



## WAVENEY BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2023

Dear Members

It has been a while since we had a news letter so the committee thought that we would bring you all up to date on various bits and pieces of club news.

### **From Chair Mark Broughton**

The club continues to bounce back after the Covid-19 years with good numbers attending both indoor and field meetings. Helen Gooderham has done an excellent job of putting together the 2024 events programme with a combination of old favourites and new sites for us to visit.

Work is due to start soon on putting up the Swift tower in Eastbridge. Great credit must go to Rob Gooderham, Bob Flindall, Steve Piotrowski and Chris Parr, for the immense amount of work they have put into this project. Without their expertise in planning, design, project management and fund raising the project would have floundered. The bird ringing demonstrations at Minsmere have been a great success with hundreds of visitors to the reserve benefiting from the knowledge of our ringing team. I've popped along to a couple of them and it's a joy to see visitors, particularly youngsters enjoying close up views of the birds being processed. Membership renewal emails will be sent out early in the new year, please fill in the Gift Aid section if you haven't done so already. The club can claim back an extra 25p for every pound of membership fee or donation, if a gift aid form has been completed, all at no cost to the donor. Merry Christmas to you all and I look forward to seeing many of you during the flying start week, in the New Year.

### **From our Events Organiser**

2023 has proved to be another successful year but notable for new members appearing on outdoor events in particular and continuing to become regulars throughout the year.

It's been a pleasure to meet so many new faces and to see how much they appreciate the quality and friendliness of the events and the knowledge of our enthusiastic leaders. I must also send grateful thanks to all those leaders who put much thought and effort into making our birding experiences so rewarding. Kevin Allenby is also a star, making changes to the website when requested and adding our 2024 programme with a new look.

I hope that our 2024 programme which is now on the website will prove exciting and continue to attract all our valued members.

Find the new programme for 2024 at [waveneybirdclub.com](http://waveneybirdclub.com)

You will see that starts with a bang on January 1st with the popular Flying Start, a week of birding to get those lists off to a flying start!  
Do join us.

Merry Christmas and a Happy Birding New Year, Helen Gooderham.

### **From Our Membership Secretary**

I'm pleased to say we have 147 members for 2023. 30 of these are new members or rejoining, lapsed members. This compares to 118 members for 2022. We welcome all members to our Club and look forward to our 2024 activities. This is my first year as Membership Secretary and I'd like to re-iterate my thanks to Jane for her support during the year.

In 2024 we will confirm your cash membership payments by email and this can act as a receipt for your subscription.

We look forward to our Club continuing to grow in 2024.

Thank you all for your subscription and Merry Christmas.

Cheryl Deeks

### **From our President**

#### **SWIFT TOWER UPDATE**

We have reported on the trials and tribulations surrounding our swift tower build in earlier newsletters. It all sounded so simple: find and purchase a Douglas fir tree; get it ornately carved; fix a purpose-built nesting chamber on top of the pole and sink it in the ground. Easy, we thought! However, we have had to jump through more hoops than circus performers. For annual inspection purposes, a buried pole was not desirable, in case unseen rotting to the wooden structure occurred underground. So, we had to employ the services of a Structural Engineer ( Geoff Denton of Adam Power Associates ) to find a solution as well as providing the structural design work and carrying out site inspections during construction. Geoff devised a method that would leave the whole pole exposed to the elements. It will be supported in a concrete chamber with reinforced foundations. Most of the component parts are made and ready for transportation to the Eel's Foot Inn at Eastbridge, on the fringe of RSPB Minsmere, an ideal site to host our tower.

With the planning and design complete, we have the funds to start construction. Work is due to commence on 11th December 2023, to be completed by the end of January 2024 and we are hopeful that severe winter weather does not delay progress. Fingers crossed that we don't suffer further delays.

Funding has been one of our biggest challenges, followed by the appointment of a contractor and all the associated documentation. Our funders insisted on three quotes and we accepted the lowest. But this soon resulted in difficulties, so we were forced to change tack. We have now appointed Gilleard Bros - the Company who built the Access for All Path at RSPB Minsmere. This has left a funding gap that we urgently need to fill.

Membership renewals are due now and you will find a box to tick on the form where you can make a donation to help swifts. Please be generous.

The swift tower will serve as a monument to education about the swift and provide a home for one of the UK's most-threatened species. We expect the tower will attract many visitors each year. If all goes to programme, WBC and Adnams (the landowner) hope to jointly host an official opening for the tower on 5th May 2024 at the same time as we welcome back swifts to Suffolk skies.

We have received enormous support from Suffolk and Essex Coast and Heaths National Landscapes (formerly Coast and Heaths AONB) who have provided encouragement along with considerable financial support. We have also received funding from East Suffolk's Nature First initiative. We are grateful to you our members for all your donations, to Pat Lancaster for her substantial bequest in memory of her late husband Tony and to the contributors to our former Project Officer's Paddy Shaw's memorial fund. As a Club, we must thank the design team members: Rob Gooderham (detailed drawings), your Project Officer, Bob Flindall and retired Civil Engineer, Chris Parr. They have worked tirelessly on this project and their commitment should be commended.

Steve Piotrowski

3rd December 2023

From President Steve Piotrowski, Chairman Mark Broughton and all on the Committee we wish you Season's Greetings and look forward to seeing you at our last event for 2023, the Christmas Social on Tuesday 12th December.

Lastly, please see some of the events on which we've thoroughly enjoyed ourselves this year.



We look forward to more of the same in 2024.





