

Fife SOC

Newsletter No. 201

Compiled by Elizabeth Irwin

March 2021



Stonechat: Allister Todd

Our next Newsletter will be Issue No. 202 for June 2021. Articles, letters, reports, and photographs in jpeg or tiff format for publication should be sent, by Monday 7th June at the latest, to Elizabeth Irwin at Drumcarrow Cottage, Pettycruik, Strathkinness KY16 9XP or email: fifechair@the-soc.org.uk

FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to our Spring edition of the *Fife SOC newsletter*. I was a bit worried that with no outings taking place, I would be short of interesting material. However, as usual members have delighted me with their articles and photographs. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed putting it all together.

Reading the articles as they came in prompted me to pose the question: what sort of bird watcher are you? I think we are all appreciating birds through our windows and on our walks, and there are some great photographs of some of these. Perhaps you are also taking part in surveys and enjoy finding out more about

the science behind the bird? Norman Elkins has an interesting article about the BTO's *Garden Birdwatch* on page 5. I know that many of us have also been thinking more and more about the impact that modern life is having on birds and on the natural world. There is a thought-provoking article from Jeremy Greenwood on page 8. I would be interested to hear from you for the next newsletter about changes that you have been making to try to make a difference.

Whatever type of bird watcher you are – and possibly most of us are all of these – I hope to see you soon.

Elizabeth Irwin



Fieldfare: Dave Healey

Planned meetings

Wednesday 17th March (on Zoom)

Justin Grant talking about White-tailed Eagles

Wednesday 14th April (on Zoom)

Fife AGM followed by joint members' night

Future meetings: *Our season of talks will resume in September, because as usual we will take a break over the summer.*

***Our aim** is for Fife's talks to return to the second Wednesday of each month in the Supper Room at the Town Hall in St Andrews. Of course, at this stage, who knows what will be possible or advisable!*

***If we do return to talks via Zoom**, we plan to join up with Tayside again, and alternate between second Wednesdays, and Tayside's preferred day of the first Thursday in the month. That will be no real hardship as the virtual talks so far have been excellent, and we have enjoyed the company of Tayside members. We*

will keep you all up to date with what is happening via mailchimps and in the next newsletter. Do get in touch if you have any thoughts about how we run the meetings.

An invitation with a link to the *Zoom* meeting will be sent out a few days before the event via email mailchimp. To receive this notice, please ensure that you are on the appropriate mailing list held by HQ. You may need to check your junk box and add this to your safe senders list. If you are unsure, you can check your mailing list preferences by emailing [Kathryn Cox](#) or if you know you do not receive branch notices but would like to, you can sign up [here](#).

For instructions on how to use *Zoom*, please click [here](#), or see the information sheet at the end of this newsletter.

The meetings will start at 7.10pm for participants to log in, a meet and greet and What's About Chat, and the talks will start at 7.30pm. We join up with Tayside SOC for the meetings and as usual we also welcome young birders and students to the meetings.

We have already held some successful talks, so if you are new to *Zoom* I hope you will consider trying out this format. You can bring your own friends / family / pets / drinks and food and the dress code is casual! Alcohol is allowed because you do not need to drive home!

Planned Outings *At the time of writing, outings are cancelled because of government restrictions. We hope to be able to start up again in September (or earlier if possible), and we will let you know when this happens, via mailchimp. If you want guidance about what is permitted in terms of more formal bird surveys, there is information on the SOC website and on the BTO and Scottish Government websites.*

Until then, here is a reminder of past outings with two stunning photographs from Allister Todd



Dotterel photographed on at outing at Dalwhinnie, 1995 : Allister Todd



Arctic Skuas on Shetland on a Fife SOC trip in 1997: Allister Todd

An Oasis on the East Sands by Andrew and June Riches

We have been walking on the East Sands fairly regularly for our exercise walk. At the eastern end of the sands just before the path ascends past the caravan site is a little gem of a patch. There is a rocky area and lots of seaweed pushed up by the tide. At high tide it collects the birds from along that stretch of coast. A large “quarry” of turnstones are so busy feeding that they are just below you on the seaweed. Redshanks and purple sandpipers join them. On the sandy patches pied wagtails and white wagtails scurry around. You might also expect rock pipits but the birds we have seen are meadow pipits. The prominent hind claw can be seen in the photo. A kingfisher was also tasting the wares diving into the sea from a rocky stance. There are always cormorants, grey herons, and eider around and we have also seen a brent goose, red breasted merganser, and red throated divers.



