

From: easingtonpc@outlook.com
Subject: FW: Easington Parish Meeting - 11 May 2021

Please find some words enclosed below for the Parish Council Meeting re Spurn Bird Observatory over the last few months and our plans going forward.
kind regards,

As with every organisation and charity, the last 12 months have been challenging for Spurn Bird Observatory. The lockdowns curtailed a huge amount of our income as our accommodation options were forced to close. Luckily, our membership base swelled and several fundraising initiatives (auctions, raffles, quizzes etc.) were very successful and we managed to weather the storm well. We even gained our 100th member of Friends of Spurn – just showing how far reaching the love for this special place is. We are now looking ahead to a productive 2021 season, with the hopes that we can fully reopen our Observatory accommodation in June to the same hostel-style capacity we have become used to pre-pandemic since we opened in March 2016. We have, however, picked up a few ‘best practices’ during the pandemic which we will continue going forward.

We plan to offer our weekend guided walk programme in May and June and again in the autumn, with our Spurn Info Hub shop open on weekends with social distancing measures in place. Our biggest news of 2021 is the planned launch of the Migration Festival again, after no event in 2020. This year’s festival will have a slight change of venue - being held at Westmere Farm and Sandy Beaches caravan site rather than our usual base of Westmere Farm, Kilnsea. We plan to offer our usual mix of guided walks, workshops, lectures and excellent catering to help visitors enjoy the Spurn area to its full potential over the weekend of 10th – 12th September, and learn more about the movements birds and other wildlife make every year in their rituals of survival. The Observatory is once again partnering with the British Trust for ornithology for this event, and tickets will go on sale later in May. Of course, it might be a slightly different affair to our previous festivals, with the COVID-19 pandemic still in everyone’s minds. The Migfest committee will keep up to date with all the latest government and experts’ advice as we plan another successful event.

Other plans into the future (for 2022 and beyond) include the reinstating of the observatory exchange programme where young naturalists and wildlife enthusiasts are sent from one of our partner observatories (which includes Flasterbo in Sweden, Long Point in Canada and Cape May, New Jersey, USA) to another, to learn from the residents and staff there and maybe pick up tips to bring back to their own respective observatory. Our Science & Research subcommittee hope to throw a ‘Open Day’ style event – giving a chance for locals to hear about and see the scientific work that goes on behind the scenes in the Spurn area and a chance for Hull University researchers and students to meet Spurn, Kilnsea and Easington residents who may be interested in their work.

And finally, the 2020 breeding season for the Little Terns at Beacon Lagoons (between Kilnsea and Easington) was very successful, with over 40 chicks fledged. It touch and go for a while whether any form of protection could be offered to these birds (which are one of Britain’s rarest breeding seabirds – and the only colony in Yorkshire) with the lockdowns, but luckily we were able to implement safe working practices for our staff and volunteers. The Little Terns are back for the 2021 season and our head warden, Toby Phelps, is here until the end of August. With increased signage on the beach we hope that beachgoers will find the colony more visible than usual and we politely ask that those using the beach stay away from the fenced-off areas and keep dogs under control, to help minimise disturbance to these ground nesting birds.

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Spurn Bird Observatory

Monitoring bird migration since 1946

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