

Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society, Natural History Section

Minutes of meeting held in the New Walk Museum on Wednesday, 7th November, 2018 from 7.00. until 9.30pm. Approximately 20 members and 1 guest attended.

The meeting was chaired by Hazel Graves.

- After a welcome, Hazel thanked Jan Dawson for preparing and serving the meeting refreshments. Volunteers were **again** invited to take up the task. Thanks too to Pouran Khodabakhsh for the latest newsletter and Jan for arranging the winter programme.
- Members were again advised that from October 2018 meeting minutes are available to read on the parent body website under our section tab.
- An extraordinary general meeting will start our meeting on 19th December 2018, to finalise the section's plans to accommodate the new charging regime for rooms at the New Walk Museum.
- The next section meeting and parent body meeting were trailed.
- Members were invited to become involved with our presentation at the Museum Exhibition Day in 2019.
- Sightings were –
 - Ravens in courtship display near Tilton and their pellet contents – Jan Dawson
 - Red Kite over Wigston and River Soar between Barrow and Pillings Lock – Sue Hitchings and Hazel Graves
 - Bat disturbed by helicopter hovering - Rosie
 - Badger dung pits containing a red jelly and seeds. Could be Yew arils, the poisonous seed remaining undigested, or Wayfaring Tree berries.
 - 2 Stonechats in Bradgate Park during the previous week - Hazel.
- Books suitable for children were displayed – Lost Words by Macfarlane and Morris (inspired by the removal of some of the common names of wildlife from a childrens dictionary) and I am the Seed that grew the Tree by Waters and Preston-Gannon.

The lecture was **Cossington Meadows by Chris Hill, LRWT Conservation Officer.**

- Chris outlined the history of the reserve – its conversion from fields to sand and gravel pits, its subsequent use as landfill, its conversion to reserve by fencing, landscape re-profiling (including a fish refuge) and some planting of aquatics to create diverse aquatic habitats for a range of invertebrates. The underlying clay makes water retention easy. He explained the challenges and solutions to managing the site by grazing. From his experience the present Black Welsh cattle are the best option. Mention was made of:
 - The creation of an artificial hibernaculum and Otter, *Lutra lutra*, holts
 - The engagement of community help
 - Grass Snakes, *Natrix natrix*, Toads *Bufo bufo*, Common Newts, *Lissotriton vulgaris*, a Bittern, *Botaurus stellaris*, Short Eared and Barn Owls, *Asio flammeus* & *Tito alba*, Common Terns, *Sterna hirundo*, Black-headed Gulls, *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*, Harvest Mice, *Micromys minutus*, Soldier Fly, Ground Beetle, *Carabus granulatus*, Sexton Beetle, Common Spotted and Southern Marsh Orchids, *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* & *D. praetermissa*.
 - Problems of invasive species such as New Zealand Pigmyweed, *Crassula helmsii*, river pollution and having to deal with bureaucracy.
 - The finding of ancient Red Deer, *Cervus elaphus*, antlers and Auroch, *Bos Taurus primigenius*, bones.

After questions, Hazel gave a vote of thanks.