

HERTFORDSHIRE NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

HNHS/85M

85th Management Committee Meeting

Monday 8 September 2025 at 250 Sandridge Road, St Albans and online via Zoom conferencing

Present:, Agneta Burton, Rupert Evershed, Hanna Grimsdale, Tim Hill, Martin Ketcher, Peter Tallantire (Chair), David Utting (Secretary) and Stuart Warrington

Apologies: Apologies were received from Ian Carle, Chantal Helm, Chris James and Alex Waechter

1. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 July 2025 were approved. Matters arising:

- Draft risk policy: David had examined the Charity Commission's model policy and found it was angled towards charities who employed staff and relied on public donations and service contracts for their income. He concluded that although an HNHS policy might cover some risks such as declining membership, the proposed actions would largely refer to existing policies and constitutional requirements. Committee members noted that continuing importance of risk assessments for individual field meetings, conferences and other public events, but agreed that an overall risk policy was not necessary under present circumstances.

2. AGM preparations

- Tim confirmed that the Autumn Meeting and AGM would take place from 2 – 5.30pm on Saturday 18 October at the offices of Affinity Water in Hatfield. The programme would include the usual report on water resources by Alister Leggatt of Affinity, followed by updates on the current dragonfly survey (Roy Woodward) and work on new mammals, amphibians and reptiles atlas following the end of the ten-year survey (speaker tbc). The High Sheriff of Hertfordshire, Nicholas Buxton, would talk about nature conservation work on his Easneye estate and present the 2025 HNHS Awards. After the AGM, David would give a 150th anniversary talk about HNHS history titled 'Discovering where the wild things are'

Draft financial report for 2024-25 – Peter presented the draft accounts for 2024-25 that had been previously circulated. These showed lower income (£11,937) compared with the previous year (£14,879) and higher expenditure (£19,052 compared with £18,009). The deficit was more than explained by expenditure on the 150th anniversary exhibition (£6,682) and reprinting of *Hertfordshire Geology and Landscape* and *Beetles of Hertfordshire* (£4,262). Allowing for those exceptional items, the Society continued to have enough regular income to cover its recurring expenditure. Peter reported a small error (-£184) in the figure shown in the 2022-23 accounts for PayPal receipts. This had been perpetuated in the figure for 2023-24 but would now be corrected and reported to the Charity Commission. The committee agreed that the draft accounts and correction note should be presented at the AGM for approval. It was agreed that no increase in annual membership subscriptions need be proposed. The committee thanked Peter for standing in as Treasurer as well as Chair and his work preparing the accounts.

- Trustee nominations – David said that all existing trustees had agreed to be re-nominated at the AGM with the exception of Chantal Helm. She regretted that other pressures meant she had not been able to give the committee the time she would have liked during the past year. The committee thanked Chantal warmly for her contribution to its work during the past ten years.

Peter said that in the absence of other nominations for Treasurer, his nephew, Harrison ('Harry') Tallantire, had agreed to be nominated. He provided members with a copy of Harry's professional CV. It was agreed that his name should be proposed at the AGM.

3. 2025 HNHS Awards

Peter expressed pleasure that seven formal nominations had been received for the two awards. Two suggested names had come from the wider membership following an email appeal for nominations. The committee thanked Agneta, Chris, Tim and Peter for gathering further information about individual suggested at the previous MC meeting. In discussion, it was agreed that all those nominated had made impressive contributions. Since only two awards were made each year, it was decided that those not chosen for 2025 should be re-considered for future years. It was agreed that the award winners for 2025 should be:

- Trevor James Award for an outstanding Hertfordshire naturalist: Haydon Bailey
- 1875 Award for an outstanding contribution to natural history in Hertfordshire: Mike Ilett

Tim Hill would notify the winners and arrange for the award crystals to be prepared. David would let the non-committee members who had submitted nominations know that their nominees would be re-considered for future years. It was agreed that the winner's names should remain confidential until the Autumn Meeting.

Action: Tim, David

4. 150th anniversary celebrations

Hertfordshire Naturalist 2025

Stuart said work was progressing on the journal, but a number of contributions had arrived later than requested. One author had disappointingly withdrawn from providing an article. Although the new issue would not be ready before the Autumn Meeting he expected it to be published before Christmas. Ronni, David and others offered help in sourcing photographs.

Action: Stuart, Ronni, David

North Hertfordshire Museum Exhibition, (December 15 2025 – 14 February 2026)

David said the museum had offered exhibition space for eight weeks (at £120 per week) starting on December 15. Photographs and one or two other items from the St Albans exhibition would be displayed together with any suitable items that he and Chris might source from a forthcoming visit to the museum's depository. He hoped to arrange some family-friendly wildlife talks at the museum over the Christmas holidays.

Action: David, Chris

5. Update on Hertfordshire's Nature Recovery Strategy

Tim said the eight-week consultation period for the draft report was likely to have generated up to 1,000 responses. These would be carefully assessed. Publication of the strategy was now expected in November.

6. Reports

Membership Secretary: Martin said four new members had joined since the last meeting. There were currently 527 members, including family members. He had emailed 40 members on the 'expired' list who had not paid for 25. He would circulate the names of 12 others whose email addresses no longer worked in case committee members could supply up to date contact details. It was noted that six of these had paid standing orders via the discontinued Santander account.

Action: All

7. Recording and monitoring

Recorders' Committee: Ronni said the group had completed a five-yearly review of its code of practice, setting out expectations for recorders. The new version had been re-named County Recorders' Advisory Notes and took account of important recent changes recording methods, including eDNA identification of species. She would submit the code to the next MC meeting so it could be formally signed off.

Action: Ronni

8. Meetings and events

Environment Day at All Saints Church, Hertford (13 September): David was providing an HNHS stall and would take part in a panel discussion

150th anniversary Autumn Meeting and AGM (18 October). See agenda item 3 (above)

Gerald Salisbury Memorial Lecture (Thursday 22 January 2026). Tim said Welwyn Natural History Society had confirmed that the Welwyn Civic Centre hall was booked for Ian Denholm's lecture on 'The Wild Orchids of Hertfordshire'. It was noted that the lecture would take place on a Thursday instead of the usual Wednesday.

9. Publications

See agenda item 4 (above).

10. AOB

David had received an email from Chris wondering if the MC could include more discussion of Hertfordshire's natural history at meetings. Her particular suggestion was that county recorders might occasionally be invited to give a short presentation on their particular taxon and recording methods. Ronni agreed that an occasional presentation might make the regular agenda item on recording and monitoring more interesting. Committee members queried why reports from the Herts Invertebrate Project and Mammals, Amphibians and Reptiles Atlas project were included on the agenda, but nothing from the Bird Club, Bryophyte Group or Flora Group. While accepting that the committee's prime role was to manage the Society, members agreed that it would be useful to discuss the issues raised at a future meeting.

Action: Chris, David

Hanna suggested the Society might compile and advertise a list of county recorders and other experienced members who would be willing to share their recording skills with young adults and others who were interested in learning more about the field and identification skills. Although groups like the Invertebrate Project were already contactable via the website, committee members agreed that there could be benefits from making a list of training contacts available through the website. It was agreed that this deserved further consideration.

Action: Hanna, David

Next meeting: 7.30pm Monday 17 November at 250 Sandridge Road, St Albans and online

David Utting, HNHS Secretary.
14 September 2025