



HERTFORDSHIRE NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY AND BIRD CLUB

This newsletter is being mailed out with *The Hertfordshire Naturalist 2021*. Congratulations, as ever, go to editor Judy England, designer Jack Fearnside and the editorial team.

Zoom-in to our online AGM, Annual Awards and wildlife presentations

Continuing caution over the Covid virus means the 2021 **Annual General Meeting** will take place online between **10am and 12.30pm on Saturday 27 November**. A formal calling notice for the meeting will be emailed to members, together with the annual accounts (and sent by post to those without internet access).

The business meeting will be followed by a ceremony honouring the first winner of the renamed **Trevor James Award** for an outstanding Hertfordshire naturalist and the winner of this year's **1875 Award** for an outstanding contribution to natural history in the county. Afterwards, we shall be hearing from **Josh Kalms** from the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust about the exciting project that has reintroduced Water Voles to the River Ver and other Hertfordshire rivers. County recorder **Roy Woodward** will also talk about the five-year countywide survey of damselflies and dragonflies that is due to start next year after a two-year Covid-enforced delay. Details of the online meeting – including a Zoom link and proxy voting arrangements for those unable to take part in person – will be included in the AGM calling notice.

Plans for an online membership scheme

The management committee is close to finalising plans for reorganising membership applications and subscriptions. For the first time, there will be an option for those joining HNHS/Herts Bird Club or renewing their subscriptions to pay directly via the website. However, payments by bank transfer or cheque will be welcome as ever – and annually-renewed standing orders even more so!

The need for a new, online payment option became urgent this autumn after **Virgin Money Giving** announced its closure from the end of November. Details of the new scheme will be publicised as soon as all arrangements are in place.

Tyttenhanger campaign enters new phase

The campaign to protect wildlife around the Tyttenhanger gravel pits, including Hertfordshire's last colony of endangered Tree Sparrows has this month entered a new phase. Hertsmere Borough Council, which has earmarked part of the breeding site for a new village of 6,000 homes, has launched a public consultation for its draft local plan that will continue until Monday 6 December. In the new *Herts Naturalist* (management committee report) you can read about the important work by Herts Bird Club and others to build new feeding stations for the Tree Sparrows and assist other mitigation measures that may help draw the colony away from the proposed development site. The Tree Sparrow population is a particular cause for concern. But HNHS also supports proposals to establish a nature reserve at Tyttenhanger to ensure that its rich biodiversity – including other 'red-listed' species – is properly protected and enhanced. The Hertsmere Local Plan consultation documents can be viewed at hertsmere-consult.objective.co.uk/

Urgent final call for 2021 subscriptions!

Martin Ketcher, our new Membership Secretary, has recently sent out reminders to members who have not yet renewed their subscriptions for this year. We regret that the **Herts Bird Report 2020** will only be sent to paid-up members.

MARA survey approaches final (final) year

Completion of the countywide survey of mammals, amphibians and reptiles (Herts MARA) has been postponed twice because of the continuing pandemic. However, the organisers hope that 2022 will not only be its final year but also bring a bumper crop of new records. Sightings, including tracks, signs and roadkill as well as 'live' animals, can be submitted via the HNHS website www.hnhs.org. Since 2015, more than 3,500 sighting records, 420 field sign records and 130 bat detector records have been received.