

THE WELLCOME TRUST GENOME CAMPUS

WETLANDS COMMUNITY CONSERVATION GROUP

Tuesday 21st July 2020, 1pm – 2pm, Zoom Conference Call.

Actions

Item	Description	Who
1.0	<u>Apologies</u> Received from LO and MS, working on Campus Grounds.	
1.1	<u>Introductions</u> Sarah Burgess (SHB) – Environmental Manager on Campus and the Wetlands. Today SHB wanted to widen the scope of the Wetlands Group out to introduce you all to the wider Sustainability Strategy that we are working on across Campus with one of the themes being Biodiversity and to introduce this Group to some of the people that were on a separate call for Biodiversity on Campus. To join the two Groups together for Biodiversity and Wetlands. Lorraine Moore (LM) - Estates & Facilities on Campus, provides support for the Wetlands and Wetlands Committee. Iain Webb (IW) - Wildlife Trust, working with Wellcome Campus for a number of years specifically on the Wetlands and would be take people out. Just finished a walk, have been walking round the Wetlands trying to engage with people from Wellcome and the local villages. Ceri Williams (CW) - Hinxton Parish Council. Steve Trudgill (ST) - retired from HPC, used to Lecture on Biogeography, Conservation and worked for the Field Studies Council on the nature reserve management and is a Hinxton resident. Andrew Knights (AN) – working on Campus, take part in surveys including Moths and the Common Bird Survey. Neil Rawlings (NDR) - used to work on Campus, organizing the Common Bird Census for the last 10 years or so. Eve Coomber (EC) – carries out the Butterfly Surveys on the Wetlands as part of a team of volunteers. Emily Boldly (EB) – working with SHB as part of the overall Campus Sustainability Strategy over the rest of the year.	

Sabine Eckert (SE) – working by the lake to do optimum observations.

Violeta Munoz Fuentes (VMF) – working on Campus for EBI as a Biologist. Interested in Biodiversity, Conservation and a member of the EBI Green Committee. This is my first meeting with the Wetlands Group and I am very interested in the Wetlands.

Dave Keating (DK) – an Ickleton resident and have been on numerous wildlife walks with IW and visit the Wetlands daily for my mental health.

Andrii Undin (AU) – working for EBI and I enjoy the Wildlife Walks on the Wetlands.

Emma Boldy (EB) – working for the Conference Centre and keen to learn more about the Wetlands linking to the Conference Centre.

1.2 **Overview of Campus Operations**

To note SHB provided an update of the Campus operations. Due to Covid-19 the Campus has greatly reduced in numbers, currently around 200 to 250 staff members on Campus, mainly working on Covid-19 Projects and some Wet Lab work. All office based staff are working from home and will be for the foreseeable future. Most of the Wetlands Guided Walks were cancelled at the start of lockdown and have started to open up over the last couple of weeks but it would be the end of the Walk season now.

Discussions in this meeting will be around planning for next year and into the future.

Most surveys have not gone ahead which is understandable but if there are any surveys for the key seven areas that would be great. It would be useful to decide what we want to do with those areas for next year.

2.0 **Sightings & Surveys**

Birds

NDR & AK have both started surveys for the Common Bird Census this year and have completed two each. It was not possible to carry out the early surveys because of lockdown but started in June and should complete with analysis. NDR has completed the analysis for last year.

2019 – Common Bird Census Analysis Survey

Most Territories there were:-

15 Wren territories, 13 Robin territories

Some birds we did not record last year which have bred in the past.

Great Partridge which last bred in 2014.

Hobby – been observed on the Wetlands and bred in the local area in 2017

Little Grebe – Last bred in 2010 along with plovers

Little Owl – 2013

Mute Swan – 2014

Red Legged Partridge, Tree Creeper and Willow Warbler not seen last year but were seen in 2018.

NDR has been looking at how birds have been faring compared with the average over the last 10 years;

Increases

We have seen increases in Black Cap, Chiffchaff and Wood Pigeon.

2009 there were only one territory for Black Cap and Chiffchaff.

We are now up to 7 Chiffchaff territories and 8 Black Cap territories.

