

## Nature Reserve Review 2020

This has been a challenging year for all of us but the work of managing the reserve has continued. Thanks to our secretary, Glenys Ferguson, reports have been circulated and decisions made and recorded. Volunteers were back as soon as allowed, initially in twos then groups of 6, the logistics having been carefully worked out by Ian Procter. I wouldn't describe trimming hedges, scything nettles, pulling bull rushes out of water courses etc. as a "staycation", but I would say that the opportunity to be out of doors in a lovely environment with a very friendly group is appreciated by all the volunteers. As a result, the reserve has remained accessible and is looking great.

We continued with the surveys: wildflowers, winter birds, breeding birds, bumblebees and now also odonata (dragonflies, and damselflies). The reports are available on the website (the odonata survey includes some lovely photographs). This was a very odd year generally for bees in hay meadows, with little nectar owing to the drought in April and May. Instead, they were seen in gardens, so do remember those bee-friendly plants. Because we survey annually we are able to monitor trends and have noticed that lapwing are always interested in the arable field but only nest when the ploughing takes place in early March. With the recent wet springs, the contractor has not always been able to do the work for us that early. Under the guidance of our bird surveyor we plan to prepare some nesting sites over the winter and also improve the accessibility to the chicks, of the wet area at the bottom of the field. Lapwing are a declining species; their nests often being damaged by intensive farming practices.

The summer was a challenge for farmers, who had to fit us in between other jobs when the weather allowed. The barley crop was cut rather early which means that he still has to come back to cut the wildflower margins (appreciated by the bees no doubt). In contrast, the hay was a bit late. As the weather had been rather wet we hastily convened a small group of volunteers to give it an extra turn between cutting and baling. We are hoping that this will see the cattle well into the winter. Finally, a bull has been with the herd. He will go shortly but we can look forward to White Park calves again next spring.

Finally, a big thanks to the local community for all the positive feedback, especially in this unusual year.