

Trafford Wildlife AGM. Held 25.1.23. at 7pm

Present were J.Wood (Chair), G.Densham (Secretary), D.Reeves (Treasurer), D.Densham, J.Banwell, J.Turnbull, M.Baker, P.Miners, S.Leicester & Y.Martinez.

1. Matters arising from previous AGM (on TW website) not covered in agenda items.

1.1 (Item 5.5) FOI requests to Trafford for Birch Moss covert and Man Utd nature reserve plans. Birch Moss covert Mitigation Strategy dated July 2013 was made available. The Man Utd pre dated this to about 2000 & no record available.

1.2 (Item 7.3) Church newsletters. There isn't really a newsletter.

1.3 (Item 7.4) Facebook. Closed Facebook groups cannot be changed to open.

2. Chair & Secretary Reports

CHAIR REPORT

It is with great pleasure that I am able to report another successful year for Trafford Wildlife. However, looking back to last year's AGM it is clear that the challenges we faced then have not all gone away. Although on the plus side, we no longer have to cope with Covid restrictions.

Recruitment remains an issue but we have welcomed a number of new members this year and I think we have done well in an area where quality counts more than quantity.

Our work on National Trust land has been successful and is clearly valued. For understandable reasons, we still await NT approval for some of our plans. For example, the SSSI at Brookeheyes Covert and the go ahead for the willow tit project.

Nature in Trafford is still under potential threat from housing and infrastructure development, but the good news is that we have achieved a huge amount of work over multiple sites, enjoyed great friendship, the benefits of exercise in the open air, and the satisfaction of a good job well done for nature conservation.

I know that Geoff and David will thank everyone for their great contributions throughout the year but it falls to me to offer a special thanks to Geoff for his unstinting work in maintaining at least two working parties per week throughout the year and putting in the planning and organisation effort this takes. He also takes on liaison work with other organizations and maintains the website and other publicity forums.

Special thanks are also due to David, not only for keeping his eye on accounts but also for organising Sunday working parties and doing much work on planning the further development of sites, the purchasing of new plants and keeping members informed through emails.

Also deserving of special mention is Maura who has kept the litter pick group together throughout the year in (almost) all weather's and provides such helpful information and maps on WhatsApp each week. She is also instrumental in liaising with the Sale Makers Market where we have had a presence for the first time this year.

We are lucky to have such a great group of people as members. It makes me feel that we can look forward with optimism to meeting some of the ongoing challenges and to continue to maintain and enhance our precious wildlife in 2023.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

	2020	2021	2022
Number of tasks	76	115	141
Number of people	448	534	694
Number of volunteer hours	1782	1918	2638

Communications to volunteers continue through Website, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and Email.

The website hosting through Site123 was renewed for a further 3 years in November. Plenty of responses via the website but few actual volunteers.

Publicity posters have been put out in Sale, Altrincham & Coppice Avenue Libraries.

Publicity posters have been put out in St Martins & St Mary's Church Sale.

Publicity was attempted with Methodist and Life Centre but with no success so far.

20,000 copies of the free magazine Live Well Your Way were distributed around libraries, surgeries, social clubs etc. There was one response who has come out.

TW had a stall at Sale Makers Market 4 times this year and a useful number of volunteer contacts have been made.

TW presence at Trafford Green Groups networking event in August.

TW had a stall at the Manchester University Volunteering event in October, a good day with plenty of interest but no volunteers.

TW had a stall at Sale West volunteer event in November.

Social prescribing was researched and TW require a fairly high level of ability so would follow on if anyone found suitable from front line providers.

No movement on surveys & recording. Members have participated NT Dunham surveys.

City of Trees were approached regarding tree planting aftercare but no progress.

3. Sunday Group & Financial Statement (also see separate report for full detail)

Sunday group

David R reported that the Sunday volunteer group conducted 12 conservation outings over 2022, representing a total of 70 persons and 290 person-hours.

Financial statement

The Treasurer (David R) reported that TWs account had a healthy balance of £2052.55 at the end of December 2022, of which £857 came from member donations during the year. Proposed spending in 2023 includes £100 for group insurance, £70 donation to Sinderland Green Church (in appreciation of allowing use of their car park), and an anticipated £500 for materials and equipment. These items were approved by the AGM.