Declines

Significant declines in 4 species:

Skylark – 5 territories in 2018

Greylag Goose - 5 in 2018, there are hardly any Geese on Campus. The long grass on the cricket pitch is unsuitable for them.

Chaffinch; 2 territories last year and there have been as many as 7 in 2010 and 2012.

This Year – 2020

Turtle Dove heard singing on site.

Little Grebes singing on site on one of the surveys but have not been seen since. Cetti's Warbler seems to be lost, not seen or recorded.

Turtle Doves – AK

It has been a really good year for Turtle Doves with a pair on the Wetlands in May, suspected of breeding at Caldrees Manor in Ickleton and the male has been pairing away on the wetlands and IW has very kindly been supplying seed for this year and we had a supplementary feeding site on the Wetlands. The area used is not ideal as in a short area on the footpath at the back of the Wetlands and we are having more footfall due to Covid people are spending more time walking there. I have not seen any juveniles. Although, last week the pair appeared again on the railway lines and Wetlands, pairing but have now gone silent and could potentially be bedding down for a second breed. There is seed left which will go out until the tub is empty, probably a couple of weeks' supply.

The habitat is good around the Wetlands with the thick scrubby area. AK and IW have been discussing the possibility of in addition to the supplementary feeding having an area which is cultivated but would have seed mix to provide food around the clock which would be more natural. IW advised that machinery would need to be used to cultivate the area. It is unclear whether the recommended supplementary feeding site would be large enough to take machinery to cultivate regularly. Sow seed, Scarlet Pimpernel, in addition to Fumitory and Chickweed. IW is in regular contact with one of the RSPB Turtle Dove Project Officers, as they are conducting

research at Hope Farm, looking at the best species to plant out to feed the Turtle Doves. AK's idea is great, to have an area on the Wetlands but also anywhere in the Campus Grounds which could be managed in that way to increase the potential for Turtle Dove and other seed eating species. Happy to sacrifice an area of the Wetlands for that.

AK would like to have access to the areas used last year on Campus as there would be less disturbance and would be adjacent to the Wetlands.

Near the wooden bridge and footpath by the river, there is a set-aside field, Clare Meadows, to the north of the sheep field which is not grazed and has long stems with plenty of seed and the Turtle Doves have often been seen on the wires overhead. Very audible but there is probably a good example of types of seed to use. The type of seed is not known, the field is just wild. ST offered to carry out a survey of the area but there are dots, grasses and nettles, mainly ruderals rather than low growing plants as the grass is quite tall.

SHB explained that we have the two areas that we did cultivate and continue annually or plant seed in those two areas, as we have nothing else to improve biodiversity in the area. If there is an additional area on the Wetlands, please let SHB or LM know the location. Access is the biggest issue for the Wetlands but there are a few areas on the Wetlands which are a bit scrubby and we could do something else with them. A section by the river walking towards Ickleton, behind the tree belt with long grass, which is not managed at all. ACK has seen the Turtle Doves there quite a lot in the last month.

Turtle Doves have just been added to the Rare Breeding Birds List in the UK this year. NDR advised and Cetti's Warbler has been removed from the Rare Birds List. SE had sighted a Cetti's Warbler on the Wetlands. ST heard one earlier in the year by the level crossing.

From Sabine Eckert to Everyone: 01:20 PM *[Zoom Chat Message]*
Treecreepers bred on site, and there is one spottily territory.

Very few Green Finches – NDR

Birds – DK *[Post Meeting Note]*

Sighted a Turtle Dove feeding on the very south of the Wetlands where AK had been spreading the seed. Also, the pair on the wires to the west of the land between the Wetlands and the Campus. They have also been in the trees on the other side of the railway but I'm not sure if they actually nested there. No sign of them in the last few days.

Butterflies & Moths

EC provided an update. There have been no surveys due to lockdown but have had access to the Wetlands over the last couple of weeks.

Marbled Whites are back, last year we had a huge number of them.

Andy has seen a Purple Hair Streak in the Oak Trees.

Butterflies are thriving around the oak trees on Campus.

SHB pointed out that LO had reported that there were numerous black Caterpillars with orange heads, in the Hedgerows by Car Park A. EC agreed to investigate when next on Campus.

