

Kemerton Conservation Trust

Kemerton Court
Kemerton
Tewkesbury
Gloucestershire
GL20 7HY

Tel: 01386 725 254

www.kemerton.org

Registered Charity No. 702488



GOVERNORS

ADRIAN DARBY, OBE (Chairman)

MATTHEW DARBY

PETER DOBLE

LORD HOWICK, VMH

PETER MARREN

Dr MARGARET PALMER, MBE

BRETT WESTWOOD

ROGER WORKMAN

Kemerton Conservation Trust

Report from Kate Aubury Support Coordinator

October 2017-October 2018

Overview

In the last 12 months I have been busy administering the Friends scheme, writing and issuing the newsletter and dealing with general queries, updating Facebook and the website, organising several events including the Annual Open Day, completing grant applications and supervising the monthly work parties. There have been several major additional administrative projects this year including implementing GDPR, launching the new logo and writing seven new reserves risk assessment. I have also continued to become more involved in habitat management decisions and project management, in part due to John Clarke's illness. In addition to assisting Governor Matt Darby with organising the weekly warden work and contractors carrying out ad-hoc habitat management I have also been overseeing work to reinstate one of the Mining Bee banks at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve and I project managed the Cash for Catchments Silt trap Project at Beggar Boys Wetland, which completed in September.

Although I have carried out much of this in the half day assigned to Trust work as part of my administrative role with Kemerton Estate, about half of it continues to be done in my spare time and I am finding it very hard to manage it all, particularly with the additional burden from GDPR, and have at times gotten very behind on the Friends' scheme administration. It is my strong belief that the Trust must look at ways to increase our personnel resources in the near future to enable us to better manage our existing workload and allow us to do more fundraising, project management and community work. I hope this will be prioritised in the coming year.

However, despite lack of time and pressures of workload, a lot was still achieved in the last year and below is a more in-depth look at some of the activities I was involved in.

Friends of KCT Scheme

The overall Friends scheme numbers have increased slightly in the last 12 months. We have 191 individual or joint members and 7 corporate sponsors (the figures were 176 and 7 respectively in 2016/17). The membership mix continues to consist of a higher proportion of donors than volunteers (136) than volunteers (55).

This year, we recruited quite a few new members and lost a handful of existing members. We only lost 7 members in the last 12 months (as against 18 members lost in 2016/17). Of these 6 were donors and 1 was a volunteer (as against 8 donors and 10 volunteers last year). Of the donors, two sadly passed away and the others did not renew, and the volunteer stopped attending because they had moved away.

The new donors were mostly recruited either at the Open Day, Apple Day or via our website after visiting KLNLR (membership forms can be downloaded). Most of the new volunteers are locals who have approached us interested in getting involved in the care of the reserves and we also gained 2 new volunteers as a result of DoE.

All members continue to receive the bi-annual newsletter, which is very well received and an important part of our communications with the Friends.

I continue to update the Facebook page, which is a more informal communication channel for members and the general public. I post photos of work parties, advertise upcoming events, highlight the diversity of the reserves with photos of flora and fauna throughout the year and write short pieces on any big news items. In the last year I have also posted about the vandalism issues at KLNLR. I try to ensure it's updated at least once a month and posts generally reach 250-500 people but sometimes as many as 2000. Average views are 35-50 but some posts generate a lot more interest (our most read recent post was about someone

swimming in the lake and the dangers involved, which attracted 1000 clicks, whilst two other posts about vandalism and littering both attracted over 350 clicks and over 50 comments or reactions).

Volunteer Work Parties

The work parties continue to flourish and are invaluable in getting large scale habitat management jobs completed.

Turnout has increased substantially slightly from 6.3 per session last year to 9 per session this year, which is great. However, we had to cancel two work parties (one due to bad weather and the other due to unexpected illness) so have only completed 9 work parties in the last twelve months, which obviously impacts on the total habitat management carried out. We only lost one volunteer who moved away, although we have seen less attendance from some of our regulars who have competing priorities or work commitments. We gained 3 new regular volunteers, including one new DoE participant, and also welcomed back another two DoE participants who volunteered in the past, which is nice to see. I continue to advertise volunteering at all events and post regular updates on our Facebook page so anyone interested can see what we do and get in touch.

