



## Wiltshire Bat Group Meeting 12<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Potterne Wick Scout Centre - 1900 – 2100

These notes have been put together for the benefit of those members not able to attend, and to provide a record of the discussions. They will be posted on the Wiltshire Mammal Portal web site. Any inaccuracies and omissions can be rectified at the next meeting.

### Sticky Notices

- *If members want to get involved in our fieldwork and projects, then please email the [project leaders directly](#) and ask to go on their volunteer lists. The list of email addresses can be obtained upon request by emailing [wiltsgbmembership@gmail.com](mailto:wiltsgbmembership@gmail.com). Please be patient, some events get booked up quite quickly, and in line with national guidance [project leaders are necessarily restricting numbers and reducing exposure to bats](#).*
- *The Wiltshire Bat Group will continue to abide by all the guidance produced by the BCT, IUCN and Government scientists for reducing the risk of exposure of Sars Cov-2 (Covid-19) from the human population to bats. The BCT website has all the relevant information – [www.bats.org.uk](http://www.bats.org.uk)*
- *Bookmark the Wiltshire Mammal Portal in your web favourites – <https://wiltshiremammals.wordpress.com/wiltshire-bat-group>. You can read occasional news, our latest and archived annual Newsletters and previous meeting notes from the publication tab. We are also on the following social media platforms – Facebook [@wiltshirebatgroup](#), Twitter [@wiltsgb](#), Instagram – Wiltshire Bat Group and Wiltshire Bat Care*
- *We have 8 hand-held detectors and 2 Song Meter Mini static bat detectors that can be borrowed. You'll need to collect and drop off. Please email [EventsWiltsgb@gmail.com](mailto:EventsWiltsgb@gmail.com) for further details.*
- *If you want a reminder about how to request funding for projects in Wiltshire from the WBG please email [wwponting@gmail.com](mailto:wwponting@gmail.com)*
- *If you want assurance about how we protect your personal information please email [wwponting@gmail.com](mailto:wwponting@gmail.com) and we'll send you our latest Data Protection information.*
- *Send your bat records to the county recorder at [wiltsgbatrecords@gmail.com](mailto:wiltsgbatrecords@gmail.com)*
- *There is a comprehensive account of all Wiltshire's bat species in [mammals-in-wiltshire 2nd-edition](#) Due to be updated in 2022/3. Free to download.*
- *Note: If you are reading these notes on the Wiltshire Mammal Portal, are a WBG member but don't receive updates by email from our Secretary, then please email [wiltsgbmembership@gmail.com](mailto:wiltsgbmembership@gmail.com). You may be one of those members that we have no contact details for. And please remember to tell us if you change your email address at any time. Thanks!*

### **Will Ponting opened the meeting and welcomed everyone**

- 18 members and guests attended the meeting with apologies from 12 others.
- Will welcomed everyone and explained the agenda for the meeting.

### **The first item discussed was the WBG Secretary role.**

Will was disappointed to announce that after two rounds of advertising no one had come forward for the Secretary role in the group.

There were no formalities or voting.

After nearly six years in post the current Secretary Jenny Bennett was standing down. Will explained that for the immediate future the tasks of the Secretary would be shared out amongst the other remaining Committee members.

Will thanked Jenny for her efforts as Secretary, but she remains on the Committee in a non-core role to focus on aspects of planning. Will pointed out that the WBG does not formally get involved in local planning, personal disputes or developments, but Jenny's role will be to work more closely with Wiltshire Council.

Nominations for Secretary and Chair were still welcomed.

### **WBG 2022/2023**

Will made the point that with fewer Committee members the response from the group over the next year will be one of consolidation in order to retain stability and not to over extend or take on more commitments.

There will still be two indoor meetings for members in November and May, and Events, Training and NMBP monitoring planned and in the pipeline will also continue.

Wiltshire Bat Care coordinated by Cait McCann will continue to operate and be the focus for bat rescue and rehabilitation but after an unprecedented growth over the last two years also needs to take stock and stabilise what has been achieved rather than take on further expansion.

The WBG will continue as a champion for bat conservation in the county, our projects will continue and where possible under the current situation offer opportunities to members. Will closed this agenda item by reminding everyone that the committee were volunteers and that the WBG would continue to be run as effectively as possible, albeit at a reduced capacity.

### **What's happened so far in 2022**

Will explained that there was no formal update from the County Recorder as a full description of the notable records and sightings had been given in the spring Newsletter and at the November 2021 meeting. Will thanked Ben Mitchell for his time and effort in putting the Newsletter together. You can read it on the Wiltshire Mammal Portal under the WBG publication tab. [www.wiltshiremammals.wordpress.com](http://www.wiltshiremammals.wordpress.com)

The second bespoke bat house for Wiltshire has just been completed in the south of the county. This will provide roosting and hibernation opportunities for horseshoe bats in particular but is in a rich habitat environment with many of Wiltshire's flagship species being present. Will thanked all those involved in funding, designing, building and the Landowner. WBG helped with match funding through a member donation to the group.

Additionally, as mentioned at the last meeting, a small mine near Shaftesbury was re-grilled. This mine is potentially important as it may be a staging post for greater horseshoe bats as they disperse from north Dorset strongholds to the Chilmark SAC and swarming sites elsewhere.

Will mentioned that small experienced underground teams had been out at our main hibernation sites over the winter. Single visits were made to each main site to assess the situation after two years of no counts. Generally good numbers of greater and lesser horseshoe bats were noted despite continued disturbance.

Project leaders had also checked on their bat box schemes to ensure boxes were secure and safe after the severe winter storms.

The Wiltshire Mammal Portal has been updated. This contains our web pages and gallery. Please check it out when you get the chance. This is shared with the Wiltshire Mammal Group.