Meadow Pipit with hind claw clearly visible: Andrew Riches



Purple Sandpiper: Allister Todd



Turnstone: Allister Todd

Garden Birdwatching by Norman Elkins

In the past year, during which lockdowns have forced us to stay at home, watching birds in the garden has been a life saver for many, and now also recognised as beneficial to mental health. I expect that several of you will have taken part in the RSPB's Bird Garden Birdwatch at the end of January, but have you thought about extending this recording throughout the year? Some of you will already do so through the **BTO's weekly Garden BirdWatch (GBW)**. This began in 1995 and has amassed a huge amount of data that goes towards our understanding of birds. GBW is designed to find out how, when and why birds and other animals use our gardens. Participants send in weekly lists of garden birds and other wildlife, which are analysed by scientists working under the BTO's urban and garden ecology research programmes, to investigate the links between changes in wildlife populations and factors such as garden management, food, weather and urban structure.

GBW is funded by the participants (with a subscription of £17 p.a.), but the BTO is offering this free during the pandemic, in the knowledge that watching birds in your garden is beneficial to health. You can sign up to this at <https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/gbw/about> . If you haven't access to the internet, contact the BTO by phone (01842 750050) and paper forms will be supplied. When the free scheme was announced last year, 9000 extra participants were recruited within a couple of months! The rules are simple to follow. Details of your garden will initially be requested, and then all that is needed is to just to keep a note of all birds seen in the garden during the week. Finally, the highest number of each species observed by the close of the week (Saturday) is entered online (or on your paper forms). It doesn't matter if you cannot count every day (or even



miss a week), the records are of value, although consistency is advised. If you have a large garden, the recording area should be that part which you can regularly view. Of course, provision of bird food is desirable, particularly if a variety is offered to suit the different species that appear. Overflying birds should not be counted, except for aerial insectivores such as Swallows crossing the garden while feeding. A low level Sparrowhawk shooting across the garden also counts, as it is obviously hunting. It's also very illuminating, and satisfying, to observe species' reactions to individuals of their own and other species. Each has their own 'hierarchy' and one can learn a lot by just watching their behaviour.

Our own participation began from the initiation of the scheme in 1995 and has become rather an obsession. Despite her claim not to be a birder, Jean has become adept at identifying and counting birds, and the family do so during their visits. Since 1988 (when there was a similar but short-lived three-year survey) we have identified 53 species within our rather small Cupar garden, with unusual visitors such as Woodcock, Tawny Owl, Waxwing, Lesser Whitethroat, Treecreeper and Tree Pipit. Bird boxes produce extras in the shape of newly-fledged birds in late summer. Over the years, there have been many fluctuations in numbers, a few doubtless due to vegetation changes. Some conifers have been felled, while other trees and bushes, mainly



Male Brambling

deciduous, have grown, the largest of which is now a 12m Ash tree. Natural food available at the appropriate season (often prolific) comprises ash keys, plums, apples, rose hips and berries of holly and cotoneaster. Hedges and shrubs provide ample cover for small birds. Flower beds and flowering shrubs such as buddleia and lilac are used by insects including butterflies, while bare earth and lawns hold soil invertebrates. To complement available natural food, we provide additional foods such as the favourite of sunflower seeds, plus fat balls, dried mealworms, peanuts and nyjer seed. Water is always available in a bird bath and any suitable scraps or rotting apples are scattered on the lawn.

Keeping a record over a long period has revealed some quite significant changes. Swifts used to nest in a roof space, but they are rarely seen these days, even in the vicinity. Goldfinches have increased dramatically, while Collared Doves and House Sparrows have declined significantly. Magpies first appeared in 2013 and are now fairly regular. The largest numbers of birds visit the garden in wintry weather – the maximum being 130 individual birds of 22 species in a week. There were 10 Yellowhammers and a Reed Bunting during the recent snows, while neighbours had 85 Fieldfares in their trees. In midsummer, as few as 20 individuals may visit, this number then rising as adults bring fledglings.



