



Registered Charity No 701627

Spring 2020

Holderness Countryside



Spring lockdown Bug-hunt Hawthorn Shield BugAlan Burnham

Journal of the South Holderness Countryside Society

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No 136 - Free to members. Available to non-members for a minimum donation of £1.50

From the Chairman

Where did 2019 go to? And we're already approaching the end of the first quarter of 2020! Research performed on prospective time estimates has shown that the more attention a task requires, or the busier that you are, the faster time flies. I am sure that our society volunteers probably all feel the same, fitting in work, family, appointments, yet still finding time to bramble bash, hedge lift and trim, grass cut or plant trees. Each and every one of them is an absolute diamond. A wet, muddy, frequently cold, diamond – and I thank each and every one of them. Check out Peter's article on work done at the reserves.



Our Young Nats kept busy last year working towards various badges, and doing absolutely sterling work. You will find an article written by Adam, now one of our senior Nats, later in this journal. I wish I could print more of his work, his Summer project to keep a nature diary was absolutely amazing. It deserves to be published in its own right. We are in the midst of organising their 2020 project work right now. Keep an eye on our Facebook site once we start back in March to keep up with what we get up to.

We should be preparing for our AGM over the next month or so, but with the current Covid-19 situation this will need to change. As per the letter that was sent by email to as many of our members as possible, our AGM will be suspended until further notice, following the Special Measures announced by the Business Secretary on 28th March. We proposed 5 actions to allow us to remain in control and transparent. We need your comments on these before the end of April please.

Our meetings held at Ivy House were a great success. We had a varied range of speakers, all fascinating, and illustrated with some beautiful photographs. My thanks to everyone who gave up their time to put a talk together, and also to those members who have supported the events by turning up in all weathers. Despite contacting many prospective speakers last year, it became very difficult to find people willing to visit us whether that be afternoon or evening. It may become necessary to rethink the frequency of the talks, but I am open to all offers and suggestions of speakers suitable for visiting our society. We certainly have plenty of time to think about it.

This same difficulty is also, sadly, reflected in finding suitable copy for our journal. All members are encouraged to send in photographs, articles, comments of interest. The last few journals seem to be filled with comments mainly from Peter, Fred, Gill and myself. Did you see an unusual plant? A bird that missed its flight path? Unusual insect activity? Our wildlife is wonderful – let's share it! If copy becomes regularly short, our journal frequency will reduce, with a suggestion of issuing a double-sided newsletter in its place. Pass on your musings, your sightings, and your pictures. If I can fill a page with waffle – anyone can! I recently sent out an email with identification attachments entitled 'Spring lockdown bug-hunt'. An ideal opportunity to use the next month or so recording birds, bugs and butterflies seen from the safety of our own gardens. Let's chart their appearance, the dates first seen, and where in South Holderness they were spotted. It's also an ideal opportunity to encourage children and grandchildren to supplement their home schooling.

Tracey Netherton 29.03.2020

Bits and Pieces

Peter J Cook

There has been some worry that following enactment of the 'B' word we might lose agri-environmental stewardship payments on Hollym Carrs Nature Reserve. However, the new government has announced, surprisingly early in its term, that it would be helping farmers to encourage biodiversity, restore soil condition, prevent flooding and plant trees on agricultural land. The SHCS is a landowner paid to keep land out of agricultural production and uses it to manage habitat types on its reserve to maximise biodiversity potential. For those new to the Society Hollym Carrs Nature Reserve is a managed plantation, open fresh water and freshwater marsh, dry grassland and wet grassland with Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) status. Target BAP species include e.g. Great Crested Newt, Reed Bunting, Greater Water Parsnip for which suitable habitats are kept in good condition.

