

**AGM of the Bolton Conservation Volunteers held at Sweet Green Tavern  
on Wednesday 13 February 2019**

**Present:**

Lynn Entwistle (LE) Colin Mather (CMA) Claire Billington (CBI) Colette Peachey (CP) Rick Parker (RP)  
Tom Bruce (TB) Caroline Bruce (CB) Andy Brownlow (AB) Paul Thompson (PT) Katrina Muir (KM) Nathan  
Ashley (NA) Evelyn Egan (EE) Clayton Morris (CM)

**Apologies:** Francis Williams

**Officers' Reports**

**Treasurer CBI**

CB produced a spreadsheet showing a breakdown of income and expenditure which also compared last year's accounts with the previous years. There was also a summary in the form of a written report. Bank account balance is £9,347.00 and is made up of £2,082 Lottery funding, £336 Community Empowerment Fund, BCV funds of £5,409, Tesco bags of help fund £730 and Donations £790.

The main changes are:

- Task income has increased by £860 this year
- In April 18 we received Lottery funding of £9,940 and £2,000 from Tesco bags of help. Thanks to Caroline and Tom for keeping a check on what is spent from each of the funding streams and for securing the funding – there is a breakdown of spend.

Claire thanked PC for auditing the accounts especially as he came all the way from Wales to do it, and RP for his work as organiser.

All those present thanked Claire for her sterling work over the year.

KM asked if we reported back to donators as to how we spent the money.

**Auditor PC**

Accounts were audited by Paul Crawshaw and found to be in order. We must link our spend to the funding.

**Fundraising CB**

The lottery funding received was good and will be linked with schools more and other groups. This enables us to do more with the community like the Wildfest at Moses Gate. The funding this year from the lottery could be up to £20,000 and would be a 2 year project if received. This is an opportunity for diversification and training etc.

**Communication Officer LE**

The communication systems we have in place continue to be efficient when information must be circulated. Everyone in BCV can be contacted by either text or email but contact details need to be regularly updated to remain efficient. LE circulated contact sheets and ask everyone to check and correct the information we hold.

**First Aid LE**

As Tom, Sheena and Jane have all attended First Aid courses during the last year we now have certain First Aid cover at every task and I have stepped back a little to allow younger volunteers to take greater responsibility. They have been looking after the First Aid kit which still satisfies the legal requirements for the number of volunteers we have on any task and for the work we do. I am attending a course in March and will again have a valid certificate. It is thanks to the care all our volunteers take to ensure the safety of those around them as they work that the need for First Aiders is not a high priority. It is important to have continuity within any longstanding group such as this and I believe BCV has the right attitude to continuing into a bright future.

## Website Officer      CMa

- Originally hosted by Mr Site until 2016 when it was bought out by Paragon Internet Services, in 2018 the hosting service was transferred to TSOHost.
- Up to the end of December the total number of hits since launch were **29,030**.
- For 2018 figures are **2630** hits and **38** email contacts. (complete list at end of page)
- These are lower than last year's figures and follow a downward trend since 2015 but hit numbers are still better than 2014. However, email contacts are the lowest ever.
- This may reflect the changes in how people use the internet, i.e. smartphones etc., which the website isn't 100% compatible with and is fiddly to use on those devices
- The web builder itself is about 14 years old and has had no major updates for several years and is becoming a bit clunky.
- Sometime in the next couple of years we may have to upgrade to a new web builder
- This was previously attempted in 2015 but the test version of a new version of the website was terrible and the project was abandoned in a year later.
- The new owners of the web builder say that all of the problems have been ironed out but I'm reluctant to try again.
- Last year I made a couple of additions to the website
- Old photos gallery
- Old news page
- Scorched Earth article
- Normans Xmas Cheer
- This year's hosting fees are £57.19, this is an increase on last year's fees and includes domain name registration fees.
- The laptop is still working well but my broadband is very slow, last year I said I was looking into changing to something better. That is still the case.

## Photographers Report

- I've been group photographer since 2006
- For a number of years I was photographer, publicity officer and website officer.
- Photos were used on the website, press releases, leaflets, articles, slideshows, and also distributed to other groups and clients
- Now that we have Facebook and You Tube Officers and ad hoc publicity officers who create their own images and material for content, movies, posters etc. my role as photographer isn't as wide ranging.
- **770** photos were taken with the group camera, **234** were used on the website; this is the lowest number since 2015.
- Some of these photos have been used to create the calendar, although half of those were taken in my own time and not on tasks, and the certificates for the dry stone walling and hedge laying competition.
- The group camera was bought with lottery funding in 2016 and continues to operate well as too does the laptop

## Tools Officer      TB

TB said all tools good and in working order. A list was provided.

## Videos      AB

Since the last AGM, I have uploaded 8 videos to the BCV40 YouTube Channel. This is fewer videos uploaded than last year, but they contain more minutes of video overall.

I have also filmed, but have yet to edit:

Blackleach tern island; Jumbles Reservoir hedge laying; Ravendon Clough rhodie & path work.

I also filmed clips of Francis at Rumworth and Rick at Firwood Fold for a possible future 'History of BCV' video.