In autumn 2021 a small team carried out a limited trapping event (Covid compliant) at Brown's Folly to sample horseshoe and Daubenton's bats for SARS-Cov2. All came back negative despite the increase in disturbance in the system.

Will emphasised that while the Covid situation was improving, there was still the need to remain compliant with national guidelines, and as such opportunities for volunteer training and handling during the coming year may still be reduced.

### **Update from the Treasurer and Membership Officer – Will Ponting**

- Full accounts are available to anyone wishing to see them. The Treasurers account is independently audited each year, this is in progress for FY 2021 and will be confirmed at the November meeting.
- In summary:
  - Income £7,168
  - Expenses £8,045
  - Current balance in Bank £6,834
  - Estimated reserves for 2022 - £4,432 (general, SW GHS project and annual contingency)
  - Working unrestricted balance for FY 2022 - **£2,402**
- Will pointed out that a working balance of £2,400 was slightly reduced from the previous account, but in line with increased expenditure noted.
- Donations had been made to the Sussex bat group/VWT GHS appeal, and Wiltshire Bat Care.
- There are currently 215 members in the Wiltshire Bat Group. Annual income from membership donations, (which is our only fixed income) is in the range of £1,200 - £1,400, so all donations are welcomed.

### **Ollie Ellis – WBG NBMP Champion**

Ollie gave a brief update on NBMP monitoring surveys available and training events. Members are encouraged to get in touch with Ollie at [NBMPwiltsg@gmail.com](mailto:NBMPwiltsg@gmail.com) if they wish to volunteer. NBMP surveys align nicely with our increase in surveys and monitoring to provide bat records while hands-on bat work is reduced.

Ollie also updated members on behalf of Kelly Sheldrick, our Events Officer. Events, training etc will be regularly sent out to members as things are added and planned into the yearly itinerary.

New merchandise will be available shortly. Includes mugs which will be available for purchase, and also given as a 'thank you' gift to members contributing to bat conservation in Wiltshire.

### **Any other Business**

- The WBG has a Network Partnership agreement with the BCT meaning that we can take advantage of their 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Insurance. Details are available on request, please email [wwponting@gmail.com](mailto:wwponting@gmail.com).
- Please let us know if you are doing bat work in Wiltshire. You obviously don't need our permission, but this enables us to deconflict and potentially stop duplication of effort, we can also put people in touch with each

other. The main benefit is that you will be able to utilise the BCT Insurance agreement, and we get more bat records. Send your bat records to [wiltsbatrecords@gmail.com](mailto:wiltsbatrecords@gmail.com)

- Will was asked to point out that some members had reported emails from the wiltsbg@gmail account used by the committee to send out group emails had been delivered to spam folders. This is almost certainly due to the large number of cc'd addressees. So, please regularly check your spam folders.
- Members were asked if they had any ideas or preferences of what they would like the bat group to do generally, or what they'd like to see at the meetings. There were no suggestions on the night, but please email [wiltsbg@gmail.com](mailto:wiltsbg@gmail.com) if anything comes to mind.

### **Break**

After the break Will introduced Matthew Terry, Trustee for the BCT and former Chair of the Worcestershire Bat Group.

### **Carry on up the bat roost**

Matthew's talk about the varied and sometimes eye-opening sex life of bats was extremely entertaining, educational and amusing.

At each section of the talk it was emphasised that the findings and discussion points were based on factual Academic research from some of the most pre-eminent biologists and scientists around the globe. Importantly, the reasoning behind these behaviours was investigated and where possible explained.

This talk was a good end to the evening. After questions Will thanked Matthew and closed the meeting.

### **There being no further business Will thanked everyone and closed the meeting at 2100.**

The next meeting will be on Thursday November 10<sup>th</sup> 2022 at Potterne Wick Scout Centre.

<b>Wiltshire Bat Group Project leaders and email contact details</b>		
Project leader contact details are circulated when joining WBG and upon request by emailing <a href="mailto:wiltsbgmembership@gmail.com">wiltsbgmembership@gmail.com</a>		
<b>Your Committee</b>		
The Chair	vacant	wiltsbg@gmail.com
WBG Secretary	vacant	wiltsbg@gmail.com
Treasurer and Membership	Will Ponting	wiltsbgmembership@gmail.com
County Recorder for Bats	Gareth Harris	wiltsbatrecords@gmail.com
Wiltshire Bat Care Coordinator	Caitlin McCann	wiltshirebatcare@gmail.com
BCT NBMP coordinator	Oliver Ellis	NBMPWiltsbg@gmail.com
WBG Events coordinator	Kelly Sheldrick	EventsWiltsbg@gmail.com

## **Wiltshire Bat Group Principles**

- *Bat Group members should be champions and ambassadors for bat conservation raising the profile and public awareness of bats.*
- *Bat Group Members should promote and encourage data recording, forwarding their bat records to the Wiltshire Bat Group County Recorder.*
- *Experienced bat workers should provide training opportunities for the next generation of volunteers, including effective engagement with the public, safe handling, bat ID and surveying techniques.*
- *The Bat Group will establish and maintain effective partnerships with other bat groups, statutory bodies and conservation organisations.*
- *Bat Group Members should be courteous to each other, show respect, act with integrity at all times, communicate openly and adhere to the conditions of licences.*
- *Bat Group members should respect and adhere to National Guidelines relating to personal safety and bat welfare at all times.*
- *Bat group members engaging with, referencing or representing the Wiltshire Bat Group to the media should ensure they are delivering accurate, balanced and consistently professional messages aligned with the values of the group, and national bat conservation initiatives.*



**Natterer's bat – Will Ponting 2019**