Next year EC plans to continue with the Butterfly Group and surveys and to broaden out from the Wetlands to the Campus.

Butterflies – DK [Post Meeting Note]

Early on there were Tortoiseshells, Common Blues and Orange Tips. More recently there have been Biblical numbers of Meadow Browns together with Small Heaths and Sippers. As mentioned, quite a few Marbled Whites, also some Gatekeepers, Speckled Woods, Ringlets, Commas, Red Admirals, a few Brown Argus and Peacocks. No Painted Ladies yet. Plenty of Small Whites. Moths, in the last couple of days there have been lots of Six Spot Burnet Moths.

Clearwing Moths - ACK

ACK provided an update for the Clearwing Moths with two slides.

Prior to this year we recorded six species on site and this year four that have been done previously, Six Belted there are hundreds probably more a few red belted, Red Belted and Large Red Belted, which were recorded for the first time last year, we did not record that this year and Hornet Moth which is quite spectacular. Orange Tailed, not recorded that since 2014, lots of Red Tipped using the Willows.

New species for this year is the Lunar Hornet Moth, which is our second most numerous to the Six Belted, Clear Wing on the Wetlands. The Larvae have a two year cycle and feed within Willow. AK has seen exit holes on Willows and is not surprised to have found them but there has been no synthetic pheromone until now with one released this year, ACK tried that and obtained some nice photographs of the Lunar Hornet Clear Wing found this year and the Hornet Wing for comparison, both spectacular. The Hornet Clear Wing is much rarer. Utilising the Aspen in the shelter belt with visible exit holes.

Glow Worms – IW

Update and Add to the Agenda List

Seen on the Wetlands over a number of years with three last year. IW would like to engage with the public, local residents and Campus to raise awareness of the presence of Glow Worms on the Wetlands. When IW went to see the Serotine Bat, he also saw five female Glow Worms and met a Hinxtton resident who is keen look at Glow Worms, she has been out every week since to survey the site. ACK is also interested and been out to survey. There have been at least 25-30 females seen on the site so it is a healthy population and would be nice to have an opportunity for people to appreciate and see them but also to have some monitoring to see how they utilize the site. IW is happy to help develop that but would be nice to have the Glow Worms on the Agenda List as they are quite amazing. SHB agreed.

Action: LM to add Glow Worms to the Agenda List.

Plants

SHB wants to focus on this last year with plant transects to understand what is happening with our flora on site, certainly Wetlands and slightly wider a field as well. Any keen botanist or plant scientist who would want to take this further, otherwise SHB will work with IW to try to get a task force together to look at plants. NDR and ST offered to pick this up, time permitting.

IW has been to the Wetlands a couple of times; the management that has taken place in the past two winters has worked really well, both the cutting and removal. There is less thistle on the river side of the Wetlands and it is opening up for grasses and less robust species to be growing. As that continues it will improve the grasses. SHB advised that we plan to cut the second half in September 2020, with ongoing annual cut of half the area.

Plants: Orchids – DK *[Post Meeting Note]*

Not a single Orchid on the north side since the work was done. There were quite a few Bee Orchids there in the past, and some Pyramidals. Not a single Bee Orchid on the far south bank this year and only a couple of Pyramidals. There were, however, quite a few Orchids on the south edge of the south pond. Early on, a couple of Southern Marsh Orchids, which were eaten by Muntjak. Later quite a few Bee Orchids on the east side and some Pyramidals on the west with a Spotted in the middle. The best place this year was the little path through between the lakes. As you come from the far side, for me, towards the railway, just after a few saplings that are right on the path, there were Bee Orchids to the right, then a clump of four Spotted Orchids. Further to the right in amongst the tall growth was a fabulous Spotted Orchid, probably close on two feet tall. A little further on, on the left was a fabulous Pyramidal Orchid that has only just gone over. There were also a couple of Southern Marsh Orchids and Spotted Orchids further on. Perhaps the result of the work on the north side, or the very dry May resulted in the lack of Orchids this year. DK has concern that if that centre part has the same treatment, we will not see Orchids there next year.

Aquatic Habitats

Cambridge Trout Club not on the call.

