

# Issue 112 - WATERCRESS

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

As the Annual General Meeting had to be cancelled, in March, the WWA committee decided to find a novel way of holding it that would be acceptable to our members! We are going to give the reports from the Officers via this newsletter and the election of the new committee has been done by our regular volunteer group, via email. So, let us begin the meeting with ...

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

"As I sit down to compose a few words for this edition of our newsletter I can look out of my window at a beautiful blue evening sky, some fine high cloud highlighted by the setting sun and watch a variety of frisky garden birds filling their beaks in anticipation of the new breeding season. Spring is here, we are now on British Summer Time, shrubs and flowers are well into new growth and everything in the world is good.

But of course, it is not, it could not be further from the truth. All meetings and public gatherings have been cancelled or postponed. Everyone must be planning and wondering what to do over the next few months. 2020 has been put on hold. Unthinkable many weeks ago, and following government guidelines, we have now had to formally close the Reserve as effective management has become impossible.

Due to the sterling work of all our helpers over the last year, the site will be at its best in the coming months, and I can only hope that we will be able to re-open in time to appreciate it, be assured that will be as soon as practicable.

In the meantime, and on behalf of the WWA, I extend thanks and gratitude to all those who have contributed to the management and maintenance of the site, your efforts are recognised and much appreciated by members and visitors alike.

Spring is here, summer, autumn and winter will follow. There's something I can guarantee!

Stay safe."

**Steve  
Chairman**

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## RESERVE MANAGER'S REPORT

I would like to reinforce the comments made by our Chairman and thank the volunteers, who selflessly give up their time to help maintain the Reserve. Without their efforts, either at the regular Wednesday morning meet-up or the monthly Sunday work party the Reserve would be inaccessible! Because of the coronavirus situation our volunteers have been

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

deprived of their regular workout each week or month, and we are all missing Janet's lovely home-baked cakes every week!

Sheila and I have been keeping an eye on the Reserve by doing security checks every few days. There have been a few people climbing over the gate and ignoring the signs that the Reserve is closed, but mostly people are being very respectful of the situation.

Most of the work carried out on site has been mentioned in previous newsletters so I will keep this report brief. Some of the jobs completed last year included rubbing down the sheds, blockhouse and bird hide and being given a coat of Cuprinol, some of it even getting onto the woodwork!

Regular tasks include hedge cutting (and laying), grass mowing, tending to the Butterfly Meadow and Herb Garden, butterfly surveys, topping up the paths with wood chippings (when available), barley straw treatment in the Mere to try and control the algal blooms, cutting back any overhanging vegetation and lots, lots more. Last August we held our annual 'volunteers' BBQ'. It is always a pleasure for the WWA committee to say a big 'Thank You' to you all, and to be able to treat you to an outdoor lunch whilst admiring the efforts of all your hard work!

**Howard  
Reserve Manager**

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## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

At the end of 2019 there were 169 paid-up member households. 115 paid by cheque and 54 by direct bank transfer. This is about the same as last year and brings in an income that is vital to fund work carried out by our volunteers (and professional arborist) at the Reserve. I would like to thank you all for your continued support, without which the Association would not continue to exist.

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

I would also like to thank members for their prompt membership renewal subscriptions, way back in January. It is not too late to renew if you have overlooked this and still wish to do so. I would be delighted to hear from you! A membership renewal form is attached if you need one. Although the Reserve is closed to the public for now, the Association greatly appreciate all the funding, especially during these challenging times!

**Howard  
Membership Secretary**

## TREASURER'S REPORT

A high-level summary of the WWA's profit and loss account for the year ending 31 December 2019 is as follows:

- Total income for the year of £3,187, compared with £5,244 for 2018. The main reason for the reduction being a timing difference in claiming tax back on donations.
- Total expenditure of £3,620, compared with £3,058 in the prior year. The main reason for the increase being amounts spent on tree pollarding work.
- An overall deficit for the year of £433, compared with a surplus for the prior year of £2,186. However, overall, the WWA had an accumulated surplus at the year-end of £8,918.

The full set of accounts are attached.

**Mandy**  
**Treasurer**

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

As the WWA's Secretary it falls to me at the AGM to run the election for the WWA Management Committee for the next year. We are in unprecedented times but are looking to ensure we have a Committee for 2020. Cath joined the Committee in 2015 and has contributed to the running of WWA over the past five years, most notably creating an excellent presentation documenting WWA's origins, work and achievements. Cath has decided to stand down from the Committee and we asked for nominations for a new member. Mike, who is a familiar face to those of you who volunteer at the Reserve, was proposed and seconded and his nomination accepted. Whilst the list of committee members would normally be put to the AGM for election this has not been possible. We are anxious to ensure we have a functional Committee, so we have asked for the list of members to be proposed and seconded by WWA volunteer members. Caroline C has block proposed the new committee and Roger has seconded the proposal. and have ratified the Committee as follows:

### **Elected Committee for 2020:**

Steve - Chairman  
Mandy - Treasurer  
Howard - Reserve Manager  
Janet - Secretary

### **Members**

Sheila  
Sam  
Mike  
Margaret

We trust that, in this difficult time, this is acceptable to members so that the Management Committee can continue to support the work of WWA.