At Toffling Hill there has been some activity thanks to volunteers Charlie, Rohan, my grandson Cameron and me. The hawthorn hedge along S Carr Dales Road has substantial gaps through which dogs and people can get in other than through the main gate. A start has been made at 'lifting' the inside face of the hedge and laying the removed live and dead branches as a dead hedge. Gaps are being filled mainly with hazel, crab apple and holly. A start has been made at planting a few tree species but not as prescriptively as we had to be at Hollym Carrs. Hornbeam (as an alternative to Ash), European Larch, buckthorns and even a couple of pot-grown *Picea abies* Christmas trees that survived indoors to 12th night, have joined a mix of trees planted by Pete and Jan Crowther (previous owners) including Aspen, Field Maple, Copper Beech, Rowan and Oak. More locally indigenous species have also been planted, e.g. Alder (self sown from HCNR), Silver Birch and Woolly Birch. Together with the hazels planted last year the other early catkin bearers and apples there should be sources of food for honey bees. Some species are banned by the Management Plan e.g. Horse Chestnut, Holme Oak and Linden (*Tilia tomentosa*) because of their deleterious effects on biodiversity.

On the theme of 'trees for bees' a small orchard is being developed using some of the £2000 generously donated by Associated British Ports. For now ten different apple varieties (both dessert and culinary) have been chosen appropriately for pollination class together with 10 'true native' crab apple pollinators. Protection from deer, rabbit and grey squirrel damage is essential there. Perhaps we could find a local bee keeper to rent a patch to!

From various directions there is growing pressure to plant trees. This is not a bad idea in principle but I fear that knee-jerk mass planting is not the answer. From experience we know how susceptible plantations are to the elements. How much valuable habitat is going to be wrecked by mis-guided tree planting? Who is going to do the periodic checks on tree guards and remove guards at the appropriate time? HCNR is planted to capacity but I suspect that we may be approached to plant more, perhaps smother the meadow! Our stewardship agreement would not allow that. Beware everyone that the Great Northern Forest idea is to provide future feedstock for power stations. HCNR was not planted with that intention and nor is Toffling Hill. If we give way to pressure to plant more on our land we may soon find ourselves lamenting the felling of what we have worked hard to develop. What we have developed is currently chewing up carbon dioxide optimally. What is being planted now will have very little effect on atmospheric CO₂ before it is too late..

NEWSY BITS – TO END 2019

It is with sadness that we report the death of Bill Curtis of Atwick. Bill and Margery have been supporters of the Society for many years. We offer heartfelt condolences to Margery.

Membership

We are delighted that so many of you have renewed your membership and thank you for your continued support. This year has been a good year for signing up new members and we welcome the following: Charlie Eldred who is proving himself to be a great asset on the practical side having left his mark in several outdoor tasks throughout the year. Jayne Eames (Thornton) and Paul Thornton - Jayne is an enthusiastic naturalist with experience in bat work and bird recording. She is often to be seen recording on Withernsea Millennium Green and has joined its team of Trustees. Paul Thornton is a son of Withernsea and, like his father before him, has a passion for tree planting. He too has attended work tasks on Hollym Carrs and we look forward to him becoming more active in the future. John and Jacqui Gaunt have moved here from near Sheffield where John worked in environmental services at Sheffield City Council. He brings a specialist interest in reptiles and a wealth of enthusiasm for wildlife recording. Jacqui is a trainer of sheepdogs and those of you with knowledge of my background will understand my interest!

Of me

Selfishly I look upon these younger, enthusiastic members as potential replacements in the future! For some time I have been shutting down, reducing my personal liabilities and responsibilities and generally 'downsizing'. Naff knees, creaking hips and failing memory comes with age, I am told. A blessing is that I can see things more clearly after cataract surgery and I want to use this faculty for more enjoyment.

The latest on my hit list has been my role of plant recorder for the Botanical Society for Britain and Ireland, a job I started jointly with the late Eva Crackles in about 1998 and have continued, jointly with Richard Middleton, for the most part since (about 15 years). Richard has also just retired, and we have handed over to Rohan Lewis, who is a member of this Society. *This Society has had the benefit of a County BSBI recorder, as a member, since it started!*

At the same time I have relinquished my post as Local Wildlife Site surveyor on the East Riding LWS panel. I have served on this panel since 2008 and was a member of its fore-runner on the Humberside County Council, representing the SHCS, from 1991(ish) to 2001. That's 20 years total. When it has been published I will write an article about the successes of the LWS system in our area. Some of you will find the number of small areas that are designated for protection surprising.

