  
**Newsletter Editor:** Peter Johnson, 01892 661548  
**Website Editor:** Tom Howard-Jones, 01293 883039

**E-Mail:** [info@weirwood.me.uk](mailto:info@weirwood.me.uk)  
**E-Mail:** [membership@weirwood.me.uk](mailto:membership@weirwood.me.uk)  
**E-Mail:** [treasurer@weirwood.me.uk](mailto:treasurer@weirwood.me.uk)  
**E-Mail:** [newsletter@weirwood.me.uk](mailto:newsletter@weirwood.me.uk)  
**E-Mail:** [sightings@weirwood.me.uk](mailto:sightings@weirwood.me.uk)

**Other Contact Information**

**Tuesday Work Party Volunteers:** [work@weirwood.me.uk](mailto:work@weirwood.me.uk) **Website Photos:** [photos@weirwood.me.uk](mailto:photos@weirwood.me.uk)  
**General E-Mail address:** [info@weirwood.me.uk](mailto:info@weirwood.me.uk) **Website Address:** <http://www.weirwood.me.uk>