

NEWSLETTER No: 165 February 2019

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Vice-Chairman: Jill Harvey 36 Rose Hill Lickey B45 8RR 0121 453 5838
Hon. Secretary: Baden Carlson 30 Beacon Hill Rubery B45 9QP 0121 624 9464



Forthcoming Events

“Heathlands in our Area” - 7.30pm, Tuesday 26 February 2019 at the Trinity Centre - B45 8ES



Photo: Google Images

A digital presentation to be given by **Andrew Harris** of the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust.

Heathlands used to be widespread in the area – reflected in place names like West Heath, Kings Heath, Small Heath and many more. That is no longer the case and efforts are being made to regenerate heathlands, not least in the Lickey Hills Country Park.

Andrew's presentation will include an introduction to the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust and the work that the Trust is doing in local reserves like Spinneyfields at Lydiate Ash. Andrew will consider various aspects of heathland including their background, decline

and restoration, current management practices and the Trust's vision for their future.

Admission: £2.00 to non-members.

Visit to the Oratory Church, Edgbaston – the afternoon of Saturday 23 March 2019

Following the interesting visit to the Oratory House in Rednal during October 2018, a follow-up visit has now been arranged to The Oratory Church in Edgbaston – 141 Hagley Road, Birmingham B16 8UE. It will be necessary for members to make their own way to the Oratory.

We are awaiting final details from The Oratory which will be included in the next Newsletter.

Spring Litter Pick – Saturday 30 March 2019 - meet at the Visitor Centre in Warren Lane at 10.00am.

This annual event is fast approaching and is an opportunity for members and friends of the Society to have a positive effect on the Country Park. Further details will be included in the next Newsletter.

Recent Event

Wassail in the Community Orchard - Saturday 12 January 2019



The annual Lickey Community Orchard Wassail once again proved to be very popular with between 180 and 200 people (difficult to count precise numbers in the dark) enjoying the fun. The Wassail began in the Visitor Centre with Appalachian dancers *Step on Board* performing to the music of Bob Bignell and his band.

Once the Queen Pea and King Bean had been chosen, the procession made its way to the orchard led by Ranger Services Manager, Steve Hinton. The procession wound its way around the orchard making as much noise as possible to ward off evil spirits and awaken the fruit trees from their winter slumbers in an effort to achieve a bountiful harvest.

Photo courtesy of Keith Woolford – more photos at www.thelickeyhills.uk
Photo shows Steve Hinton addressing the throng.

The Mummers Play written by the Lickey Bard (Steve Hinton) had a topical storyline featuring pressures on the Green Belt. Due to the ever increasing numbers attending the Wassail, the Society invested in a portable PA system with radio mikes and a couple of battery operated lights – these proved to be very successful and added to the enjoyment of the occasion.

Local poet Spoz performed an impromptu poem written in just 30 minutes and there was singing and drinking of mulled apple juice. Our thanks are due to everyone who attended the event and to the team of Rangers and Society members who worked so hard to ensure that it was another successful and enjoyable Wassail.

News from the Country Park

Car Parking Charges – There have been no significant developments since the last Newsletter but it is certain that parking charges will be introduced at Beacon Hill, the Golf Club and Warren Lane car parks as they have been approved by Birmingham City Council. Currently negotiations are taking place between Birmingham officers and the Worcestershire Highways Authority. There is still no indication of the charges that will apply but it is likely that season tickets will be made available and permits provided for volunteers who give freely of their time and experience to work in the Country Park.

Work has yet to start on the car parks to make sure that they are safe and fit for purpose. The Society is very much aware of the impact that the charges will have on our members and local residents. We are still being told that there will be a public consultation but so far no details have been made available. We will inform members as soon as we have any further information.

Birmingham City Council budget for 2019-20 – Again, there have been few developments since the last Newsletter. One positive is that the freeze on new appointments is being relaxed and the process of filling vacant Ranger posts within the city is underway.

Marlbrook Tip

A meeting took place at Bromsgrove District Council offices on 25 January as a result of recent tipping at the site. Environment Agency (EA) representatives gave an update and reported that the Tip is currently considered to be safe following a survey in February 2017 which was paid for by the Tip owners. EA reported that material allowable onto the site under the current Waste Permit is 68,000 tonnes. A site visit in December 2018 examined a load of imported material and a small amount of metals & plastics were found and they asked for the material to be removed. A new inspection is due in 6 – 8 weeks. The representative confirmed that the EA does not check every lorry entering the site for quantity or quality. The next quarterly Waste Return from the site owner was due at the end of January. EA estimates that 68,000 tonnes is roughly 3,000-4,000 lorry movements, based on the compaction, type of waste and if the material is wet or dry. This has been worked out by the site's Panel Engineer as the amount needed to cover the site with a minimum of 300mm depth of restorative material. The restoration material is considered to be needed to prevent damage to the clay cap from erosion and vegetation growth.