Trees for Withernsea

A tree planting group has been set up by Angi Becket to plant trees in Withernsea. Our very own John and Mrs Tate are also involved and I have been 'working on' others to help. Angi has ordered trees from the Woodland Trust and has been granted permission by the Withernsea Town Council to plant on some sites in the town. This is not a SHCS instigated venture but it is pleasing to report that some of our members are involved. Angi has attended some of our indoor meetings and we welcome her.

Trees for Skirlaugh

One of our new members, Ian Broadwell, has known of this Society for many years as a friend of Frank Kennington. Ian has a large field at Skirlaugh and proposes to plant some trees and an apple orchard. We wish him well. I was involved early in the scheme to assess his land for Local Wildlife Site status.

GONE AND ONGOING GOINGS ON
Local developments of conservation importance

Peter J Cook

The Yorkshire Wildlife Trust has produced a **Management Plan for Spurn**. This 106-page document is to drive the management of the Spurn National Nature Reserve until June 2024. I have had a very small part in reviewing its botanical content and hopefully the habitats of the rare and special plants of Spurn should be frequently monitored.

The Environment Agency's (EA) project to **realign the Humber Estuary flood defence bank** between Skeffling and the Winestead Drain outfall has been through several public consultation exercises, attended by David Constantine and me over the last 2 years. Planning consent has been granted. I mentioned the good outcome already achieved for the future of Haverfield Quarries in a previous issue and can now follow this with news of further favoured developments. David and I attended a workshop with EA and their Consultants JBA Bentley along with representatives from other environmental groups e.g. Humber Nature Partnership, East Riding Council Biodiversity Officer, Patrington Parish Council, RSPB and the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. The subject of this was, "Terrestrial Habitat Creation and Mitigation Area – Concept Design". This is a concept to create a massive area of wetland reserve to compensate for the loss of terrestrial habitat when the defence bank is removed and substantial areas of land have been flooded. *

A vast amount of time, energy and money has been spent on ecological assessment over two years and the whole has been brought together in dedicating 75 hectares of arable land between Winestead Drain and Haverfield Quarries as freshwater wetland (wet grassland and ponds). For comparison, Hollym Carrs Nature Reserve is about 11 hectares – this area is therefore nearly 7 times bigger! A copy of the Concept Design Report is held by me and although regrettably this is NOT a SHCS concern, some members may be interested. We should all be pleased that there will be a vast new reserve on our doorstep here in South Holderness.

Beacon Lagoons Nature Reserve is geographically complex. A substantial portion of land was leased from the Environment Agency for £25 per annum, originally for 25 years, a period which lapsed five years ago. We have kept the lease on. The Little

Tern breeding colony used to use part of this area but they have moved on. Two other parcels were bought by the Society, one of which is now leased to the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and is managed by the Easington Biodiversity Steering Group as part of Kilnsea Wetlands. The remaining freehold area is lagoon and open sand on which the Little Terns now breed. This area is managed under licence by the Spurn Bird Observatory.

This whole area is adjacent to Kilnsea Wetlands which is under sound management by a team chaired by Environment Agency that includes a representative of the SHCS as a stakeholder, and landlord over part of it. It seems logical therefore to merge Beacon Lagoons Nature Reserve into the Kilnsea Wetlands project, and the Executive has therefore initiated negotiations. Our leasehold from Env Agency will be relinquished and Env Agency is prepared to lease our freehold area. Our land will still be protected by our Charitable status and will be better cared for than we are able. Also this larger management committee has more clout than we have to obtain funding. Importantly though we will no longer pay public liability insurance for liabilities we need not have.

