

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust



AGM 2020: Questions Raised

We received a number of questions both in advance of the AGM and some that were raised in the Q&A facility during the AGM. For some questions we responded directly to members online during the AGM but there were other questions where there was insufficient time to do this so we committed to providing answers on the web site instead. Some of the remaining questions were for the team at the Trust whilst others were for our guest speaker, Dave Goulson.

Questions for the Team at the Trust

A question specifically about Crickley Hill and dogs not being allowed in the café area

Unfortunately space is limited in all of our café areas but also as a charity we try to make as much profit from the cafes and as such there is often only one member of staff working in the cafes so it is easier if they are able to prep whilst still interacting with customers. We understand that it is frustrating for dog owners to not be able to enter the cafes however we have tried to provide plenty of outdoor seating and some covered areas for more inclement weather.

I may be incorrect here but I don't feel GWT connect well enough to our local Radio Gloucestershire. I get the impression the presenters, who are great, don't quite get it concerning the environmental crisis. Maybe GWT could become a bigger influencer on/with Radio Gloucestershire.

We send our press update through to Radio Gloucestershire weekly and they often call us for a comment and at least once a month they ask a member of staff to feature on one of their programmes. We are trying to work more proactively with Radio Glos in the future and hope to be able to invite them along to some of our launch events next year.

Excellent talk by Dave Goulson, has his talk been recorded and can societies and Rotary clubs have access to his talk at a future zoom meeting?

We will contact Dave Goulson to see whether we can make his talk available to clubs and societies.

What can GWT do to discourage developers from laying down plastic lawns in place of lawns?

Few developers use artificial grass because it is more expensive. Where it does occur this is usually as a result of retrofitting by the householder, so discouraging people from doing this is the most important action. We have mentioned this before during interviews with local media, such as BBC Radio Gloucestershire, and it is often part of our response when asked about things people can do for wildlife in their garden. We are working with Local Authorities

to ensure that their Local Plans discourage applications for new housing that include artificial grass.

Ref. Agenda item 7. On page 22 Audit Notes 1f - it is suggested that it isn't practical to place a value on volunteers' time but on page 5 we read that 32,266 hours of voluntary work were given, equating to £384,235. Please could you explain this discrepancy and how this figure was arrived at?

Volunteering hours are tracked throughout the year, then a report is produced at year end which assigns values to those hours using a "Volunteer Investment and Value Audit" methodology which is a recognised way of assigning a notional value to the volunteer work in charities. As this is not a cash transaction it does not go through the accounts themselves but we do report on this important and valued resource in the Trustee Report.

Various questions on the Estate Review

There is more information on the Estate Review pages on the web site including Frequently Asked Questions and questions raised via the AGM have been incorporated here.

Questions for Dave Goulson

We received some questions before and during the AGM for our guest speaker, Dave Goulson, and he kindly agreed to send us his answers after the event. The answers we have received from Dave, and which represent his personal views, are below.

At a time when landscape-scale conservation is taking top priority, can relatively small, isolated nature reserves be particularly valuable for habitat specialist invertebrates, for example if they have very steep slopes such as old railway cuttings & embankments?

There is widespread acceptance that bigger, better-connected reserves are more effective, but of course that does not mean that small reserves have no value. Some invertebrates can survive for many decades in very small patches.

**What else can we put on our cats' necks please to prevent fleas and worms?
and
Are there any natural alternatives to chemical flea treatments?**

First, there is no need to put anything on them unless they have fleas. My 7 year old dog has never been treated against fleas, and has no fleas. Fleas breed in the bedding, so regular hoovering and putting cat beds through a hot wash helps. There are also herbal remedies that some swear by – e.g. "Billy No Mates" (not sure if available for cats). If all that fails, try oral flea treatments such as Bravecto – though this too is poisonous to insect life, and means your cat's poo is toxic.

Can you recommend books for children?

I'm really sorry, I do not know the children's literature very well.

if people can't get their act together in time to stop the decline, is legislation not the answer? Banning Neonics has had an immediate effect.

Ideally, we'd have bottom up action from gardeners, shoppers, farmers etc., and top down help from government who could make a huge difference with legislation and alterations to

farm subsidies. The problem is that government seem to be strongly influenced by the very effective professional lobbying of big corporate interests.

What is the persistence of neonics in garden centre plants longer term?

We know that neonics can last up to five years, but it would often be less.

I heard that neonics are not so bad for bees

The pesticide companies have done a great job of sowing doubt and confusion over this issue. EFSA had a team of scientists spend a year evaluating the hundreds of relevant scientific reports, and on the basis of that they recommended the EU ban. It was not instigated without good cause. In my opinion, the scientific evidence that neonics contribute to insect decline is beyond any doubt.

Do you have concerns that the more we encourage wildlife in our gardens, the less they will be able to survive freely in the wild as they come to depend on us?

No, I do not think this is an issue. There is no 'wild' in Britain – everything is man-made or influenced. One could make the same argument about nature friendly farming. If we rely on truly wild places to support our wildlife, we'll have no wildlife, sadly.