Our viewing figures are tiny, relative to some YouTube big beasts. This reflects a niche audience for a local conservation group. However, I have come across people on task in London who have reported

watching BCV videos independently before meeting me.

This year I started using activity-specific over group-specific titles for videos, I.E. 'How to make a hibernaculum for amphibians' rather than 'Bolton Conservation Volunteers at Kearsley Moss.' The idea is to aim to pull in a more general audience.

The video with the most views, though uploaded just in September, is the Bridge Street LNR bentonite clay pond dig. It's had 391 unique views and has been watched for 1,900 minutes overall. Search terms used to find it were 'bentonite clay' and 'pond making.' These searches have mostly come from within YouTube, but a good % of its traffic is from Facebook and other sites (for which, read Colin's.) It's the only video for which viewing figures are accelerating over time. This is likely because it's much more informative than equivalent videos on its niche subject, so will retain viewers for longer; this results in it being promoted higher in YouTube searches - as in, its thumbnail will show up higher up on a list of suggested videos. One possible way to reach a greater audience is to begin to make targeted videos on specific conservation subjects. For instance, habitat piles, making ponds for wildlife, and so on. Suggestions welcome. Rick commented that by using the web, the influence of the group has begun to extend beyond Bolton. It's quite conceivable that healthy ponds, hibernacula, dead hedges and so on will be created remotely by others following viewings of our demos.

The next most-watched videos are 2017's Drystone walling competition; Beaumont & St Bernards schools; Rumworth Lodge; Anglezarke hedge laying competition; and the Northern Forest video from April '18. I am not aware of anyone having joined the group as a result of viewing the videos. If anyone has any anecdotal evidence of this, I would be grateful to hear it.

Having researched the Northern Forest video, it's now clear to me that Britain is a sitting duck for rewilding at scale. We have vast areas of denuded landscape which support a tiny mass of life overall, relative to the geologically recent past. At the same time, calls are coming from climate researchers to reforest the world's lands ASAP. Britain has a length-and-breadth network of degraded moorland, which could be afforested to lock up carbon and allow native flora and fauna to return, vastly increasing the biomass which it presently supports. I'd be interested to see if anyone is up for in adopting measurable goals for the group in this or any other conservation areas.

There are 11 videos with 1 more to come from the last task. Thanks for the new hard drive. AB was keen on doing a half hour history of the group and welcomes any ideas. Feedback was good RP said he enjoyed all of them.

### **Publicity Officer**

This post was vacant but is now being filled by Francis Williams

### **Fun Officer           JA**

Jane said that she loved being part of BCV and what makes the group so special is the organised fun: Easter egg hunt, Santa Tasks; Halloween outfits, pub crawls; bonfire night house party CB & TB and the Christmas meal in January. Also the spontaneous fun – Horwich pub crawl actually visited a pond site! She welcomed new members.

### **Facebook Page   KM**

Thanks to Katrina and Joanne for doing the Facebook page. Got 269 followers, 112 engagements from last Sunday's task.

### **Chair                   RP**

Rick said he has been a member for 35 years – the group started in a pub meeting to help the environment. They had no tools etc. BTVC helped them to evolve.

The last 2 years have got better and better. 2018 was the most fantastic year. The difference being – commitment, belief in what we do and enthusiasm. The number of volunteers has gone through the roof and we have taken our destiny into our own hands and can cope with anything and achieve anything!

1. Money – in the pipeline for 2019 is a large lottery funding (if we get it) which will influence other groups and engage and help them to be like us.

2. Projects to help – such as ponds, helping willow tits; species specific conservation! Maybe an artificial Kingfisher site on the island at Doffcocker?
3. RP made 2 toasts: - 2018 – best year ever, well done everybody!  
2019 – will be a rollercoaster of a year!

## 1. Election of Officers

<u>Post:</u>	<u>Name:</u>	<u>Proposed by:</u>	<u>Seconded by:</u>
Chair	RP	TB	CP
Vice Chair	KM	TB	RP
Photographer	CMa	RP	AB
Secretary	CP	JA	RP
Treasurer	CBi	RP	TB
Auditor	PC	RP	JA
Social/Fun	JA	CB	CP
Comms Sec & First Aid	LE	RP	KM
Tools Officer	TB	RP	CMa
Website Officer	CMa	TB	JA
Publicity Officer	FW	AB	RP
Walks Co-ordinator	TC	RP	JA
Videos	AB	RP	TB
Facebook	KM & JO	CMa	CP

All the appointments were unanimously accepted by those present

## **AGM concluded**

## **Meeting**

**Minutes:** Accepted as an accurate record.

1. Last task at Ravenden Clough was brilliant with 28 attending. There is more to do – drainage problem so digging and gravel to be put down. We may put it on the program to go back and finish.
2. RP and TB had a meeting with Paul at the Anderton Centre about the residential weekend – the hedge needs filling in and hazel coppicing and continue with hosier coppicing. Also the rhododendrons need exterminating again!
3. The Constitution 2019 (how we do things) was passed around for information and can be found on the website
4. The Code of Conduct can also be found on the website.
5. RP was invited for interview on Radio Bolton and has been asked back in April.

Meeting closed at 9.15pm.

**Next meeting:** Wednesday 13 March 2019, 8:00 p.m. at the Sweet Green Tavern, Bolton.