At HCNR we have had to shake the bull by its horns. Areas of open rush and tussocky grassland, an important feature in the Habitat Suitability Index for Great Crested Newt and habitat for small mammals and breeding reed bunting, have become overgrown with bramble. To comply with our stewardship agreement we have to keep scrub down to a maximum 10%. It had climbed 90% cover over an area of 400 sq m. It would have been a massive task for a small volunteer force to remove this by hand and dispose of it by burning, which is not allowed. With some regret we have had to engage a contractor with tractor-mounted flail to remove blocks of bramble leaving isolated smaller 'domes' for nesting song birds. This process gave an opportunity to count old nests in the large bramble dome. Not one was found giving credence to the observation that breeding birds prefer small bramble patches to large ones. Blackthorn has progressed rampantly under the powerlines and these also must be dealt with.

**Not for one moment am I claiming brownie points but in other schemes like this (Paull, Outstrays and Kilnsea Wetlands) I have 'banged on' and complained about valuable plant and insect habitat being too readily sacrificed in favour of creating lagoons and wallows for waders, with resulting loss of biodiversity. Together with the preservation of Haverfield I see this as some long-awaited compensation for large scale loss of terrestrial habitat over the years.*

Young Nats Project Work

Nature Club Poem by Ben

*It's good to build things and explore,
Looking at bugs and so much more.
We do pond dipping
And recycle tipping.
Spotting butterflies flying high in the sky,
And feeding the birds so they don't die.
I love nature club playing in the mud,
And exploring in the wood.*



'Spring' from Adam's Diary

Spring

15 April




It is mild and flowers are starting to come out.

I am building a tree house.

It is a type of laurel tree. I am using logs, sticks, cardboard and rope to make floors in different areas.

I am using my treehouse for bird watching (and playing!)

This is an evergreen tree so it will keep its leaves all year round and look the same.



Adam Hoey - Young Nats Article (Kestrel)

Young Nats is a fantastic nature group where you get to learn about nature and the environment. It's educational, but in a fun way – we observe, record and do practical projects like bat boxes and hedgehog houses. We even do decorating and craft projects about nature: with nature friendly equipment.

This nature loving group meets every other Saturday at Hollym for 2.5 hours of splendid excitement and fun. I have made new friends and everyone is friendly and kind. There are awards for you to work towards: Bronze, Silver, Gold & Kestrel so you get recognition and certificates for all your work.