Goldfinch



Male Siskin

Other linked BTO garden surveys are the Garden Bird Feeding Survey (GBFS) during the winter months, which records those species using food specifically provided. In December 2004, we were asked to record the earliest species coming to feeders during the 'shortest day'. Predictably, the first was Blackbird, with its relatively large eyes. Even one aspect of the recent Tawny Owl survey was undertaken from the garden and the BTO's Nest Record Scheme welcomes data from any nests.

If you don't do so already, please consider becoming one of the 56,000 gardens that have participated since GBW began. There are even activities for children on the GBW web pages, so if you are home-schooling, try [Activities for children | BTO - British Trust for Ornithology](#).

Photographs above by Norman Elkins



Redpoll: Nigel Duncan



Female Blackcap: Allister Todd

The Curse of the Pheasant by Jeremy Greenwood

In late summer and early autumn every year Pheasants and Red-legged Partridges are released in the British countryside so that people may shoot them. The scale of this curious custom is remarkable – about 47 million Pheasants and 10 million RLPs. Neither species is native to our shores. Over the years various attempts have been made to assess how the scale of these releases compares with the populations of native birds, producing some astonishing figures. Now Professors Tim Blackburn of University College London and Kevin Gaston of Exeter University, having undertaken thorough and careful analyses of the available data, have pushed our astonishment even further*.

It is not just the numbers of a species that are important in terms of its ecological impact but the size of the individuals – a Pheasant has considerably more ecological impact than a Dunnock. Tim and Kevin therefore worked out the biomass of each species: that is, the number of individuals multiplied by their average weight. They found that in August, just seven species made up around three-quarters of the total biomass of all birds in Britain (excluding poultry). This in itself would be interesting. But even more striking, they found that the Pheasant alone made up almost half the total and the RLP added another 3.7%. In order of biomass, the figures are:

	Thousands of millions of tonnes	% of total
Pheasant	41	48.8
Wood Pigeon	7	8.2
Gannet	5	5.6
Red-legged Partridge	3	3.7
Carrion/Hooded Crow	3	3.6
Guillemot	3	3.5
Blackbird	2	2.5
All other species combined	<u>21</u>	<u>24.1</u>
Total of all species	85	100

What effects do these introduced birds have on the ecology of the British countryside? Given the scale of the introductions, it is strange how little work has been to answer this question. It is certainly likely that the released birds reduce the resources available for consumption by native species, despite the quantities of food laid out for them (the equivalent of 450,000 tonnes of wheat). The introduced birds provide much additional food for predators, though whether this reduces predation on native species or, through increasing the number of predators, increases it is a matter of argument. In addition, it has reasonably been argued that the decline of Grey Partridges may be at least partly the result of the increased numbers of parasites that they share with Pheasants.

Given this uncertainty about their effects on the rest of our fauna and flora, it is strange that Pheasants and RLPs are the only non-native animals that it is legal to release into the wild in Scotland without licence.

Here's a question to ponder. Suppose that there was no history of these species being introduced to Britain and that someone applied for a licence to release annually tens of millions, amounting to a biomass equal to that of all native species. Is it likely that a licence would be granted?

*Their paper may be accessed at

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10530-021-02458-y>



Tree Sparrow: Elizabeth Irwin

If you are out and spy **Heron**s, please see also this comment from **Paul Blackburn** who is our new **BTO Regional rep**:

“Re the annual heronries survey: most of the larger heronries in Fife are counted but could I appeal for any sightings of small heronries (< 5 nests) which people might come across?”

I'm sure that most SOC members are aware of the annual Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) but there are several unallocated squares in Fife so if you come across anyone who may be interested in participating please let me know.”

‘Swifts’, by Norman Pasley per Paul Blackburn

As most of you know, I started the petition, **Save our Swifts**, on 38 Degrees in January 2019. With your excellent support, it now has over 195,000 signatures! Here’s the link to it: <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/save-our-swifts>

The Petition asks that all UK house builders should be required to install Swift bricks on all new-build homes and provide incentives for retrofitting nest boxes onto older properties.

