



Wiltshire Bat Group Meeting 20th April 2023

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. 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](#). Email wiltsbqmembership@gmail.com and ask for current list.*
- *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*
- *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 [@wiltsbq](#), Instagram – Wiltshire Bat Group and Wiltshire Bat Care*
- *We have 8 hand-held detectors that can be borrowed for events. You'll need to collect and drop off. Please email eventswbq@gmail.com for details.*
- *If you want a reminder about how to request funding for projects in Wiltshire from the WBG please email wwponting@gmail.com*
- *If you want assurance about how we protect your personal information please email wwponting@gmail.com and we'll send you our latest Data Protection information.*
- *Send your bat records to the county recorder at wiltbatrecords@gmail.com*
- *There is a comprehensive account of all Wiltshire's bat species in [mammals-in-wiltshire 2nd-edition](#) 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 wiltsbqmembership@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

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

WBG Committee vacancies.

Will drew attention to the fact that the Group now has vacancies in various roles on the committee. The Chairman in particular and with the probability of not having an Events Officer in the next few months. He asked that members consider putting themselves forward to help running the group and pointed out that officers are not committed indefinitely and that the roles are essential but not onerous.

Update from the Treasurer/Membership Officer – Will Ponting

Will gave his report on the year's financial activity. The numbers are as follows:

Opening balance 1/3/22 - £6834

Income: - £6697

Expenditure: - £6539

Closing balance 28/2/23 - £6993

Reserve for 2023 - £4556

Unreserved funds for 2023 - £4556

Any questions can be addressed via email to the Treasurer.

In summary the WBG funds remain at a good level. And small grants are available to members for bat survey work. Any requests to be sent to The Treasurer.

Membership numbers are high at 250 so the WBG is in good shape.

Update from the events Officer – Kelly Sheldrick

Due to a family illness in Australia, Kelly was unable to attend the meeting and for the same reason it is likely that Kelly will be unable to continue in the role, although she will still be with us for the next few months. Hopefully handing over to the next Events Officer. All members of the committee paid tribute to the amazing work she has done over the past months and years.

In her absence Laura gave a short account of the talks and training events which have taken place over the winter.

Wiltshire's Best Bat Walks – Competition

Laura announced a new competition open to all members. To come up with suggestions for the best places in Wiltshire to experience bats. The aim is to produce a series of online leaflets with short bat walks covering urban and rural sites in various locations across the county. Members are invited to submit their ideas via the on line for which is on the website. The best three suggestions will be chosen by the committee and Richard, Graphic Designer and bat group member, will work these up into beautiful leaflets to become the first three walks of the series. Submission date end of September, winners announced at the November meeting. Leaflets produced for Spring 2024. Further details will be circulated to members via email and social media.

Update from Wiltshire Bat Care – Caitlin McCann

Caitlin was unable to attend the meeting. Will presented a series of slides which outlined the work carried out, including the costs in time and money to carry out the work. He paid tribute to the incredibly hard work carried out

by Caitlin and her team. Anyone interested in supporting this work should get in touch with Caitlin directly: wiltshirebatcare@gmail.com

Update from the County Recorder – Gareth Harris

Gareth gave a brief run down of the highlights of bat work activity over the past few months. You can read the details of these projects on the Wiltshire Mammal Portal under the WBG publication tab. www.wiltshiremammals.wordpress.com.

Gareth noted that there has been a good volume of acoustic records coming through but that these were mainly from Bat Group members and the general public with fewer coming through from professional ecologists. He recommended that anyone interested in sending records should consider the excellent training available through BatAbility run by Neil Middleton.

Refreshment Break

Talk: Tom Kitching from The Vincent Wildlife Trust

After the break, Tom Kitching from The Vincent Wildlife Trust gave an excellent talk on the work and history of the Trust. After an overview of the aims and focus of the trust he talked in more detail about his work on bats, in particular, the greater and lesser horseshoe bats. Much of what the trust does is to protect and often buy buildings and sites which are important maternity and hibernation sites and try to increase bat numbers by making them optimal and secure. Over the years many lessons and techniques have been learnt which are now being applied to their biggest project so far run in conjunction with the Sussex Bat Group, at a site where a pioneer group of greater horseshoe bats was detected a few years ago.

After questions Will thanked Tom and closed the meeting.

Wiltshire Bat Group Project leaders contact email		
wiltsgmembership@gmail.com		
Your Committee		
The Chair	vacant	wiltsg@gmail.com
WBG Secretary	Laura Loncar	wiltsg@gmail.com
Treasurer and Membership	Will Ponting	wiltsgmembership@gmail.com
County Recorder for Bats	Gareth Harris	wiltsgbatrecords@gmail.com
Wiltshire Bat Care Coordinator	Caitlin McCann	wiltshirebatcare@gmail.com
BCT NBMP coordinator	vacant	NBMPWiltsg@gmail.com
WBG Events coordinator	Kelly Sheldrick	EventsWiltsg@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.*