

Matters arising from 2019 minutes

Due to Covid19 restrictions AGM for 2020 originally scheduled for July had to be postponed til Sept and run as Zoom meeting.

Website redesign: the person who might have been able to do this has had too many other work pressures to undertake the process, so no progress on this at moment.

Apple day Oct 20. Due to Covid19 this will not happen as in previous years. See below for further details.

Group Coordinator's report for AGM FPBNR 8th Sept 2020

Many thanks to all those involved this last year for continuing hard work in a range of areas. In particular, we are most grateful to Rob not only for his expertise as treasurer but also for the excellent seasonal posters he has produced so regularly. Thank you to Sue K for managing our media profile especially on Facebook (where we have over 460 followers), and to Graham for his ongoing work in managing the practical aspects of the reserve, without which it would quickly revert to impenetrable bramble; we much appreciate their dedicated commitment and wildlife knowledge. Thank you also to Andy for administering the website and to Sharon for all the support she has given me.

Activities during the last year: 13 Nov at Mel's café, David Cramp gave a fascinating illustrated talk about wildlife in the garden, encouraging us to provide habitats, observe and appreciate the range of wildlife on our doorstep, even the ones we are diffident about (such as rats). About 20 attended. In December there was a site visit from Rory Jones (bat ecologist) and CBC regarding potential construction of a bat structure to rehome a small number of lesser horseshoe bats from a bridge off Moorend Rd, but no further progress on this in last few months. In January Hazel attended a meeting organised by Richard Rolfe (Biology lecturer at Glos university) with CBC and other Friends groups to discuss a Cheltenham Wildlife Festival in 2020; this has been put on hold til next year. Most recently, local resident David Elder has produced an AV presentation on the reserve which will be used as part of Cheltenham Heritage Open Days this month.

Despite the enforced break due to CV19 from April to June, monthly work parties have provided approx 200 hours of volunteer time, in which we carried out a range of tasks including litter picking, path clearance and repair, cutting back undergrowth, brush cutting and moving logs and branches as needed. These work parties are a good way for us to encourage people to get involved in practical support for the reserve in order to increase the number of active volunteers.

During this period of CV restrictions, the reserve has provided a much appreciated outdoor haven for many people in this area and although its seclusion can be abused, the majority of users have treated it with respect and simply enjoyed its benefits of outdoor space and abundant wildlife. In order to sustain this appropriate level of use, it seems wiser not to plan a large gathering for Apple Day in October, as we have done in the past, but to provide some specific publicity regarding our orchard (and perhaps other historic Gloucestershire orchards), with apple themed suggestions for visitors to engage in around the half term week. Sharon is happy to coordinate posters for this, and if you have some ideas for this please do be in touch with her.

Looking ahead, if you have ideas of the type of activity you would like to see at the reserve then please do make these known. Obviously anything we arrange will have to comply with current regulations on numbers etc. We hope to be able to run an Apple Day in October 2021, but there is still too much uncertainty to be able to guarantee this. I would like to suggest a dawn chorus walk in May, if there is support for this. Informal feedback has shown that the information posters on the notice boards have been useful, and it would be good to keep these going if we can.

There have been some points of concern during the year: landgrabbing at the eastern end of reserve has continued; an intrusive wall recently built out into footpath towards TravisPerkins; the notice board by pond was vandalised . I have emailed CBC regarding the landgrabbing and wall issues – they are unlikely to take action regarding landgrabbing, and they confirmed they are not responsible for the path (I think Glos Highways is). Repairing the notice board has proved costly and problematic, so it is currently offsite.

Finally, a reminder that PBNR is now listed on Cheltenham Lottery, which gives a 50% donation to the reserve when it is nominated as a receiving charity from ticket purchases. The lottery runs every week and tickets cost £1. Sharon has all the details, and it is a very simple way of raising money for the reserve.