

Dulwich Society Wildlife Group 25.1.22

Meeting held on zoom. Thanks to Heather Stubbs

Present: Peter Roseveare (Chair), Dave Clark, Harry Rutherford, Sue Cope, Jeff Doodson, Emily Montague, Sam Taylor.

Apologies : Charles Newman, Sigrid Collins, Angela Wilkes, Glynis Williams, Stephen Robinson.

Minutes of the Meeting 16.11.21

The minutes were agreed as an accurate report of the meeting. Minutes will now be forwarded to Heather Stubbs for inclusion on the Dulwich Society website.

Matters Arising

New Members

Harry Rutherford (expertise in moths and other lepidoptera) has joined the group and was welcomed.

Steve Robinson will be joining the group when able to attend. (Particular interest in swifts)

Redrafting mission statement.

A second draft was discussed and two amendments agreed. To be finalised at next meeting.

Archiving old minutes

Peter has reviewed these and drew particular attention to the park plant lists that had been collected in 2010.

Ponds in the Woods

Sam again confirmed that both the ponds are becoming eutrophic and are in need of management. The larger pond is likely to require mechanical dredging. Sam will be getting an estimate of cost. Sam's expectation is that major dredging is required every fifteen years or so and is due to be done in near future. He stressed however that the situation is not so bad that the pond wildlife is in imminent danger. Action does however need to be planned. Financial contribution from the Dulwich Society would be welcome. Some prevention of raising nutrient content further is done by skimming off leaves.

Working with Gardening Group and Trees Committee

Peter provided Jeremy Prescott with a tweet with advice about feeding garden birds. Peter has been involved in discussion about hedge enhancement on Gallery Road.

Platinum Jubilee projects

Bird and bat boxes are being considered. There was discussion of including further wilding of Greendale as part Jubilee projects including expanding the wildflower area.

Hedge on Gallery Road

PR reported that he has inspected the area where it is hoped to enhance the hedging on Gallery Road. Dave will talk to John Best at Southwark about availability and providing whips. There was discussion about consideration of best time of year for planting new hedging and the need or not for watering. (ST advised that under normal weather conditions watering is not advised).

Correspondence

Oak Processionary Moths

There was discussion about pros and cons of spraying for Oak Processionary Moth. While there is a statutory requirement to get rid of OPM and it is possible for people to apply to have trees sprayed to kill the moths, there is concern about populations of other species such as purple hairstreak butterfly. Harry's opinion is that the OPM is now a well established species and complete eradication is unlikely. In view of the skin irritation that it causes there is a case for spraying near paths or where children playing. They do not spend any of life cycle on the ground so there is no reason to remove leaf litter in hope of reducing their presence. Sam has not seen any evidence of OPM in Dulwich Woods. His opinion is that spraying is only indicated when there is an actual infestation and should not be done as a prevention method.

Diversity of birds Dulwich Park Lake

A society member has written to Peter expressing concern that there is a greater diversity of birdlife in Kelsey Park compared to Dulwich Park. Dave Clark's records show that the diversity of waterfowl and other birds has increased around DP lake although numbers of birds have fallen. There has also been an increase in sightings and varieties of dragonflies and damselflies since the reedbeds were developed.

There was discussion of reasons for fall in total numbers of waterfowl. This may be partly a national trend relating to climate change. Local issues may be increased numbers of rats and corvids. There is also increase in numbers of people and dogs causing possible disturbance. The carp in the lake are also large enough to predate ducklings.

Members Reports

Emily for Dulwich Park Friends

There is a system of aerators improving oxygenation in the lake. This was funded by a grant obtained by the Park Friends. The reed beds do not have a regular maintenance plan and are not covered by the Park Management Team. The park keepers report no increase in rat numbers despite increase food waste from increase park usage.

The cafe is planning to add a kiosk. The park friends have requested information on rubbish collection relating to the new kiosk outlet.

Sam for LWT

No further progress on Cox's bridge and the oak trees. There has been hedge planting of blackthorn, hawthorn, hazel and wild privet along the south circular border of the woods.

Wildlife Sightings of note

Woodcock on PR's garden!

One shoveler on park lake. (fewer than most years)

DC reported fewer migratory thrushes than most years in October/November. Largest group was twenty five. Expected second influx in January. Country-wide again been fewer. Buzzard seen regularly in Dulwich Wood. Firecrest seen this month in Woods.

Kestrels on the church tower on Cox's Walk.

AOB

Recommendation of book: The Wood that Built London by C.J. Schuler. (photographs by Daniel Greenwood)

Date of next meeting: 5 April 2022