

Devon Mammal Group AGM – ZOOM (Online) – 4th August 2020

1. Attended: Helen Calver, Ellie Knott, Sue Smallshire, Stephen Carroll, Phil Collins, Hilary Marshall, Charly Mead, Sarah Butcher, Rebecca Robinson, Chris Hughes, Kate Hills, Dave Smallshire, Jess Smallcombe, Joanna Swift, Claire Edey, Jennifer Page, Debbie Johnson, Katherine Mead, Katherine Webb, Mike Treble, Matt Parkins, Tracey Coombs, Elysia Ratcliffe, Jean Turner, Joanne Gilbert, Tony Bennet, Trevor Fine, Amanda Barton, Andrew Charles, Stephen Powles and Chris Powles
2. Apologies: Teresa Sullivan
3. Minutes of the 2019 AGM dated 26th June 2019

The minutes were sent out with the invitation to the AGM
There were no changes proposed to the 2019 minutes

Agreed: Rebecca Robinson proposed and Ellie Knott Seconded

Chairs Report:

We've had a very unusual year due to lockdown covering half the year, however we have managed to have our 20th anniversary picnic with activities at Langford Farm Trust last summer.

Ellie and Hilary ran small mammal trapping training sessions for Brentor Commons Association last July.

Hilary went out to survey the lower sections of the Tamar for signs of Otters in response to a email enquiry also last July.

Pips and Pints was run again last year in September by Sarah and Stephen in conjunction with Devon Bat Group and Devon Wildlife Trust at the catacombs in Exeter.

Sue and Charly had a DMG stall at the Meldon Wildlife Festival last August which included a Harvest Mouse Project display with 3 of Sues Harvest Mice and a more general mammal display touch table which was very popular.

Our Christmas Quiz which we planned to hold at Wildwood Escot in December was cancelled due to low uptake, we acknowledge that it was quite a difficult place to get to on public transport so next year we will pick somewhere that hopefully everyone can get to.

Ellie had been running Otter survey training sessions and small mammal trapping surveys for the Torrington Conservation Group just before lockdown, sadly the additional training sessions planned had to be cancelled.

Sue and Dave did get out recently to visit Roborough Field Rewilding Project to install some Dormouse nest tubes and advise them on habitat management.

A huge thank you to everyone who took part in these activities. We continue to respond to all online enquires which keeps us quite busy, these enquiries usually concern habitat

management for species such as Dormice, Hedgehogs, Bats and Otters. We visit sites whenever we are able to do so.

We have had some fantastic talks prior to the lockdown on subjects including; Red Squirrels, Wildwood Trust, Grey Owl – a leading beaver conservationist, Dormice on Dartmoor, Lesser Horseshoe mitigation and monitoring, and native and non-native deer populations in the South West. Sadly, the pandemic resulted to an early end to our talk season however we will be organising our talks with Mark Elliot and Derek Gow at the earliest convenience. We would like to thank everyone who provided talks and anyone who attended those talks.

4. Summary of 2019 – 20 Accounts

Report from Ellie Knott – DMG Treasurer

- The expenditure on membership comes from stamps and envelopes as we still have a small amount of members who still get everything such as event notices through post
- Sale stock, we have sold all of the books we had but we haven't bought any new ones yet and don't plan to unless something particularly interesting comes out due to storing unsold stock and transporting them to events
- Events, we spent slightly more than what we took from running them. This includes speaker expenses and room fees.
- Website fees went to Tom Williams who was helping us to host our website, we would reimburse him on this however we will now be looking after our own website in the future. The £1 income came from checking whether the payment card worked
- We had extra donations made when members renewed their memberships
- Our donation to WIRES to support the mammals affected by the Australian bushfires last years is shown on donation expenditure. Our raffle proceeds were used as a donation
- We spent £30.21 on equipment this year to replace the springs on the ECOss tube traps. The springs have been upgraded and so hopefully they will last longer. We are looking to buy some footprint tunnels later this year also
- Insurance is used to cover our events
- Small mammal grants were granted to two projects; £472 was given to support a hedgehog survey project and £239 was given to support a Dormouse project

Harvest Mouse Project:

- The Harvest Mouse project saw a grant from LUSH and from the John Lewis 'Community Matters' Scheme. An extra donation was given by Brandis Corner Wildlife Group which unfortunately had to fold but decided to share a portion of their remaining funds to the Harvest Mouse Project. The grant from LUSH was used on equipment and not salaries and so we put £2,536.03 from DMGs money into the project this.
- Equipment was bought for a new technique of monitoring for the Harvest Mouse Project, trail cams and some materials were purchased for this.
- Sarah also brought in £136 from running training days and events for other organisations, we did receive another £50 however we received this after the financial year ends.