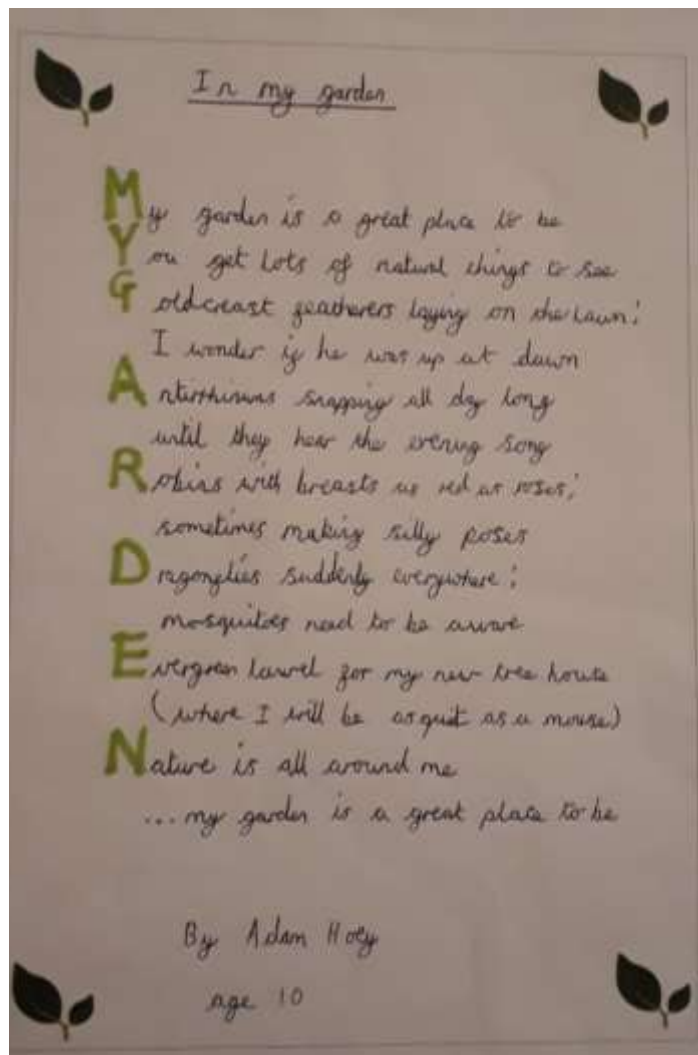


Sometimes we have days out to exciting places like the Butterfly Fields, Bempton Cliffs, the Living Seas Centre and Spurn Point. We learn lots of new things and there is always a brilliant activity for us to do. Other times we look after and explore the nature reserve in Hollym.

Young Nats is a great hobby and while you're having fun you know that you are helping nature.

Adam Hoey

Age 10



The “Avid DIY’er” or the “It’ll Do’er”

Every year I am amazed at the frenzy of activity by most of our garden birds when it comes to nest building. The majority of our birds build a new nest every year; although there are a few who take the Sarah Beeny approach of ‘Renovate don’t Relocate!’ By now, our feathered friends will be well into their breeding season with the majority of them starting back in March or April, and having two, possibly three broods by July.

I remember my Grandma always cleaning her hairbrush outside so that the birds could use her hair to line their nests, and I have seen similar ideas with pet hair once they have been groomed, putting their hair in a feeder to stop the wind from blowing it away but allowing the bird’s easy access.



Photo: David Constantine. Robins in nest.

We have three categories of garden nest builders; we start with the moss and mud nests. These vary from the luxury apartment style down to the good sturdy basics. The Goldfinch and Dunnock prefer neat cups of moss lined with feathers, thistledown or wool. Home comforts and neat as a pin. The Chaffinch is similar but decorates the outside with lichens and cobwebs, lining the nest with hair. The slightly untidier bird of this group, the Tom and Barbara Good of the bird world, is the



Photo: David Constantine. Blue Tit.

Greenfinch who includes dried grass and thin twigs in the moss mix resulting in a functional but untidy appearance; at the other end of the scale, the Margo and Jerry Ledbetter of the garden birds, we find the Long-tailed tit. They build an intricate ball of moss, cobwebs and hair, decorated on the outside with lichen and lined with approximately 2000 feathers.

The Blackbirds, Song Thrushes and Mistle Thrushes build nests which are a little more bulky and conspicuous, and include mud in the artist’s medium. The Blackbird’s mossy nest is lined with mud and then covered in fine grass; a good, solid, John Constable nest. The Song Thrush takes things a step further and is unique in including a lining of hard mud, rotten wood and dung, cemented together with saliva, then moulded into shape by the breast of the female; a mixed media artist of the Salvador Dali style. The Mistle Thrush is more decorative and of the collage era of artists including Pablo Picasso, with a dried grass and mud nest decorated with paper, other rubbish, flowers and green leaves.

The second category of nests includes those secreted in unusual spaces. To keep their young safe we normally discover nests hidden in trees or hedges, but some prefer to go a step further with their home security. Starlings and sparrows will often use holes in roofs, or cavities in walls or buildings, with sparrows living in colonies for that additional perspective of security in numbers. Robins, the Bear Grylls of the bird world in both spirit and survival techniques, are well known for sometimes choosing unusual nesting spots which include old lamps, kettles, plant pots and car grills. When these artificial 'rentals' are not available they will choose to be well hidden under thick ivy, among tree roots, under ledges or thick herbaceous vegetation, or in outhouses. Some seem to prefer, or at least not mind, to be close to humans; whether that's just their boldness or through a sense of additional protection it would be difficult to say.



Photo: David Constantine. Male Starling.

