

Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society, Natural History Section

Minutes of meeting held in the New Walk Museum on Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2019 from 7.00. until 9.30pm. 30 members and 5 guests.

The meeting was chaired by Hazel Graves.

Apologies had been received from John and Sheila Tinning.

Our next meeting, and those of our Parent Body and the Geological Section were trailed.

Exhibits were:

- a stuffed Polecat, *Mustella putorius*, and Raven, *Corvus corax*, from the museum's collection
- the lichen, *Ramelina fastigiata* growing on fastigiata Hornbeams, *Carpinus betulus*, planted in a car park.
- The 'skeletons' created by the veins of Musk Mallow, *Malva moschata*, sepals.

Sightings were:

- Cowslips, *Primula veris*, in flower in a member's garden
- The now rare presence of a Grey Heron, *Ardea cinerea*, on Evington Golf Course. These were regular there until the arrival, about ten years ago, of Little Egret, *Egretta garzetta*.

Alan Cann has now been co-opted onto the committee to help with our IT platforms. He showed the meeting the two forums he had set up on Facebook and in Gmail Groups. Hazel also thanked him for helping get out meetings publicised on the museum screens.

The evening's main business was a lecture – **Charnwood Lodge, Leicestershire's last Wilderness?** by **Neil Pilcher**. Neil works for the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust and is the warden in charge of Charnwood Lodge. He was introduced by Hazel.

Neil told us about the history of the site and its buildings, and how Miss Clarke left it to the trust. He then moved on to the challenges of its conservation management and its use in educating volunteers about its wildlife. He highlighted its importance for moths, birds and bird ringing, Diptera, butterflies, especially the Wall, *Lasiommata megera*, and Green Hairstreak, *Callophrys rubi*; its galls, its 366 plant species now being monitored by quadrat surveys with the help of volunteers; its 141 lichen species; its 546 fungus species; its 194 spider species, and, thanks to very careful buildings maintenance, its 10 bat species. He finished by thanking Miss Clarke for this very generous legacy.

Following a question and answer session, Hazel thanked Neil.