The work parties have continued to prove useful in supporting the Trust's work. The majority of our work is habitat management on the reserves or in the orchards but we also planted bluebell and daffodil bulbs in November as part of the Woodland Wildflower Project and assisted with site preparation ahead of the Open Day in August.

I estimate that from April 2017 to March 2018, the volunteer work party donated approximately 198 hours of work worth £1237.50 to the Trust. (This figure excludes John's and my time).

I continue to keep H&S records for all work parties. We had no incidents to report in the period covered by this report.

In addition to our own work parties, I also arranged a visit from EA staff in October 2017 as part of their giving back corporate volunteering scheme. Sixteen staff from the local office spent either a morning or afternoon session at Beggar Boys Wetland carrying out scrub clearance. The feedback was very positive so I hope we will be considered again in the future. Our warden John Threadingham kindly supervised the visit for us, while I dealt with all the organisation and H&S administration etc.

Events

In October 2017, the day before the last Governors' Meeting, Governor Peter Marren led a Member only Fungus Foray around Kemerton Wood, which I assisted with. Turnout was lower than hoped and dry weather restricted the number of fungi found but it was a fun ramble and we recorded 24 species in total, a nice addition to our existing records.

In late October David, Charlotte and I attended the annual Kemerton Orchard Workers' Apple Day with an information stand. I publicised the Trust's orchard conservation work, as well as all our general work. As the estate had just started selling apples from Lillans Orchard, which is managed by the Trust, to local company Dunkertons Cider we had some samples on the stand to show visitors, which was a nice addition.

In March Chairman Adrian and I led a Member-only Spring Walk at Kemerton Wood and Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve. We had a good turnout and although the cold spell in March had slowed the start of spring we had a good walk and everyone enjoyed themselves. The wild daffodils were looking particularly lovely.

In June we held a wildflower walk on Upton Ham in association with Upton in Bloom, who had requested an event to help tie in with their own floral work. The walk was co-led by our Chairman Adrian and Joe Costley, Plantlife's Reserves Manager, as Plantlife have a reserve on the Ham as well and it was a great opportunity to publicise both charities' work locally. The walk was free for all and publicised widely in the town and was well attended by locals, many of whom knew little about the Trust. We had a lovely afternoon highlighting the meadow's botanical richness and have forged a new link with Upton In Bloom which will no doubt continue into the future.

In August we held our Annual Open Day at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve. One walk focussed on the wonderful dragonflies at the site and was led by Friend of KCT and County Dragonfly Recorder Mike Averill, and the other was a general reserves walk led by Chairman Adrian and Governor Matt. The weather started cold and wet but thankfully the sun was shining by the time we set out to spot dragonflies, turnout was good and everyone had a lovely time. Our event was advertised in Tewkesbury Direct (local newsletter) for the first time and we had a number attend after reading about it there so I shall try and ensure I get it in there next year too.

In addition to our own events I also gave a talk to Tewkesbury Green Party about Bats in May this year. I also represented the Trust at Worcestershire's Pollinators Conferences 2018 (Community Day) where I gave a presentation on KCT's pollinator work to an audience of community groups, parish councillors and others. It was a very interesting day and we received very positive feedback from Worcestershire County Council (who arranged the conferences).

Grant Applications

In December 2017 I heard about a prize draw which Ecclesiastical Insurance was running to celebrate its 130th Anniversary. Any charity could be entered into the prize draw simply by individuals nominating it and there was no limit to the number of nominations. I contacted our Friends to ask that they nominate us, and also leant on family to do the same, and we had at least 15 nominations as a result. Within a few days we were notified that KCT had been successful and received £1000 prize money to spend as we wished. A great result! The money has not yet been spent as we are planning to put it towards a large project in Kemerton Wood which will require additional grant funding and this is still in the planning stage.