Finally, we have the truly messy birds. They remind me so much of the advert when a man is praised for 'putting a tent up before it rained' – but it was one of those self-unfolding pop-up tents that all you have to do is throw to the floor!



Two birds spring immediately to mind: Rooks and Collared doves. Rooks are known to show acts of great intelligence, or thinking logically to solve puzzles, and yet when it comes to building a nest they literally seem to just drop lots of twigs into tree branches until a slapdash type of nest is formed. Perhaps they follow the old adage of 'All brains and no common sense'. Finally, the Collared dove. Flimsy does not quite describe their meagre platform of twigs. I watched, for several days, Collared doves trying to drop twigs onto the bracket of a satellite dish to create a 'nest'. When perhaps a dozen sticks had settled, they laid eggs, which immediately fell through the gaps. The slightest breeze had the same effect as hurricane Katrina. A van driving past had the effect of a Richter scale 8 tremor. All Summer they continued, in the same place, with the same technique, but with absolutely no success. They may not win any prizes for their nest building skills but for perseverance they take first place!

Tracey Netherton

A provisional list of tree and shrub species on Society-owned property

Peter J Cook

One of the reasons why we plant trees and shrubs is to provide food and shelter for other species. In doing so we are building up a powerful educational resource for the identification of woody species. On Hollym Carrs Nature Reserve (HCNR) we planted a range of species that was limited to what are locally common native species. A small memorial arboretum contains some exotic species. All these have served to provide substrates for a massive biodiversity at HCNR. Acquisition of Ivy House and its grounds (IHC) and of Toffling Hill Nature Reserve (THNR) added yet more species established by previous owners including some considered to be exotic. The list was still not diverse enough to be of much value as an educational resource, especially for comparing and contrasting similar species. About 150 bee-friendly trees have been planted at THNR using some of the £2000 fund donated by Associated British Ports. Some of these have been planted with extra wide spacing to let them develop as 'specimen' trees. This includes the first half of an apple orchard with a wide range of varieties for the Society to sell and leave as food for wildlife.

This following table lists the first 50 species and is described as 'provisional' because further purchases will be made as time passes. Pink indicates presence.

Species	HCNR	IHC	THNR	Species	HCNR	IHC	THNR
Oak, Pedunculate				Sallow			
Hawthorn				Norway Maple			
Hazel				Pear			
Ash				Guelder Rose			
Wild Cherry				Wayfaring tree			
Blackthorn				Wild Privet			
Birch, Silver				Oak, Holm			
Dog Rose				Lawson Cypress			
Holly				Box			
Bramble				Beech			
Hybrid Black Poplar				Plum (Victoria)			
European Lime				Wild Plum			
Gorse				Box Honeysuckle			
Field Maple				Elder			
Honeysuckle				Norway Spruce			
Alder				Nordmann Spruce			
Crab Apple				Aspen			
Willow, Crack				Buckthorn, Sea			
Willow, White				Buckthorn, Purging			
Willow, Grey				Buckthorn, Alder			
Rowan				Yew			
Birch, Woolly				European Larch			
Italian Alder				Copper Beech			
Black Poplar				Rosemary			
Oak, Sessile				Hornbeam			
				TOTALS:	32	19	32

PLEASE BRING THIS PAGE AND ANY QUESTIONS ARISING TO THE AGM.

