

## Chairmans Report

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Wiltshire Ornithological Society. In a first for the Society due to Covid-19 we had to postpone the AGM which sadly means that we have no speaker. In another first for the Society to remain compliant with Government guidelines we are holding this AGM over Zoom. Thank you for joining us this evening

1. Firstly, I would like to thank all of the committee for their hard work in serving the society for the past year.
2. In particular I would like to thank Alison Rymell who is stepping down from the Executive Committee after a decade of service. Not only has Alison done a brilliant job as Indoor Meetings Organiser but she has been the first to volunteer for a wide range of tasks with endless enthusiasm and energy. In typical fashion, Alison is still contributing and she is now on the editorial team of WOS News.
3. WOS News: Thank you very much to the WOS News Editorial team: Jenny Elvin, Christine Johnson and Bruce Maxfield for the continued high standard of our quarterly bulletin. The diversity and quality of articles is superb. Please keep sending in your articles to share your thoughts and experiences with others. Jenny has now resigned from the Committee and I thank her for her contribution and positive input to committee meetings.
4. Recorder: Nick Adams has stepped down from the role of Recorder after 3 years in the role. Nick has worked phenomenally hard to improve how we manage both current and historic records. The task has become more difficult due to the increased number of ways that records can be submitted. Nicks tenure in the role has been really important in transforming our systems and going forward the new Recorder will greatly benefit from Nicks efforts.
5. Finance: Martin Cook is stepping down as Treasurer after 3 years in the role. Martin has transformed our accounts and our understanding of them. Martin has been key to the delivery of the landfill tax projects that deliver practical conservation work. Thank you very much to Martin for all of your hard work and wise counsel.
6. Hobby: Thanks to the Hobby editorial board of Paul Castle, Pete Combridge and Stephen Edwards for editing the Wiltshire Bird Report, to all the text writers, the artists and photographers, and especially to Nick Adams and Bill Quantrill for their contributions.
7. Conservation Projects: Tree Sparrow conservation efforts across the county have again been very successful with over 2000 young fledging from nest boxes for the second year in a row. The Tree Sparrow Conservation Project has become more well-known across the country and we receive many requests for advice. In October we gave a tour of the Tree Sparrow Project to a team from the Banbury Ornithological Society and they have now started their own Tree Sparrow Project emulating ours. In January we gave a tour of the project to a group of Developers and Conservationists who are trying to save the last population of Tree Sparrows in Hertfordshire that is threatened by Development.
8. We completed a landfill tax funded project that created a small reed bed on farmland adjacent to the River Thames. There was money left over from this project and we submitted and delivered another smaller project aimed at helping Tree Sparrows in the Thames Valley by providing more nest boxes and feeders.
9. Outdoor Meetings: The Outdoor Meetings Programme has been very successful and Granville Pictor really has done a superb job of coordinating them. 18 meetings were held throughout the year, mostly across Wiltshire and the surrounding counties. The highlight of the outdoor meetings was a long weekend in North Norfolk attended by 28 members who recorded an impressive 112 species of bird.
10. Indoor Meetings Thank you very much to Alison Rymell who organised the Indoor Meetings. Three indoor meetings were held during the year and those attending have found them really enjoyable with a great club atmosphere. However, they are being attended in lower numbers than we would like and we are working hard to understand how we can increase attendance. We tried two different meeting locations in Trowbridge and Swindon. Those attending enjoyed them but attendance was still low.
11. Web Site: Thanks to Gareth Hawkes our webmaster who is doing a great job managing our website and continuing to protect it from a whole host of attacks that we are all blissfully unaware of. Thanks also to Graham Deacon for maintaining the Latest Sightings page which can take up to two hours per day – a really phenomenal effort and a much appreciated resource for our members.
12. BTO: Wiltshire has been really lucky to have Bill Quantrill as our Regional BTO Representative. Bill has worked quietly but persistently over the years and he has reached the point where there are now 94

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surveyors completing four times the number of Breeding Bird Surveys than when he started. Bill has now retired from this role, we thank you very much Bill for all of your hard work. Claire Jones now takes over as the sole BTO Representative for Wiltshire. Claire is very enthusiastic and is sure to carry on Bills good work. If you haven't signed up for any surveys please do so.

13. Notices: In June 2019 we were informed of the passing of John Brown. John was twice Chair of WOS from 1989-1991 and from 1993-1995. He was also the major fundraiser for The Birds of Wiltshire. His contribution to the Society and to birds in Wiltshire really has been invaluable. In April 2019 Anna Grayson passed away. Anna was our longest serving Secretary, serving from 1978-1997 doing such an important role in supporting the work of the Society.
14. Lastly, I would like to thank David Little for his sterling work throughout the year and not least in organising and enabling the AGM to go ahead online.