

Worcester Canal Group

Meeting 12/07/23 at the Chestnuts

Present: Jacky, Jenny, Liz, Mark, Christine, Matt, Karen, Hannah, George, Graham (chair)

Apologies: Joy, Julie May, Clare.

1. Local History Project – Some progress made. A way of collecting information from local residents has been circulated by Ian. The Riverside Park now has information boards along its route. We should aim to produce something similar. Matt and Graham to contact Ian.
2. Swift Walks – This has not been a good year for swift numbers. Nevertheless, the swift walks have succeeded in identifying some popular nesting locations and these have been logged on the website by George. Some sites were expected. Victoria Institute was a surprise. The swifts are now getting ready to migrate. There will be no more walks. The next step will be a leaflet explaining the project and its value and a leaflet drop to people who might accept a nesting box. Joy has undertaken to find a way to contact the residents of Victoria Institute. Hannah will do likewise through a friend who lives there and will try to find out when the windows are cleaned as this involves the use of a cherry picker, which we will need. Mark volunteered to go up in the cherry picker and install the boxes. Liz said that WEG are making 10 nesting boxes and 6 more have been donated.
3. Other WWT – a series of very short promotional films have been made featuring community groups that have worked with the Wilder Worcester project such as the ARA and the Cathedral Group. The Canal Group film will be forwarded to Matt and loaded onto the website.
4. Banking – We have £338.87 of which £226 is set aside for further fruit trees leaving £111.95 available. However, we still do not have a bank account. Santander requires a letter of consent. Then the signatories, George, Joy, Matt and Graham will need to go to Birmingham to prove their identity. If this falls through Nat West is another possibility.
5. CRT Round Table event – Karen said that this event was the first of its kind and she had attended as the representative of the City Council. It was an afternoon of presentations. The CRT want to improve the way they work in partnership with others. One strand of this work is a careful mapping to identify where biodiversity can best be enhanced and where problems like invasive species need to be tackled. Unlocking the Severn is an example of this. Mark is a volunteer on this project and said that it is going well. The CRT is looking to undertake a massive bio-diversity project in our region. Severn Trent Water was at the meeting. A lot of the current funding will change to become more biodiversity focused through the DEFRA Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. Another strand is to do with money. Massive cuts have been announced, 5% every year with a total cut of £300 million over 10 years.
6. City Council Waterways Survey - a survey has been commissioned. Looking in particular at biodiversity. A consultation document has been put out and responses are invited by the end of the month. Matt has placed this document on the website. The city Council contact

person is Claire Neville. As the canal has only recently been the subject of a Natural Networks report it is not included in this survey. However, the canal has to be part of whatever action follows from the survey. As such it could be the focus of our upcoming AGM.

7. AGM – our AGM is due in September. It was agreed to ask Chris Dodds, part-time biodiversity consultant to the city council, to be our guest speaker. Agreed to invite as many as possible to attend. The date is to be fixed depending on his availability. Karen and Hannah agreed to book a room at the Guildhall.
8. Any Other Business
 - i) Litter Pick as always. Graham asked if a watering can be included in the equipment to help the fruit trees if there is a heatwave.
 - ii) Worcester Paint Festival – have agreed to paint two murals, one at Bilford Lock and the other as a replacement for the Jungle Book mural in Lansdowne Park. This was originally done as a memorial for a child who died. The family have been spoken to and agree that the existing mural is growing tired and should be replaced.
 - iii) The `Best Earth Plot` allotment completion was won by an allotment on the Pitchcroft site worked by Christine and Mark's son. To be invited to come and put these skills to further use along the canal.
 - iv) New trees have been ordered to replace the ones damaged by vandals.

Next meeting AGM September at the Guildhall , date to be confirmed

GF 13.07.23