Unfortunately, we had no success in persuading the Housing Minister to agree to this.

Edward Mayer, of Swift Conservation (www.swift-conservation.org) believes the way forward is to forget about central government and get swift bricks and boxes into local government plans.

He says we should try to persuade architects, specifiers, and their customers to have Swift facilities designed in from the very beginning - not as an afterthought or add-on. As a priority we should try and get biodiversity features, including Swift bricks, established within local development plans. That will get them into new buildings.

Edward has been very impressed with the work of Stephen Fit and the Duchy of Cornwall. And both he and Dick Newell have had excellent experiences working with enlightened housing associations in Ealing, Fulbourn, Newcastle and Cambridge.

And then there is us – the 195,000 signers of the petition, and other like-minded people. We can put up boxes and swift bricks. We can talk to friends, social groups, councillors and builders. We can campaign, or form local groups, or anything else you can think of. Together, we should be able to give an increasing numbers of homes to Swifts every summer! They’ll soon be here, let’s welcome them.



Fieldfares and Redwings massing near Craigtoun, St Andrews: Gordon Shepherd

Fife Bird Sightings:

December 2020

A Black Redstart was at Elie Harbour 15th – 22nd. Snow Buntings showed at Tentsmuir (48 on 21st), Outhead and Boarhills. An elusive Rustic Bunting was found at Kingsbarns on 7th but then moved on. A Scandinavian Rock Pipit (*littoralis*) that had been ringed in Norway was identified at Kilrenny Mill on 27th. Reports of the Hudsonian Godwit in the Eden Estuary continued up to 21st. Whooper Swans were reported from six sites including 59 at Dunfermline (13th) and 36 at Craigluscar (29th); Pale-bellied Brent Geese remained in the area of the Eden Estuary with 33 noted grazing on 31st; a Dark-bellied Brent Goose was at Tayport; Pintails were noted in Newmills Bay and Torry Bay, and Ring-necked Ducks were at Kirkcaldy (drake) and Cameron Reservoir (two females). Kinghorn Loch held Pochards. A flock of c150 Scaup continued between Outhead and St Andrews town, with four inland at Cameron Reservoir. St Andrews Bay held its usual large winter flocks of Common Scoters and Velvet Scoters with good numbers of Long-tailed Ducks also. Drake Smews were at Cameron and Ballo Reservoirs (28th). Red-throated Divers were seen off Ruddons Point (nine on 12th) and Kinghorn, Black-throated Divers off Anstruther, Ruddons Point and Kinghorn, and Great Northern Divers were logged at East Wemyss, Anstruther, St Andrews, Ruddons Point, Fife Ness, Kincaig and Kinghorn. Overwintering Slavonian Grebes were at Largo Bay, Dalgety Bay, Outhead, Fife Ness with a notable 20 off Tentsmuir on 28th. A single Red-necked Grebe was seen at Kincaig Point, and a late Manx Shearwater passed East Wemyss. The Eden Estuary held Little Egrets and two White Tailed Eagles. A Red Kite was over Morton Lochs on 1st and Marsh Harriers remained at Rossie Bog and Newburgh. A Hen Harrier was at Cameron Reservoir; Merlins were at Airdrie (Anstruther), Boarhills and Crail. Fife Ness, Anstruther, St Andrews and Elie held Purple Sandpipers. There was a noteworthy flock of 220 Sanderlings at Elie Harbour on 1st. Letham Pools held two Green Sandpipers, a Spotted Redshank lingered in the Eden Estuary, and a Norway ringed Bar-tailed Godwit was at Valleyfield Lagoons (1st). The Whimbrel remained at Kincaig Point, and there were Woodcocks at Balcomie, Cameron Reservoir and Knockhill Quarry, and Jack Snipes at Kilmany, Cocklemill Marsh and Tayport. A Pomarine Skua off Fairmont Cliffs St Andrews was a good find on 11th. Mediterranean Gulls continued at coastal sites on the Forth, with scattered reports elsewhere. Kinghorn Loch held four on 21st. Iceland and Glaucous Gulls were reported from Kingsbarns and Crail. Short-eared Owls were at Cocklemill Marsh (1st) and Kingsbarns. A Siberian Chiffchaff (*tristis*) was calling at Cameron Reservoir on 19th. Two Hawfinches flew over St Andrews. Notable flocks of Twite were at Kingsbarns (120 on 27th) and Kenly Burn (60 on 6th) with small numbers at Outhead. There were Lapland Buntings in the same area including 16 at Boarhills (12th). 15 Crossbills were at Anstruther (30th), and Sauchope held 40 Corn Buntings on 31st. A Rose-ringed Parakeet was again seen at Beveridge Park.

