

Minutes of Banbridge U3A meeting,  
Bannside Presbyterian Church Hall,  
12th March 2024.

**Present:**

There were 38 members in attendance, 4 new members and 2 visitors. 44 in total.

**Apologies:**

Florence Chambers, Pat Hanna, Jacinta Downey

**Welcome from the Chair**

Veronica welcomed all to the March meeting.

She began by thanking everyone who had attended/voted at the marketplace event in respect of the take 500 grant application last Saturday. There are no results in respect of grant applications as yet. However as the event provided an opportunity to make our organisation known it was a worthwhile endeavour regardless of outcome. If we are successful we will be able to hire a bus for the summer outing, if not, hopefully we will have an outing via the usual car share arrangements. No decision has yet been made on where to go so if anyone has a good idea for it please let one of the committee know.

Veronica reminded everyone that next month's meeting will be the annual AGM when all the committee members step down and new elections are held. She and Peter Kearns will be retiring from the committee. She asked members to consider making a nomination either for themselves or other members whose permission to be nominated had been obtained.

Veronica then welcomed this month's speaker David McCreedy who's talk was on the subject of local bird life.

David began by telling us that he was born and brought up in Banbridge and his interest in birds goes back to his childhood. He said that most avid bird watchers, or "twitchers" as they are known, begin as he did with garden birds. David had an excellent selection of bird photograph projections which he worked through explaining the different categories of birds beginning with those most people will know from their own locality. He described the "resident" bird population, moving on to "summer migrants", "winter migrants" and "vagrants" (birds who should not be here at all but are one offs blown here by the weather).

David described "when" different birds can be seen and then "where" they can be seen. Birds are dependent on suitable habitat so we have birds of the mountains, the glens, the rivers, the lakes, the seashore and the farmland. He described the issues which have adversely affected some species such as raptors, killed because they were seen as competition for game birds, ground nesters whose habitat was destroyed by changes in agricultural practices and what is being done to try to improve the situation. He also told us about those whose numbers are expanding and those who are doing well but do not visit our shores as much as they used to in the past.

Veronica thanked David for his interesting and informative talk which hopefully will raise all our awareness of the natural world.

Before the meeting broke up Veronica drew members attention to the display, prepared for the take 500 event, which Keith had made available at the back of the room for people to view.

Next meeting will be the AGM on Tuesday 9th April. Mavis Turner from the Belfast branch will conduct the AGM