SHB has not been in communication with the CTC recently as the Environment Agency are doing their annual spraying and pinpointing specific areas to potentially include the upper part of the River Cam. LO and the Environment Agency met a few weeks' ago to survey the area. The CTC are very against any spraying or works by EA and have submitted an objection to the works on the upper part of the River Cam. SHB is in dialogue with those two parties to ensure we are making the best use of the River Cam. EA point of view is flooding concern and from CTC it is improving the Trout and from SHB it is improving the biodiversity of the habitat itself. The CTC are happy to continue with works as and when, SHB asked whether there is any other areas for concern that would need work outside of the scope of the Grounds Team.

IW advised that the CTC are doing a great job in helping to increase the flow rate and scaring the gravels, the key issue is Himalayan Balsam but it is unclear how

feasible it would be to get a contractor in but would need to start one end to work down from there and it might be a catchment approach working in collaboration as The Wildlife Trust work with partners at Barn brook which is significantly smaller but is proving to be a success, albeit slowly, to eradicate in the area. There is a need to engage with other organisations to remove Himalayan Balsam. SHB will give that some thought but pointed out that where possible the Grounds Team were pulling Himalayan Balsam from the river bank, less so this year due to lockdown, although they are starting to return to Campus, there may be an increase this year. ACK has not observed much this year.

Pyramid and Bee Orchids

AK raised attention to these a couple of years ago. Please notify SHB, LM or LO of any sightings to arrange for the area to be cordoned off.

The Nursery may have been tricky with the children but as much as possible we do try to barrier off areas to ensure they are not cut.

Wildflower Meadow

We are looking to plant areas including the field prior to the Wetlands and on the piece of grassland between Hinxton and the Conference Centre and one other area. The Grounds Team would make up the ground and we are planning on buying the seed from the same company that provided Kings College wildflower meadow in Cambridge. We have engaged with them to provide seed mix based on the pH level of the soil and conditions on site.

The section between the wooden bridge and the Wetlands; IW raised concern that there is a healthy population of Glow Worms and a lighter touch would be more appropriate in that area. If you turf strip, that would destroy their food supply and probably the Glow Worms as well. It would be nicer to perhaps introduce patches to allow that to spread with management rather than full scale preparation of the ground. SHB agreed this would be better and will ask LO to engage with IW to discuss it further and plan in detail.

Reptiles

DK – Lost Connection due to technical issues.

Grass Snake seen last week.

Refugia – lifting weekly, good inhabitation.

First meadow – management to help to improve habitat for reptiles on the site.

Grass Snake seen last week by DK

Every week someone lifting the Refugia.

First meadow – management for Reptiles.

From Dave Keating to Everyone: 01:30 PM [Zoom Chat Message]

Far fewer lizards this year. Some baby lizards and snakes the last two weeks.

LO would like to sow more Viper's-bugloss.

Amphibians – none seen on site.

Action: LM to remove from the Agenda list.

Mammals

IW reported two additions; following a walk in early June with a bat detector and saw A Serotine Bat. ACK joined IW on a further walk and a Noctule Bat was sighted which are nice to have.

3.0 Strategy for Wetlands and Campus Biodiversity

SHB submitted the Campus Environmental Sustainability Strategy to the Campus Senior Management and it has been signed off for the next 10 years, as a Campus to put sustainability at the forefront of what we are doing. SHB will be leading that with the support of EB over the next year, as SHB will be going on Maternity Leave soon.

There are 12 key themes for the Campus Environmental Sustainability Strategy:-

1. Biodiversity
2. Waste & Recycling
3. Water & Effluent
4. Sustainable Work Practices
5. Energy
6. Carbon & Offsetting
7. Travel
8. Sustainable Construction
9. Procurement & Supply Chain
10. Sustainable Food
11. Sustainable Lab Practices
12. Behaviour Change

Biodiversity is a key theme that SHB, LO and this Group would be keen to push forward.

There are a number of steps that we have already looked at in this Group that we can take forward with actions on improving our biodiversity. One of the main objectives is getting the data set to provide evidence over the years the measure of improvement. We can use the great work and surveys carried out by NDR, ACK, EC, IW and NC but it is also looking at our plants and different habitats and eco systems that we have on site and how we can provide support to enable them to flourish and improve the whole biodiversity as a whole across site using the Wetlands as one of those habitats.