January 2021

Cameron Reservoir held two Ring-necked Ducks, two Smew, and a number of Scaup, Goosanders and Goldeneye. St. Andrews Bay continued to hold significant numbers of Scaup, Common Scoters, Velvet Scoters, Great Northern Divers and Red-throated Divers. C50 Snow Buntings continued at Tentsmuir (Kinshaldy). Whooper Swans were at Kirkcaldy, Wilderness, Cameron Reservoir, Craigluscar, Dunfermline and Guardbridge. Brent Geese remained in Balgove Bay, Pintails were noted at Tayport and Wilderness (five), Ring-necked Ducks at Kinghorn Loch and Kirkcaldy, and there was a sighting of a Goosander at Kilmany (rare for this site). Red-throated Divers were reported from 11 coastal locations with Great Northern Divers at five. Tentsmuir logged six Slavonian Grebes on 31st, pipped by 26 Great Crested Grebes in Torry Bay; a Red-necked Grebe was off Tentsmuir and Little Egrets continued at Tayport and Balgove Bay. A White Tailed Eagle was over Kilmany (22nd) and ring-tailed Hen Harriers were seen at Kingsbarns (23rd) and Carnbee. Kilmany held 26 Golden Plovers on 17th. Seafield held Purple Sandpipers, Guardbridge a Spotted Redshank, Fairmont a Greenshank; Woodcocks were at Fife Ness (in off sea) and Valleyfield Lagoons (three). Reports of increasingly scarce Grey Partridges came from Balmullo, Cellardyke and Kilmany (21 on 30th). Jack Snipes were logged at Crail's 'Secret Bunker' and Tayport. Reports of gulls included a Little Gull at Tayport, Mediterranean Gulls at ten locations (with three at Loch Gelly), an Iceland Gull at Kinghorn and a Glaucous Gull at Burntisland. A Black Guillemot lingered off Balcomie Beach. Barn Owls were seen at Auchtermuchty and Milton of Balgonie, with a Short-eared Owl at Outhead (16th). Eleven Waxwings visited Kirkcaldy (24th),

there was an imm. Black Redstart at Fife Ness on 30th and six Bearded Tits were observed on Mugdrum Island on 8th. Charlestown, Culross, and Markinch held Nuthatches, a pure form Hooded Crow was again seen at Tayport, there was a Raven at Fairmont, and a single Brambling at Newburgh (13th). Good numbers of Twite remained at several coastal sites with a notable 120 counted at Kingsbarns on 1st. Crossbills were at Cellardyke (10 on 9th) and Glenrothes (eight on 9th); Lapland Buntings continued at Kingsbarns and Boarhills, and there was significant flock of Corn Buntings at Kingsbarns with a count of 140 on 7th.