In April I secured £500 towards a new projector and projector screen from a donor who prefers to remain anonymous. In June I secured £470 from Severt Trent's Cash for Catchments scheme to carry out essential silt trap maintenance at Beggar Boys. This was successfully completed in September.

Lack of time has meant no further applications have been completed but I have recently been working on drawing up a list of potential projects, with input from Adrian, Matt & John, and researching funding opportunities ready for next year.

In addition, we again received two generous unsolicited grants totalling £700 from the Miss K.M Harbinson's Charitable Trust, which we intend to use towards volunteer tool and equipment costs.

Bat and Fungi Surveys

I carried out two NBMP bat roost counts at our Lesser Horseshoe Roost in June this year but was unable to carry out any field surveys due to the constraints of parenthood.

I carried out a couple of small fungi surveys last autumn, as well as collecting some ad-hoc records when out and about.

All records from my bat and fungi surveys are sent to John for adding to Recorder.

Website

David and I continue to maintain the website, updating the 'news and events' section as required. In January we added the new logo to the website ahead of the official launch (see below) and there have been a number of updates required as a result of GDPR (see below). We also finally found time to amend the downloadable map of KLNLR to include the Water's Edge Hide.

Vandalism at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve

Whilst the level of vandalism on site has dropped since last year we are still seeing a number of minor incidents which are wasting valuable trust resources.

The Water's Edge Hide has sadly proved the main target with various instances of littering, damage to items within the hide, damage to the door and reports of drug using within the hide by teenagers. Earlier in the year someone damaged our noticeboard beyond repair and removed all the ID books, posters and other items in the hide for visitors to use and reluctantly we have decided not to replace these at present because it is likely they will simply be taken again.

I continue to keep the local Community Policing Team in the loop and we have put up signs and written posts on Facebook to highlight the issues to our members and visitors but so far we have not been able to identify the culprits and there is not much we can do to prevent it.

Logo Launch

The Trust's new logo was officially launched in the January newsletter at the start of 2018. The logo has now been added to all our letter templates, membership IDs, the website and the newsletter.

GDPR

In May 2018 the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force. This affects the way the Trust collects data, stores data and uses data. Working in partnership with our Trust secretary Janet Cunningham, we reviewed the Trust's existing data handling and protection, carried out a full data audit and wrote a new privacy policy, as well as guidelines on IT security for Trustees and Key Volunteers. I also wrote to all our existing Friends of KCT to inform them of the new privacy policy and their new data rights and we updated our email lists to reflect activities we were allowed to carry out without express consent and those which we needed consent for. I have also updated our membership form to reflect the new data rules and capture consent, if relevant, at the time of joining. I also implemented the agreed changes to storing member data etc.

GDPR added an enormous amount of extra bureaucracy to my role and was extremely time consuming for both myself and Janet but all our work means we are compliant with the new regulations and our members' data is being handled correctly.

Reserves Health & Safety Risk Assessments

At the last Governors' Meeting it was agreed that there was a requirement for specific risk assessments for each of the Trust's Reserves – rather than just the more general habitat risk assessments we had relied on to date – and I was asked to write these for Governor Peter Doble's approval, as the Trustee with direct responsibility for Health & Safety.

I have now written risk assessments for Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve, Beggar Boys Wetland, John Moore Nature Reserve, Daffurn's Orchard, Asham Meadow, Twyning Ham SSSI and Upton Ham SSSI and these have all been approved. There were a number of actions identified as part of this assessment process and I can confirm that all necessary works have been completed, with help from our warden John and Peter and Kemerton Estate staff, including new signage at all the reserves. Any partners involved on the sites have received a copy for their records, along with Trust key personnel.

Conclusion

That concludes my roundup for the year – I would just like to thank Adrian, Matt, John, Pam and John for all their support this year. I would also like to thank my husband David, who has continued to assist me with organising many of the events, has helped with maintenance of the website and, through his unstinting support, enabled me to juggle my volunteering role with the demands of parenthood.