Accounts for the Year Ended 31 January 2020

Income and Expenditure

	Unrestricted Fund £	Restricted Fund £	Total £	2019 £
Receipts				
Member Subscriptions	863	-	863	927
Member Donations	930	-	930	917
Gift Aid	578	-	578	-
Countryside Stewardship (RPA)	2,451	-	2,451	1,961
Fundraising – General	34	-	34	177
Young Naturalists' Fundraising	-	-	-	29
Young Naturalists' Subscriptions	162	-	162	108
Bank Interest Received	47	-	47	11
Grants and Donations	1,300	-	1,300	1,000
Wayleave	-	-	-	158
Total Receipts	6,365	-	6,365	5,288
Payments				
Services and Administration	2,112	-	2,112	2,368
IT and Website Costs	54	-	54	443
Ivy House Costs	871	-	871	943
Young Naturalists' Expenses	383	-	383	744
Conservation Projects - General	1,868	-	1,868	847
Kilnsea Wetlands Bird Hide	-	-	-	7,000
Lion Storage Container	-	-	-	2,856
Total Payments	5,288	-	5,288	15,201
Net Surplus for the Year	1,077	-	1,077	(9,913)
Opening Reserves	<u>31,639</u>	-	<u>31,639</u>	<u>41,552</u>
Closing Reserves	<u>32,716</u>	-	<u>32,716</u>	<u>31,639</u>

Balance Sheet as at 31 January 2020:

Fixed Assets

Mower	3,000	-	3,000	-
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Current Assets

Bank and Cash

Nat West Current Account	4,603	-	4,603	6,846
Nat West Current Account (YN)	1,126	-	1,126	785
Nat West Deposit Account (YN)	3,521	-	3,521	3,514
Nat West Bus Reserve Account	20,046	-	20,046	20,006
Cash in hand	-	-	-	6
Cash in hand (YN)	420	-	420	482

Total Assets/Reserves	32,716	-	32,716	31,639
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Investment assets (not valued as at 31 January 2020)

Hollym Carrs nature reserve; Beacon Lagoons nature reserve; Ivy House; Toffling Hill reserve; Kilnsea Wetlands bird hide.

Other assets (not valued as at 31 January 2020) with original cost ():

Marquee (£1,423); New Projector (£988); Generator (£60); 2 Stihl Brushcutters (£870); Ivy House Chairs (£780); Storage Container (£2,856).

These are condensed from the original. The originals may be inspected by prior arrangement.

Peter J Cook, Treasurer, 10 March 2020.

PUBLICATIONS

Holderness Countryside is the journal of the South Holderness Countryside Society, and is issued free of charge to members, up to four times per year. All Rights Reserved.

Items for publication may be emailed to the Editor (brian.gill60@btinternet.com). Please ring the Editor to discuss items in manuscript. The Society welcomes articles of general interest in the genre of natural and social history pertaining to southern Holderness. These must have educational value under the terms of our Charitable Objectives (see below). The views expressed are those of the contributor. Contributions are acknowledged along with the relevant articles. Other publications may be produced from time-to-time.

YOUNG NATURALISTS CLUB

The Young Naturalists' ("Young Nats") Club meets twice monthly at our Ivy House Centre in Hollym. Supervisors have Enhanced DBS certification. Members must be of primary school age, 5 – 11 years. Young Nats are taught and encouraged to take a more positive interest in natural history and to publish articles in *Holderness Countryside*. Articles should be sent to the Editor via email or a telephone call to arrange collection.

SCHOOLS

Copies of *Holderness Countryside* are distributed to local schools. Schools are permitted to photocopy extracts from the Journal for educational use within their school. All other reproduction in whatever form is subject to copyright.

MEMBER SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Single Adult: £12. Family: £14.
Corporate membership will be considered.

CHARITABLE OBJECTIVES

The South Holderness Countryside Society was first registered as a Charity No 701627 on 30th May 1989. Defined objectives of the charity are;

- (1) *Work principally within the area of Holderness, (East Riding of Yorkshire) for the region's natural and local history.*
- (2) *Educate the public in the natural and local history of the area.*
- (3) *Secure the preservation and protection and improvement of natural history.*

Management of the Society's affairs is by elected Trustees.

The restoration of Ivy House, our headquarters, was part funded by the National Lottery.



THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Treasurer	Peter Cook	01964 614466
Journal Editor	Gill Hart	01964 671499
Elected Member	Andrew Mason	01482 817835
Elected Member	Jeffrey Marshall	01964 630045

OUR WEBSITE

www.holdernesscountryside.org

managed by Mrs Claire Ashton.

Please keep this site alive!

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