February 2021

Three White-fronted Geese of the ssp. *albifrons* were at Pittenweem on 13th; a Taiga Bean Goose (*fabilis*) was at Wester Kilwhiss; a Tundra Bean Goose (*rossicus*) was at Kilconquhar; a Barnacle Goose was noted near Dunshalt and a Pale-bellied Brent Goose stopped at Balcomie Beach. Ring-necked Ducks continued at Kirkcaldy (Beveridge Park), Cameron Reservoir and Kinghorn Loch. The flock of Scaup remained in St Andrews Bay (30 on 17th). A Long-tailed Duck was off Dysart (unusual for this site). A drake Smew continued at Cameron Reservoir. Red-throated Divers were noted at St Andrews, Anstruther, Elie, Fife Ness, Kinghorn (eight on 3rd), Dalgety Bay, Braefoot Point and Burntisland. Black-throated Divers were off Anstruther and Fife Ness, and Great Northern Divers were seen at St Andrews, Anstruther, Burntisland and Dalgety Bay. A Black-necked Grebe was off Downing Point. Kinconquhar Loch, Dalgety Bay and Burntisland Harbour held Slavonian Grebes with eight Great Crested Grebes logged in Dalgety Bay on 7th along with a Red-necked Grebe. Resident Little Egrets were seen at Cameron Reservoir, Eden Estuary and Tayport. An imm. Goshawk visited Kinghorn Loch on 9th and a female was at Dalgety Bay on 10th. Ladybank, Kingsbarns, Boarhills, Kilminning and St Monans hosted Merlins. c100 Golden Plovers were at St Monans on 14th and Grey Plovers and Knot were on Balcomie Beach. Kingsbarns held 25 Purple Sandpipers. Overwintering Bar-tailed Godwits remained in the Eden Estuary. Woodcocks were noted at Newburgh, Thornton Pond, St Andrews, Fife Ness, Pitmilny, Kilminning, Spinkie Den, Largo Bay and Crail. Although now scarce, Grey Partridges were logged at Newburgh, Wester Kilwhiss, Cellardyke (11), Strathkiness and Morton Lochs (15). Jack Snipes showed at Kilmany and Fife Ness. A brief but close view was had of a Grey Phalarope in heavy seas off St Andrews Pier on 3rd. Four Great Skuas passed Kinghorn on 3rd; Little Gulls were at Kingsbarns, Outhead, Leven and Dalgety Bay; Mediterranean Gulls continued at five of the usual sites; Glaucous Gulls were noted at Fife Ness and Burntisland (to at least 24th). A Little Auk was at Burntisland (15th) and a Black Guillemot coming out of winter plumage was at Leven. A notable flock of c9300+ Woodpigeons was recorded feeding at Anstruther on 13th. A Rock Pipit of ssp. *littoralis* was at Burntisland (12th); a Redwing of the Icelandic ssp. *Coburni* was at Tayport on 15th. Raven sightings were widespread especially in west of county. Bramblings, mostly in small numbers were at eight sites. Previously reported overwintering birds included Twite at St Monans, Boghall, Wormiston and Outhead; Crossbills at Cellardyke and Largo Bay; Snow Buntings at Tenstsmuir (seven), Kingsbarns, St Andrews, Balcomie and Elie; Lapland Buntings at Kingsbarns and Boarhills (eight) and Corn Bunting at Boarhills (130 on 12th) and St Monans. The Rose-ringed Parakeet continued to entertain at Kirkcaldy.

(Records of bird sightings for March to May for inclusion in the June newsletter, should be sent by Monday 7th June at the latest to David Heeley at dw.heeley@btinternet.com or 50 High Street, Newburgh, Fife KY14 6AQ.)



And finally – this is ‘Geordie’ being introduced to his first bird hide. Maybe it is a good thing there aren’t any SOC outings yet – he is not quite ready. (Elizabeth and John Irwin)

SOC: Guidance for Using Zoom Part 1 – for all users

Introduction:

During the current COVID19 pandemic, SOC is encouraging branches to continue holding local meetings. Advice on running outings has already been circulated to branches. To help branches hold “virtual” indoor meetings, SOC has purchased subscriptions to Zoom, the popular video-conference software. Many members will be familiar with Zoom; but for those who are not, it is straightforward to use. Further technical support may be provided if required – contact your branch committee for this.

This short guide is Part 1 of a three-part guide. In this part, aimed at all users new to Zoom, we introduce the key features and functions of the Zoom platform. Part 2 contains additional guidance of relevance to anyone hosting a Zoom meeting and Part 3 is for speakers delivering a presentation at a Zoom meeting.