**Janet - Secretary**

## WASSAIL



On the count of 3, ladies.....

The Wassail was a great success this year, with the welcome return of the Wicket Brood Border Morris. The weather was simply perfect after weeks of rain. The sun shone, we had a good turnout of our members and friends, and we took over £400 as a bonus! And a special touch was all the guests joining in the final dance of the day. Thanks go out to everyone who contributed to the day, either by helping to get the site ready in advance of the event, by baking cakes, making jam, selling raffle tickets, by setting up and taking down the awning, and a myriad of other tasks.

Who would have guessed back then what was heading our way soon?



## WORK PARTY DATES 2020

**\*POSTPONED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE\***

We had lots of projects planned for this year, but they will have to wait a while.....

**[www.watercresslnr.org.uk](http://www.watercresslnr.org.uk)**

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## WORK PARTY NEWS 2020

**January:** Volunteers finished clearing the site in preparation for the Wassail. One of the apple trees in the allotment was getting overrun with ivy, so it has been cut through and removed as high as possible.

Steve spent the morning sorting out the quite considerable amount of timber we have accumulated over the years. This is now securely stored in the Reserve Manager's dry garage, thus freeing up space in the sheds on site.

The Bramley apple tree in the Pyghtle has been pruned. The invasive sedge plants were dug out.

**February:** It was time to test out the waders and new pond gloves. The Wednesday team made a good start on digging out the Flag Iris that was obscuring the view of the Mere from the wooden bench. Although beautiful when in flower, and a great marginal plant, Flag Iris can become too prolific.



The strong winds that prevailed recently caused some damage around the Reserve. A Cherry Tree was completely blown over in the Allotment and the team spent a morning cutting it up ready for the bonfire.

The greatest casualty was an exceptionally large Goat Willow in the Shady Place. Not quite so shady, now! We called in our regular arborist, Andy Gardner, who came over very promptly to sort it out as it was being propped up by an adjacent Goat Willow. £500 well spent. One benefit of the fallen tree has been the



## WORK PARTY NEWS 2020

decent pile of woodchips created, now spread out around some of the paths! So far, this new woodchip is lasting well and makes an attractive addition to the appearance of the Reserve. We are hoping for some more woodchip from another local arborist to top up the rest of the paths. Could be a long wait!



**March:** The Association are trialling the use of Siltex again although it controversial as to whether it works or not! It is basically exceptionally fine, powdered chalk and is alleged to help break down organic silt. It is quite cheap to buy and great fun to apply if it is not too windy! We shall also continue with the Barley Straw treatment to try and keep on top the annual algal problem.

Merely messing about in the water!





## Can you be a butterfly surveyor for us?

We have a small team who survey the butterflies on the WWA Reserve over the summer months. The results give us information about what is on the Reserve and whether we are managing well. They also go into County and national databases to help track the overall health of our environment and effects of climate change.

The survey consists of a set walk around the Reserve, counting the numbers of each species as you go. We will give you training and support if you want to 'learn' your butterflies. Surveys only take place in fine weather between about 10 am and 4 pm. A survey takes about 20- 30 minutes. Although the aim is to do a weekly survey, as we have a small team you can miss a week if necessary and often surveyors choose to do more than one survey a week when the weather is good. The season starts in April and ends in September.

**Margaret**

This is on hold for now but if you are interested later in the year please let the Editor know.

## SPRINGTIME AT THE RESERVE

The Wood Anemone is a pretty spring flower of ancient woodlands, and is also planted in graveyards, parks and gardens. Its white flowers bloom between March and May, before the canopy becomes too dense, but its seeds are mostly infertile, and it spreads slowly through the growth of its roots. An easily recognisable flower, the Wood Anemone is a low-growing plant, with six to seven large, white or purple-streaked 'petals' (which are its sepals), surrounding a cluster of distinctive yellow anthers. Its leaves are deeply lobed, and it has a thin, red stem.

The Wood Anemone is named after the Greek wind god, Anemos, who sent his namesakes, the anemones, in early spring to herald his coming. This legend gives the flower its other common name of 'Windflower'. It has a sharp, musky smell and this is hinted at in some old local names like 'smell foxes'. Hoverflies are particularly fond of the Wood Anemone and help pollinate it. Other animals will only eat it if nothing else is available, because of its acrid taste. It is poisonous to humans.



Wood anemone growing in the Shady Place

## VIEWS FROM AROUND THE RESERVE



Yellow Flag Iris - flowering in late April



Grown-up playtime?



Treecreeper - photo courtesy of Craig Hill

## WWA Committee 2020/2021

### Officers

**Steve /Chairman**

**Janet /Secretary**

**Howard /Reserve Manager  
and Membership Secretary**

**Mandy /Treasurer**

### Members

**Sheila /Newsletter Editor**

**Sam /Webmaster**

**Mike**

**Margaret /Management Plan Guru**