Water vole monitoring

(David R) Following the discovery of potential water vole feeding activity in Birch Moss Covert, two trail cams were erected in the site in February 2022, in the hope of obtaining video evidence of their presence. One cam was purchased by TW for this purpose; the other was a personal cam of Janet Turnbull. Monitoring of the cams by Janet found evidence of Redwing, Mallard and Fox, but not of water voles! Unfortunately, the TW-owned cam was stolen in April, after which Janet removed her cam for safety reasons.

4. The current officers were unanimously requested to continue.

5. Conservation work – future projects:

NT comments in red

1. Brookheyes management plan agreement with NE (to allow continued de-leafing of green pond & hedge maintenance). **We will continue to pause this whilst we consult with NE. We have plans but can only implement them once our ranger team is expanded. thanks for your continued patience on this.** TW concerned that if the pond dredging isn't done that the relative rare water violet population created over the previous 50 years could be lost. **TW** will need to keep pressure on NT.
2. Sinderland Green management plan (to allow continued de-leafing of green pond & hedge maintenance). **Same as above.** As above re pond dredging.
3. Replacement black poplar planting in Sinderland Green. **When our ranger team expands, we will have more capacity to implement fab projects such as this (if indeed they are the true species and not a hybrid). We have the necessary experience and interest in the team to kick start this and a new walled garden tree nursery, but we just need more team members and more importantly updated and thorough woodland management plans which Colin and Steve are on with.**
4. Tree planting to join Sinderland Green to Brookheyes. **We do not have firm plans or capacity to do this at present, awaiting management plans etc.**
5. Willow Tit additional habitats in Maljurs/Stamford Community woodland. **We do not have plans or capacity to do this at present, awaiting management plans etc.**
6. Sinderland Green bamboo treatment. **On Riverlands jobs list**
7. Brookheyes permissive path boardwalk over sometimes underwater section. **No plans as of yet. As it is a permissive path and not a right of way this isn't urgent, but not forgotten.**
8. Removal of Stamford Community Woodland decaying tree guards. **Please can you do this before the end of Feb before bird nesting starts 1st March.**

Anything else that can be shared regarding next year?

Huge thank you from the Dunham Massey Ranger Team to all Trafford Wildlife volunteers for your continued support in 2022. From rhodi and Balsam bashing in our special woodlands on the wider estate to new hedgerow after care and orchard wildflower planting, 'free the tree' and 'park pond' projects in our SSSI deer park to name but a few! Your energy and enthusiasm don't go unnoticed, and we really appreciated your contribution to making Dunham a better place for wildlife and people.

In 2023 we will continue with the above and more both in the parkland and wider estate.

6. AOB

6.1 Swift Report – David N. At the moment our UK Swifts will be sunning themselves under South African skies, but come April they'll be readying themselves for their migration back to our shores. Last Summer I had success for the first time with my own nest boxes with a pair of Swifts taking residence and raising a youngster which successfully fledged, I'm hoping for more this Summer with the hopeful return of the same pair, I've also added three nest bricks to my house which takes the total to nine possible nesting sites. Elsewhere I've approached the Sale Society of Friends who are considering fitting Swift boxes to their meeting house, I've also approached the owners of Brooks Institute in Ashton-on Mersey who are also interested in providing a place for a nestbox, this would be great as there is already a good population of Swifts nearby. Yesterday evening I attended the first meeting of S.M.S. (South Manchester Swifts) which has been set up to be a focal point for Swift conservation in the local area, we're hoping to have an online presence shortly, I'll keep you all updated asap. If any members feel that they would like a Swift box please get in touch with me and we can see if their property would be suitable. Photo display includes of my pair entering my nestbox.

6.2 Birch Moss Covert small birch processing. A day task of 5 cutters would typically cut 30 small birch each leaving 150 stumps. A heavy gang could, on the same day, (optimistically) pop 50 small stumps. With another day of popping and the winching 15 stumps per day a further 4 days heavy gang operation would be required. In addition, with all the birch brash at the side of the reserve, winch anchor trees are inaccessible. The use of glyphosate plugs to speed up the stump control was raised. The purchase of 100 plugs from TW funds will be investigated to determine effectiveness on stumps. 10 stumps will remain un-plugged and the regrowth cut down to ascertain whether the stumps will die naturally after a few years of repeat cutting.

6.3 Timperley Tidiers (TT) litter-picking group are currently PL insured through Sale Wombles which is unlikely to be renewed through lack of funds. Proposal to include TT as a sub group of TW was accepted.

6.4 Jennifer W was thanked for her kind hospitality for hosting the evening.