

HENFIELD BIRDWATCH

Chairman's Report 2023

Much of what we did this year revolved around what we were going to do in 2024, the year of our 25th anniversary! We commenced this year on our really big project for 2024 to produce the definitive book of Henfield Birds which we aim to publish in the early summer of our anniversary year. Paul Cole undertook to produce this mammoth task with contributions from other members of the committee and I promise you when it's finished, it will be well worth waiting for. As well as undertaking the production of the book, Paul also produced the 2022 Bird Report which provides a detailed summary of the birds recorded during year. Having access to the SOS database has helped enormously in giving us all the details and information to compile these publications.

Our surveys of the birds of the parish continued under the supervision of Nigel Colgate and are now in the full swing of 2 breeding surveys and 2 winter surveys during the year. John Coit has decided to 'retire' from doing the surveys for Area 1, the area to the north of the parish. We're very lucky that local ecologist Libby Morris has agreed to take over the surveys for this area. Many thanks to John for the years of putting his time and enthusiasm and recording the birds in this part of the parish. Debbie and Nigel Colgate along with Lesley Milward and Will Green continued to survey the birdlife of Perching Manor Farm while Lesley and Val Bentley are doing the same at the Sussex Prairie Gardens. Meanwhile, Val and Will entered the 25th year (minus 2 through lockdown) of monitoring the Nightingale population of the parish.

Walks and talks were back in full swing. Again, Nigel and Val provided monthly walks while Nigel and Debbie led some very successful trips beyond our own parish boundary to some great birding areas in Sussex and sometimes, they sneaked across the border into another county! Some members also took a great trip down to the Great Bustard Project on Salisbury Plain. Every year, we run the Big Bird Bash which, as well as being an exercise to record as many species of birds over the May Bank Holiday weekend, raises money for the Haven and in 2023, we raised £483.00 for them. We continued to put on talks as well and the final one in November was particularly enjoyed as well as being very informative was given by Peter Hughes on the work carried out in Chichester Harbour.

At the end of the year, Henfield Birdwatch remains in very good health with membership up to 260 members as I write and Facebook members now number 588. So, we can enter into our 25th year in a strong position not only to celebrate this landmark in our history but also take a major part in 2024 being designated as Henfield's Year of Biodiversity.

A big thanks as ever to my fellow committee members for their continuous enthusiasm, expertise and hard work in everything we achieved in 2023.

Mike Russell

Chairman