There are a number of people, not usually in the meeting, on the call as an addition to the Group to provide support for improvement. For example, EB is keen to improve how the Conference Centre is getting involved on the Wetlands and

Biodiversity, as a whole with delegates and supporting our mission to educate and engage, linking into the Grounds, Wetlands and Biodiversity that we have on site.

SHB would like to use this Group as a stepping platform with all the expertise to work on that strategy and the actions, to work together to prioritise projects which are best for our different areas and we can improve those.

Next steps SHB will use our discussions today and those from the biodiversity workshops to produce a high level document with clear direction, which SHB will share with this Group prior to submission to Senior Management. Particularly projects which require our time and investment in surveys and having the ability to do that. Other projects would have significant financial backing and it is those opportunities that we would want to get financial support for to ensure they are pushed forward over the next ten years.

As we come to the end of the five year Wetlands Wildlife plan that The Wildlife Trust produce for Wellcome, it would link the two nicely into a broader ten year strategy including the Wetlands but also the Campus on Biodiversity and to put that together over the next year to eighteen months. We usually produce a booklet but this could be an electronic format to show one clear direction of what we would like to achieve. IW thought that this was a really good idea. You should not see the Wetlands as a single site but as part of a landscape. That is why it is important to have ST, CW and DK on the call from Hinxton and Ickleton to see what we can directly support as the Campus but also to have the ability to directly support each other and the habitats we have over our boundaries. Keeping everyone in the loop is really important for this Group.

ST has looked at and produced a list of all the birds and butterflies on the set-aside field on the Romanic picnic area towards Duxford Level Crossing. SHB thanked ST as that would be really interesting.

The plan is to potentially have another meeting in November to push the strategy further and the meeting in February/March 2021 would be the planning and preparation for the surveys and walks in the Spring and Summer, which would be linked to the strategy, hence the two additional meetings. The meeting in November would be led by LM and EB. Prior to that SHB and EB will get the high level strategy across to everyone to ensure we have that document to work through with a healthy discussion about what should be taken forward. For example, IW's advice about the wildflower meadow is a really important to ensure we correctly managing the areas without impacting others.

In the meantime, LO is crucial to this with support from EB and LM, emails would be beneficial and encouraged, to support the strategy within the next six months whilst SHB is away.

4.0 Planned Major Maintenance Updates

Two Major Maintenance Works over the Winter:

Between November 2020 and February 2021.

Cutting

We will be doing the major cutting half of Wetlands in September with 50% each year, until no longer necessary.

Lakes

Lake work was not carried out this year, it was completed 18 months' ago. Work was cancelled this year due to a number of reasons, the lake was too dry as had completely dried up, it then flooded and we had lockdown.

We have had slightly higher rainfall this year and hopefully the lakes will not dry up and will have a baseload water level to with going into the Winter and it may need minimal topping up for work to be completed.

Work will be carried out over the Winter, as per the discussions last Spring/Summer. The areas will remain the same but work will be now carried out this Winter.

The area of Lake Works will be on the strip along the middle of the south side of the main lake; pulling up some saplings and slightly larger willow trees to open up the sides of the lake and will be carried out over Winter between November 2020 and February 2021. Subject to weather and conditions, LO from Grounds will manage the works supported by LM to consult with Wetlands Committee on timings and to schedule.

LO grounds will manage that and supported by LM to make everyone aware.

From SE to Everyone: 01:48 PM *[Zoom Chat Message]*

The water level on the lake is ok at this time.

5.0 Any Other Business

Work for Autumn / Winter

IW asked whether the field, between the wooden bridge and the reserve, could be included in the cutting programme. SHB advised that the Grounds Team usually cut that and will check that it is included on the work schedule or add to the work in September.

Action: SHB to check and add to work schedule for cutting works.

Long Grass Areas

The Cricket field is very lush and as people return it to use it will be cut again. It would be nice to have perhaps larger areas left long but still cut in the Autumn.