Ruth Bamford, Head of Planning and Regeneration at Bromsgrove DC (BDC) explained that the importation of restoration soils requires planning permission which would include a topographical survey but this has not been sought. Previous legal advice indicated that planning permission is required for the work and BDC still believe this to be the case. Planning permission would give BDC control over what happens on site, i.e. they could impose restrictions on working hours, lorry routes, road cleaning and also be able to request an interim survey. BDC have served a Planning Contravention Notice on the Tip owner which is asking what is going on and why. A Temporary Stop Notice (no lorries to enter site) was issued at 9.00 am on 25 January 2019 and it will last for 28 days. Only one Stop Notice can be issued, and because of legal restrictions, Ruth could not explain what will happen after the Notice expires. However, it is hoped that further consultation will take place between the site owner, the EA and BDC. The EA requirements are a separate issue to the planning requirements as they are focused on public safety. EA representatives explained that the tipping of restorative material could take place and the site owner could apply for planning permission retrospectively.

Clearly this is a very unsatisfactory situation as the saga continues to 'roll-on'. Many questions were asked but it still seems as if there is very little control over what is going on at the Tip. The next public meeting will take place at Bromsgrove DC on Thursday 21 March, 11.30 – 13.00.

Members are again asked to provide their support in the following ways:

1) If you see **lorries going on, or leaving the Tip**, please report them to Simon Jones and Ruth Bamford at simon.jones@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk or ruth.bamford@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

2) If you think the **mud on the road** is a possible traffic hazard please report this to Worcestershire Highways Authority, using their on-line reporting facility <https://e-services.worcestershire.gov.uk/online-reporting/FindLocation.aspx?FaultType=5>

This will enable the County road maintenance team to assess the situation regarding highway safety and possibly the erection of warning signage.



Keith Woolford

Keith is a life member and great supporter of the Society and other groups in the local area. One of Keith's very many contributions to the Society was the tremendous amount of work that he did in the production of our book – 'Exploring the Lickeys – Great Walks in and Around the Lickey Hills Country Park'. Without Keith and his son Simon, there simply would not have been such a book.

Our Congratulations go to Keith who was recently given a "Wildlife Hero Award" by the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust in a ceremony held at the Trust's headquarters at Lower Smite Farm. The event was held to celebrate the Trust's 50th Birthday.

Keith co-ordinates the management group that looks after High House Wood, a small privately owned ancient woodland that adjoins the Country Park. On behalf of the Friends of High House Wood, the management team do a brilliant job of keeping the wood in high conservation status whilst ensuring public access and its use for educational purposes by local schools.

Many congratulations Keith on a richly deserved award.

Photo: Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

What's On

Lickey Hills Society Programme 2019		
Tuesday 26 February 7.30pm	"Heathlands in Our Area" – an illustrated presentation by Andrew Harris – Worcestershire Wildlife Trust Details above	Trinity Centre B45 8ES £2.00 for non-Society members
Saturday 23 March 2019 Time to be notified	Visit to the Oratory Church, Edgbaston Further details in the next Newsletter	Meet at the Oratory Church B16 8UE
Saturday 30 March 10.00am	Spring Litter Pick Further details in the next Newsletter	Meet at the Visitor Centre Warren Lane, B45 8ER
Events organised by other groups		
Friday 15 March 7.30 – 10.00pm	Skywatch – An evening hosted by the Birmingham Astronomical Society. Explore the night sky using powerful telescopes (weather permitting). In the Visitor Centre will be a series of slide shows and a chance to meet members of the Society. Refreshments will be available from the café.	Meet at the Visitor Centre Warren Lane, B45 8ER
Tuesday 19 March 7.30pm	"The Mills and Tall Chimneys of Kidderminster" – Melvyn Thompson & Dave Greyland. The imposing carpet manufacturing buildings of Kidderminster.	Lickey Hills Local History Society Trinity Centre - B45 8ES £3.00 for non-Society members
Tuesday 16 April 7.30pm	"Bells, Books & Candles: St John's Church Bromsgrove in the 18th and 19th Centuries" – Simon Henderson. A study of the records and Archives of Bromsgrove's parish church	Lickey Hills Local History Society Trinity Centre - B45 8ES £3.00 for non-Society members

The Trinity Centre is situated at the top of Rose Hill, Lickey, B45 8ES.

The Lickey Hills Ranger Service: Lickey Hills Visitor Centre, Warren Lane, off Rose Hill, Lickey, B45 8ER.

Membership Renewal 2019

Membership Renewal is now due for this year so please use this form to renew your subscription.

I / we enclose my / our subscription of £..... plus a donation of £.....

Name..... Signed..... Date.....

Address..... Phone

If you wish to receive copies of the Newsletter by e-mail please include your e-mail address below and ensure that your e-mail address shows the right font size, capitals or lower case, full stops etc.

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Subs: Ordinary - £5.00; **Senior Citizen & Junior (under 18)** - £4.00; **Household** - £8.00 [all members living at the same address]. Cheques should be made payable to, The Lickey Hills Society, and sent to:

The Membership Secretary, Mrs B Carlson, 30 Beacon Hill, Rubery, Birmingham B45 9QP 0121 624 9464