

Dulwich Society Wildlife Group meeting 16.11.21

Minutes

Present

Peter Roseveare (Chair)/ Dave Clark, Sigrid Collins, Sue Cope, Jeff Doodson, Emily Montague (Dulwich Park Friends), Charles Newman, Angela Wilkes, Glynis Williams

Apologies Sam Taylor (LWT)

Minutes of Meeting 7.9.21 These were agreed as an accurate record

Feedback from Dulwich Society Executive Committee

Peter is now a member of the executive and has attended two meetings. The chairs of both the gardening and tree committee welcomed him and agreed that there is significant overlap of interest between the wildlife, tree and gardening groups and recognised the need and value of working together on some issues. The hedging on Gallery Road has been highlighted as work that is being currently considered.

Action: Update on Gallery Road wildlife friendly hedging at next meeting

Sharon O'Connor, the newsletter coordinator for the Society has proposed that the Society take part in The Queen's Green Canopy initiative celebrating the Platinum Jubilee. This involves planting trees and nest boxes.

Action: keep abreast of this proposal and aim to ensure any action is of maximum benefit to wildlife by inputting into planning

Mission Statement and Terms of Reference

A draft document was tabled. The terms of reference were agreed. It was decided that the Mission statement should be punchier and stress active participation in promoting benefits to wildlife. Sue will redraft and circulate a revised document. When agreed the document will provide a framework for the agendas of meetings of the group and will be put on the Dulwich Society website to explain the function of the Wildlife Group as well as facilitate members interest in wildlife.

Archiving of Angela's historical records and future documentation

The Wildlife Group of Dulwich Society dates from 1969. Angela summarised the activities of the group from 1969 to 2012. Peter offered to look again at the old records and also to undertake a review of the 2012 to 2021 documents.

The aim will be to look at the issues such as planning applications and park practises that were dealt with by the group over the years, and secondly to attempt to gather information on changing local wildlife species over time by looking at the reports of bird and other species sightings. Dave agreed to request old records from GiGL relating to the Dulwich area over the years.

At present records will remain with the Chair of the group.

Records and Reports

LWT from Sam Taylor (in absentia)

Of note buzzards, sparrowhawks and tawny owl are all present in Sydenham Hill Woods.

Moth trapping in September identified five moth species. (*details of species to be added*) There are concerns that the dewy pond is becoming eutrophic as indicated by daphnia turning red which is a sign of low oxygen saturation in the pond. There may be a need for dredging of the pond.

Action: Peter to ask Sam if financial and/or practical help is required.

Bird Report Overview from Dave Clark

Water birds on park lake are monitored monthly. There has been a reduction in numbers of winter birds with fewer gulls and mallards. The latter may be related to climate change as mallards may not need to move to warmer areas in winter. Tufted ducks now outnumber mallards. Since the numbers of geese have been managed a greater variety of water bird species have been coming to the lake such as little grebe.

Bird numbers in the park have fluctuated with influxes of migrating birds such as wood pigeon during autumn. There has been a very marked decline in blackbirds. Birds in Sydenham Woods are monitored monthly. No blackbirds were seen or heard in November. The local fall in blackbird numbers in last two years is even greater than the overall trend of reduction over ten years for the Greater London area. Probably more than one driver of reduction but one reason likely to be the 2020 hot May making earthworms less easy to find. In summary numbers of robin, wren, blackbird and thrush in the woods are all down while tits, finches and parakeet levels are stable. Local parakeet levels have levelled off possibly since more jackdaws are present (42 in Dulwich Park at last count) competing for nest sites, and squirrels and raptors predate the parakeets.

AOB

New Development on Lordship Lane Estate backing onto Dulwich Park

Emily attended a consultancy meeting about a planned new six story residential development. The implication for wildlife was discussed and hopefully will be considered.

New members

Peter will invite Harry Rutherford (moth specialist) and Steve Robinson to join the group.

Topics arising and discussed ad hoc

Hedgehogs: last sighting of a hedgehog eighteen months ago in Dulwich Park. Dulwich Park Friends have encouraged owners of properties backing onto park to participate in developing hedgehog highways to improve habitat. We discussed why residents might not have taken up suggestions and encouraged another attempt to enable development of hedgehog highways around the park.

Rewilding of Greendale: the wildflower planting was welcomed. Dave discussed the encouragement of sports field groundsmen to wild edges. We discussed ways to encourage local schools to do this and in particular what might be done at the margins of the playing field (? St Olave's) by Greendale which is not much used and hence is a good site for some bird species

Preservation of understorey and judicious management of bramble for the benefit of a wide variety of wildlife and in particular blackbirds and thrushes came up for discussion more than once in relation to other topics.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 18.1.22 venue and time to be agreed