People have commented how nice it is long, not wanting to impinge on others on site but just to make sure it is a varied mix. SHB and LO have talked about this at length and believe it has been a great opportunity to show staff that we do not need pruned

lawns all the time and we definitely plan to have an increased amount of longer pieces of grass throughout the year and we are working with some people that do our big cuts at the Wetlands and behind EBI South as the two main large pieces which are cut in September but we will be getting that area cut together with the cricket field in September prior to Autumn but do not plan on over pruning. Next year, we plan to engage with the Sports and Social Clubs on site to understand requirements but plan to leave areas surrounding as long grass as much as possible. Similarly, the area between the Conference Centre and Hinxton Hall which is long at the moment except for a couple of paths through it, but we would need to consult with the Conference Centre and EB's team to make sure that is acceptable when they have delegates, together with the Wildflower Meadow in that mix. Paths are cut through for access for pest control, security guard patrols and for people to enjoy the area.

Access in the Area - Notices

ST asked for the rationale behind the notice which went up on the gate as you approach from Hinxton as it is totally missing from the Ickleton end. It advises that all the areas are crosshatched as private, please keep to the footpaths as you arrive from Hinxton. People from Ickleton do not see that, are they permitted to walk everywhere and can I still walk round the back of the lake as I used to. ST understood that there are people nipping from the grounds to the centre of Campus but it seems odd to be discouraged from walking round the back of the lake, as from Hinxton it is private but not from Ickleton.

SHB advised that the notice should be at both ends of the permissive path for both Hinxton and Ickleton. The lake at the Wetlands is permitted to both. The issue was that people were turning the wrong way before or after the Wetlands bridge, following the path which is private leading to the Campus Gates and with Covid we could not have anyone gaining access to the Campus and to ensure they follow the permissive path to the Wetlands and villages.

Signage

Signage is missing from Ickleton and it should be at both ends.
To stay to the permissive path and can walk round the back of the Wetlands.
The two paths that access site are for staff only.

Action: SHB to ensure signage is improved.

Dogs

ST, CW and DT - Notice about dog walkers and dog excrement that they take it with them, SHB advised that we have seen a huge increase and it is unpleasant for Security and Grounds Team to deal with.

ST it has been an issue all over, people are coming from all over the country, including Bishops' Stortford, as they do not follow paths, keep dogs on lead or clear up after them.

SHB advised that the signage was not aimed at local residents but was a result of an increase of general public accessing site and Campus.

Dog Bins are not provided on the Wetlands, there is no signage to direct to the nearest bins in Hinxton and Ickleton.

Village Publications

To remind villagers to keep to the permitted paths, keep dogs on leads, clear up after their dogs and advance notice of the winter work.

CW agreed to include in the Hinxton News.

DK agreed to include in the Icene, Ickleton's Parish Newsletter.

Signage was aimed at others from elsewhere not local villagers.

It was pointed out that Parish magazine would not reach the culprits.

Action: SHB to look at signage and make clear location of bins either end.

VMF thanked SHB for the interesting meeting.

IW would like to talk about the management of tree belts. It is a habitat that has not been managed and could be improved.

Action: LM to add to November meeting.

Everyone wished SHB best wishes with the impending birth and baby.

6.0 Dates of Next Meeting(s)

- November 2020 – tbc
Interim Meeting to discuss Biodiversity Actions – Zoom Conference Call.
- Early March 2021 - tbc
Preparation for Spring/Summer Walks. Hopefully back on Campus.

ATTENDEES

Wetlands Committee:

Chair: Sarah Burgess (SHB) WGC

Iain Webb (IW), WLT

Andrew Knights (AK), Sanger

Matthew Midgley (MM), Sanger

Dr Steve Trudgill (ST), Hinxton

Lorraine Moore (LM), WGC

Norman Cobley (NC), Sanger

Ceri Williams (CW), Hinxton

Sabine Eckert (SE), Sanger

Neil Rawlings (NR), (EBI)

Eve Coomber (EC), Sanger

Andrii Iudin (AI), EBI

Dave Keating (DK), Ickleton

Campus Biodiversity:

Emily Boldy (EB), Sanger

Sophie Potter (SP), Sanger

Piraveen Gopalasingam (PG), EBI

Emma Bowditch (EBd), Sanger

Violeta Munoz Fuentes (VMF)

Iliana Bista (IB), Sanger

Tom Hancocks (TH), EBI.