A word on hardware:

Zoom will run on desktop or laptop computers (Windows or Macs), tablets (e.g. iPads) and smartphones (iPhone, Android). If you want other participants to see you, you need a webcam. A webcam is built-in to most laptops and all tablets and smartphones and can be added to a desktop computer. We would recommend using a desktop computer, laptop, or tablet – smartphones will work but the small screen size will not give a comfortable view of the meeting. The instructions that follow are written for **Windows**; but the general look and feel of Zoom is similar on all platforms.

A word on software:

If using a tablet or smartphone, before using Zoom for the first time you will need to download the (free) Zoom “app” from the Appstore (iPad) or the Google Play Store (Android). This is best done in advance of your first Zoom meeting. You can also download an app for your Windows desktop or laptop PC.

Joining a meeting - by invitation email:

Allow 5 minutes in advance of the start of the meeting to set up and open the Zoom platform. Ideally, allow a bit more time if this is the first time you have used Zoom.

- **Locate your invitation email** and click on the link in the text of the email. You may need to copy and paste the link to your internet browser window. This link should not be shared publicly - to ensure there are no “unwanted guests”.
- If you have used Zoom before on your device, follow the instructions. A small box may appear saying: **[Open Zoom.US]**. Click on this.
- If you have not already downloaded the software, you will be prompted to do so. Click on **[Download and Run Zoom]**. Your computer will then download the Zoom software. Once the download is complete, click on **[Run]**. The Zoom software will now be installed and then run on your computer.
- This should take you directly to the correct meeting. If not, you will need to enter the **meeting ID** and **password** shown on your invitation email.
- If asked as you join, type in your name, and allow audio and video.
- If the host hasn’t started the meeting yet, you will see a box on your screen with the message “**Waiting for host to start the meeting**”. While you are waiting, take the opportunity to **check your audio and video** by clicking on the appropriate boxes.
- **Lighting:** try to avoid strong lighting to one side or behind you. A desk lamp close to the screen but turned towards you should help. Another suggestion to provide front lighting is to turn up your screen brightness.
- Once your meeting host has started the meeting, they will most probably need to **admit you to the meeting**, though this might have been set up to happen automatically. When admitted to the meeting, you should be able to see the host and any other participants already admitted.

Meeting controls:

Along one edge of your screen are some “icons” (clickable symbols) – usually hidden until you touch the screen with your finger (touchscreens only) or move the mouse cursor. The icons are generally self-explanatory.



The first icon is for **Audio**. Your audio may already be muted (shows with a line through the icon). The host has an option to “**mute all**” when setting up the meeting, or during the meeting. If you want to speak to the meeting, click on the audio icon to **unmute**. Click again to **mute**. It is a good idea always to be on mute unless you are speaking as this cuts out background noise. On Windows, the up-arrow alongside this icon gives access to all your microphone and speaker settings, including the volume setting.



The next icon is for **Video**. **If you are using a webcam, you should turn video on.** Click on the icon to toggle between video on and off. On Windows, the up-arrow alongside the video icon gives access to other video settings.



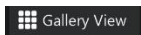
Clicking on the **Participants** icon will list the names of all those participating in the meeting. Selecting a name on the list will allow you to “chat” (see below) individually with this participant.



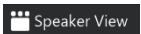
On Windows you have a **Chat** icon, which enables you to type a message either to another participant or to the whole meeting. To access Chat on a tablet, select [\[More\]](#).



Selecting More on a tablet also accesses “**Reactions**” – generally available is just a thumbs up (“I agree”) or a waving hand (“Hi, I’m here!”). On Windows, there is a separate icon (see left) for Reactions.



Somewhere on your screen will be the icon to switch to **Gallery View**, which shows you all participants in a grid, though the number of participants visible is limited by your screen size. Selecting the icon again toggles the screen back to **Speaker View**. For more on setting up Gallery view see Zoom support at: : <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360000005883-Displaying-participants-in-Gallery-View>



Further help:

Help information and helpful “how-to” videos are available at the Zoom Help Center at: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us>

If you will be **hosting** a Zoom meeting, further guidance appears in “SOC: Guidance for Using Zoom Part 2 – for meeting hosts”.

If you are a **speaker**, please refer to “SOC: Guidance for Using Zoom Part 3 – for speakers”.

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