

## **Berwick Wildlife Group held it's third Annual General Meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May.**

The Group are particularly grateful to the many people, professional and amateur, who helped them to promote, record and protect local wildlife last year. The monthly events (talks, walks and visits) have been most enjoyable, educational and well attended, and the Chairperson thanked the people who have organised and led them. Thanks were also made to those who have promoted the group through the website ([www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk](http://www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk)), the Green Festival and the many articles published by the Berwick Advertiser. Recording of local wildlife continues thanks to an intrepid band of volunteers, with work on Estuary and other birds, bats, butterflies, squirrels, bumblebees, beach litter and town trees planned for this season. A monthly wildlife review, growing database, more detailed reports and co-operation with local and national conservation bodies makes the results of the work available to others. The Group have also commented on Berwick's Vision and Core Strategy documents, and have assisted the St Boisils and St Bartholemews Residents Association with formulating plans for the Goody Patchy. Interpretive panels are to be installed at Little Beach, thanks to a grant from the Northumberland Coast AONB.

The Committee and membership have put in a huge amount of work to achieve so much, helped by the Castle Hotel who have kindly hosted the inevitable Committee meetings. Membership of the Group at the end of 2006/2007 showed a slight increase over the 2005/06 figures, and (thanks to a more stringent charging policy, nobly borne by the membership) the financial situation is similar to last year's. All the present office-holders and committee have agreed to serve another year and have been re-elected.

Following the business part of the meeting, the Group were given a wonderful talk on Alpine Plants by Ron McBeath of Lamberton Alpine Nurseries. Ron showed examples of a number of plant groups ( including primulas, rhododendrons and irises), but also described the difficulties of collecting live plants, seeds and herbarium specimens in the summer monsoon in inaccessible valleys in the Himalayan foothills. All expeditions are undertaken in co-operation with local botanists, and many new species are still being found. Ron pointed out that although plant-hunting of this sort is sometimes rather frowned upon, the number of specimens collected is miniscule in comparison with whole habitats now being destroyed by road building, agricultural intensification and pollution. The plants and seeds collected are sent to botanical gardens all over the world, and sadly in some cases may soon be the only representatives of their species. The talk wasn't all doom and gloom though – Ron is able to treat this serious subject with lightness and humour, and his beautiful pictures enlivened the story. Thank you so much, Ron.

Berwick Wildlife Group have a busy summer ahead with numerous surveys and wildlife walks, and more talks are arranged for the autumn. Everyone is welcome at all these events, details can be found on [www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk](http://www.berwickwildlifegroup.org.uk), in the press, on posters, or by telephoning 01289 330591.