We are looking into applying for more grants for the project, if anyone has any ideas for it please do let us know.

Agreed: Stephen Powles proposed, Jo Swift has seconded

5. Changes to the committee

We welcomed Charly Mead and Fleur Blackett to the committee in 2019

Teresa Sullivan stepped down in 2019 to have her baby, we offer our congratulations to her and Jess Smallcombe who has also had her baby! Fleur took up the Small Grants Officer position when Teresa stepped down.

Sue Smallshire also stepped down from Chair in September after 4 years, and what an amazing four years it has been! Luckily she has agreed to stay on the committee to help us out and keep on sharing her incredible knowledge.

Helen Calver stepped up to Chair in September and Charly took over Helens role as Secretary. Charly is also acting as Small Grants Officer temporarily until Teresa comes back to join the committee.

Helen Calver, Stephen Carroll, Phil Collins and Sarah Butcher are all standing this year for re-election.

Agreed: Amanda Barton proposed and Cathy Mead seconded

Current Committee as it stands:

Chair: Helen Calver

Vice Chair: Phil Collins

Treasurer: Ellie Knott

Secretary: Charly Mead

Membership Secretary: Chris Hughes

Small Grants Officer (Acting): Charly Mead

Website Officer: Rebecca Robinson

Sue Smallshire

Hilary Marshall

Kate Hills

re-joining us soon will be Teresa Sullivan and Jess Smallcombe

6. Changes to the constitution

- A few minor changes have been made to the constitution to follow charity commission guidance, changes are as follows:
 - 5b we have added that notice about the AGM will be given by email as well as by post
 - 7b is to name the acting Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer as Trustees as committee members change often.
 - Sue Smallshire, Lilly Williams and Kate Hills will be removed as Trustees
 - Ellie Knott will remain a trustee
 - Helen Calver, Phil Collins and Charly Mead will be added as Trustees

- The role of the committee has also been updated so we can do everything that needs to be done such as raising funds, applying for grants, cooperating with other charities and recruiting staff or contractors.
- 8b any online payments made will be authorised by two signatories, one of which will be the treasurer, the other must be members of the committee.
- 8f A written policy on reserves has been made and we will keep £1000 in the bank to cover ongoing expenses, this will be increased by the committee if necessary
- 8g to confirm our small grants fund, when finances are available we will give grants to members of the group or to other charities, this work has to be carried out in Devon

We received 21 votes to agree with the changes to the constitution

7. Harvest Mouse Report

Report by Sarah Butcher – Harvest Mouse Project Officer

A review of what has happened over the last year

- We carried on with the newsletter this year using mailchimp, we had 355 subscribers by the end of the season
- We used survey monkey to take records from surveyors to avoid paperwork. 79 records were received by the end of the season compared to 43 records which were received last year. This form has had more precise questions added to it this year to help record some important information such as what colour is the nest?
- Records are still coming through occasionally from ecologists who are out in the field
- Our twitter account has been successful
- Working with landowners such as Moor Meadows, The National Trust, RSPB, RHS, Devon Wildlife Trust.
- Group surveys and training sessions have been carried out throughout the survey season.
- New facebook page to help us communicate with the public with 200 likes
- Restarted the map this year, by the end of the season over two thirds of the map had been covered. The majority of Devon has had records of HM so far; the most popular month for searching seemed to be in March. Most volunteers were looking in tall grass and were finding mostly brown nests. Nests seem to be about 7-9cm wide which are slightly smaller than last year.
- Camera trap survey was started this year, 6 camera traps from Aldi were bought and modified by attaching them to a wooden box. This was extremely successful! Food was put in the box which attracted many mammals and birds. Harvest Mice were recorded well using this method.
- We have a few survey hub sites this year which are being monitored using footprint tunnels as well as cameras. Unusually after finding more than 100 nests present in tree

protection tubes there seems to be no sign of Harvest mice in the last three months. We are not sure if this is because of the drought or not.

- Next year we hope to:
 - Continue with the camera traps
 - Explore how harvest mice travel
 - Looking at the use of footprint tunnels and whether this is practical
 - Add more questions to survey monkey

This concludes the 2020 AGM.