

Volunteer Voice

16th June 2026, Ledbury Community Hub

Staff Attendees: Frances Weeks, Lesley Hack, Ian Grafton, Cath Marshall, Nicky David

Notes & Actions

<p>1. Update on new staff and staff departures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River City Project Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jenny Motterhead has moved into the role of Project Manager. Holly Thompson will move into the role of Nature Recovery Officer (date TBC) and we have a new Community Officer starting next month. • Nature Reserves Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clare O'Reilly has joined as our new Nature Reserves Manager; we welcome back Lewis Goldwater as Reserves Officer and Adam Toulson-Hampshire started in his role as Reserves Officer this week. All roles in the reserves team are now full time. A full list of who manages which reserve is here: Reserves Officers & Reserves June 2026.pdf • Finance & Operations Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alex Boswell has started with us as Operations Assistant • Nature Action Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rosa Fernandez has moved into the role of Nature Tots Officer 	<p>Noted that some volunteers find the team titles of Nature Recovery and Nature Action unclear. Frances Weeks to include in discussions when we finalise our new strategy</p>
<p>2. Update on training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for Volunteer Work Party Leaders and Voluntary Wardens was delivered by Rosie last month. This training day is run every six months with the next session scheduled for 9th November • First Aid. Next session scheduled. Any volunteers requiring First Aid training to discuss with their main staff contact or email Eleanor Cherry: e.cherry@herefordshirewt.co.uk • Wildflower & grasses ID training. Two successful sessions run again this year. We plan to continue to run these annually. • Local Branch Committees training and social. This is pencilled in for 9th September at Birches Farm and will include a walk and prestation as well as training on Health & 	<p>Request for brushcutter training – Ian Grafton to follow up with his team</p> <p>Request for a written guide / reminders for the tills in the shops - Cath Marshall to create</p>

<p>Safety, Safeguarding and Data Protection. We are very open to feedback on the content, date and location – please email Frances.f.weeks@herefordshirewt.co.uk with ideas.</p>	
<p>3. Nature Reserves divestments & acquisitions update We have completed (or very nearly completed) sales on those reserves that have been discussed over the past couple of years: Motlins, Romers, Merrivale, Rookhill and Upper Swingley.</p>	
<p>4. Update on volunteer activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The next Volunteer Voice will be in September – location either Ross or Kington – which would you prefer? • Christmas quiz will be going ahead again this year – date and location TBC (early December) • Discovery Days and Discovery Walks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Our Autumn Discovery Day and AGM will be on Saturday 17th October in Bodenham Parish hall. ○ Other Discovery Walks still to be announced – watch this space! 	
<p>5. Is there any intention that any of the new HWT River City officers will lead any practical work parties?</p>	<p>Yes! The River City Nature Recovery Officer will lead and/or support work parties as well as surveying and monitoring volunteer groups as part of their role.</p>
<p>6. Please may we have an update on volunteer recruitment, particularly for practical work parties?</p> <p>Last year (April 2025 to March 2026) we had 101 volunteers sign up with us, 52 of these for practical work parties. We continue to get regular enquiries and sign-ups each month.</p> <p>The new onboarding/ induction process is working well with volunteers attending a taster session before completing their form and any required training for their role.</p> <p>This week the allocation of nature reserves to reserve officers was finalised which allows us to link new volunteers with a specific reserves officer which we hope will</p>	<p>Noted that some volunteers may find the forms and training required for new starters somewhat onerous and off-putting.</p> <p>Lesley Hack will continue to take on board feedback and review our processes but some training has to be mandatory for certain roles and we do require an amount of key information on each volunteer.</p>

<p>improve their experience. (Volunteers can continue to sign up for any work party irrespective of their main reserve officer contact)</p>	
<p>7. Is there a way for volunteer leaders to have access to Eventbrite to see who has booked for an event on which they are leading?</p>	<p>Yes, we can set this up. Volunteers requiring access please email Frances f.weeks@herefordshirewt.co.uk (*We will need a confidentiality agreement to be signed.)</p>
<p>8. AOB</p> <p>Request for recycling/ disposal system for discarded vapes at Queenswood</p> <p>Request for use of name badges/ stickers at Voice and similar meetings</p> <p>Query over branch activities potentially overlapping with Discovery Days/ Walks</p> <p>Some lovely customer feedback shared that the Ledbury Shop was “the best shop she’s ever been in”</p> <p>Some discussion/ query around the Citizen Bat project.</p> <p>Some discussion around how/ where people should record wildlife sightings.</p>	<p>Cath/ Max to investigate options</p> <p>All staff to action at future meetings</p> <p>Lesley to coordinate with local branches. Generally, demand is such that we can fill all events, even if some are similar.</p> <p>This is not run by the Trust but a great initiative that local branches were welcomed to get involved with. Managed by James Bisset: h.citizenbat@gmail.com</p> <p>This is a topic which was recently discussed at a strategy workshop run by the Trust with the Records Centre and county recorders involved as well as the topic for the last Nature Action Network meeting. The picture in Herefordshire is quite complicated but general advice (for now) is that iRecord <u>Home iRecord</u> is generally the best system for most things. We hope to progress these conversations to have a clearer system for both submitting and viewing data in the future.</p> <p>Ian Grafton to share feedback with the team</p>

<i>Feedback on how and where brash piles are constructed on our reserves and logs are piled - restricting access for bat and nest box checkers</i>	
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Refreshing our Strategy – notes from our discussion

If the Trust's main goal is to improve and increase biodiversity, we should concentrate on those options which best achieve that:

Farm Advice

General agreement that this was important in such an agricultural county. BUT essential to get the right, expert staff who would be well respected. Agreed working with other organisations and signposting where appropriate was important.

Nature Markets

Conflicting views. Some felt like opportunities such as BNG were here to stay and offered great potential income so we would be foolish to ignore that. Others that these systems could make us complicit in ecological destruction and that there could be unintended consequences.

Monitoring wildlife also put in top three by one group

Housing and Infrastructure also raised as important – victory at Lugg Meadows seen as significant.

Increasing membership was also discussed – felt like doing all the other things well would naturally help us to increase our membership.