

Bat Conservation Trust



Pete Guest Award: 2020 Nominations

Background

The Pete Guest Award is given in memory of Pete Guest who was an inspirational figure in the bat conservation movement for more than 20 years. Each year, the bat world is invited to nominate people who have made an outstanding practical contribution to bat conservation. The criteria for the award includes: dedication, innovation, enthusiasm and inspiration in making a difference, both to bats and to people, helping make BCT's vision become a reality.

Previous winners of the award are:

2019. Gail Armstrong
2018. Steve and Fiona Parker
2017. Donna & Graham Street
2016. James Shipman
2015. Arthur Rivett
2014. Colin Morris
2013. Maggie Brown
2012. Daniel Hargreaves
2011. Peter & Maggie Andrews
2010. Roger Ransome
2009. Sue Swift
2008. Tom McOwat
2007. Phil Burkinshaw
2006. John Haddow
2005. Phil Richardson
2004. Tony Hutson
2003. Jenny Clark*
2002. Shirley Thompson*



* BCT set up an award for “Outstanding voluntary contribution to bat conservation” in 2002, winners received a framed picture. Following Pete’s death, the Trustees proposed a new award in Pete’s name as a way of honouring his contribution to bat conservation. They also proposed that a formal trophy be sculptured, first awarded in 2004. This then replaced the award set-up in 2002.

This Year's Nominations

A total of 10 bat workers have been nominated for the Pete Guest Award in 2020 including one joint nomination:

Name	Voting reference (see How to Vote)
Tony Atkinson	PGA-Atkinson
Karen Healy	PGA-Healy
Michelle Young	PGA-Young
Dave Cottle	PGA-Cottle
Roger and Sylvia Jiggins	PGA-Jiggins
Morgan Hughes	PGA-Hughes
Stuart Smith	PGA-Smith
Amanda Millar	PGA-Millar
Stephen Davison	PGA-Davison

Supporting statements submitted with nominations are enclosed in Appendices 1-9

How to Vote

To register your vote by **email**:

- Please copy and paste the relevant voting reference (see table above) into the **subject** of a new email
- Write your name and bat group (if you are a member of one) only in the main body of text
- Email to: cmorris@bats.org.uk by **5.30 pm on Monday 24th August**.

Please be aware that if the voting reference has not been entered correctly, your vote may not be registered. Therefore please double check before sending.

To register your vote by post:

- Print out and complete the postal voting form available from the BCT website:
Return the form to: Pete Guest Award, FAO Colin Morris, Bat Conservation Trust,
Quadrant House, 250 Kennington Lane, London. SE11 5RD by **Monday 24th August**.

Votes received after 5.30pm on 24th August will not be valid, therefore please ensure you allow sufficient time for delivery.

Please note that you are only allowed one vote. Your name will be stored by BCT solely for the purpose of imposing this rule. Names will not be published or announced publically.

The Decision Process

The nominee(s) with the greatest number of votes will be announced at the Bat Workers Forum on Tuesday the 22nd September. Unfortunately, because the National Bat Conference is taking place on-line this year we will be unable to present the award at this event, therefore, we will be making an alternative arrangement to present the award at a later date. Details will also be posted on the BCT website, BCT social media and via email communication to bat groups week commencing 28th September.

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Appendix 1. Supporting statement for Tony Atkinson

Paul Diamond

Cornwall Bat Group

What can I say about Tony Atkinson? I've known Tony for over 12 years and surveyed with him on many occasions over this time, his knowledge, commitment and desire to pass on his knowledge is absolutely inspiring. Tony is **the** 'bat man' for southeast Cornwall and has been a pivotal figure within Cornwall Bat Group for many, many moons. I understand that Tony has been an ever present on the Cornwall Bat group Committee since the late 1980's

Tony's involvement with bats extends back to the 1950's (around 65 years ago) when Tony worked with John Hooper to ring Greater Horseshoe bats ostensibly to monitor their movements and determine whether bats on Dartmoor were the same bats as those in Torbay (which they are) and which co-incidentally revealed that the life span of this species can exceed 30 years.

Tony has been involved in a bat box check scheme for over 25 years and surveying for the National Bat Monitoring Programme (NBMP) for over 20 years. During the summer months counting Horseshoes, brown long-eared, common pips and Daubenton's and going underground into mines and adits in the somewhat less pleasant months of January and February to count Horseshoes and any other bats which turn up from time to time. All of the above require at least two survey visits per season, with some requiring three – this is an incredible level of commitment for anyone, perhaps more so when you realise Tony is 85 years young.

My first underground hibernation survey with Tony was around ten years ago and I distinctly remember Tony apologising to the group in advance as it was likely that being in his 70's Tony would hold us up during the survey as we walked from cars to hibernation sites and back – In fact Tony became the target to keep up with, as he always seemed to be striding out in front!

I also discovered during the day that Tony is so much more than just a 'bat man', he is an all-round naturalist with interests across all of the Natural World, not to mention industrial archaeology as he explained how various features in the landscape were created and how biodiversity had taken over and thrived on some of the neglect.

I would also like to briefly mention Tony's wife Mary. Mary is a remarkable naturalist in her own right, being an exceptional botanist and a top-drawer lepidopterist. In fact, whilst Tony is undertaking bat counts, Mary can often be found just around the corner with her moth trap catching and recording the Lepidoptera in the vicinity too. They are a formidable team who can often be seen holding hands and not just to stop each other falling over!

In addition to Tony's monitoring and recording work, Tony has led innumerable 'bat walks n talks' over a great many years. He has given presentations on bats and their role within the ecosystem to diverse audiences across the county and acted as trainer and mentor to many aspiring ecologists, myself included.

If the above are not sufficient reasons for people to agree that Tony thoroughly deserves the recognition that a Pete Guest award bestows and vote accordingly, I would like to add that Tony is also one of the longest serving Natural England -Volunteer Bat Roost Visitor (VBRV) in the County.

When I informed Tony that I was intending to nominate him for the Pete Guest Award, Tony's response that he did not consider that he had done enough to warrant such an award and that I think, tells you the measure of the man – 65 years working with bats, 85 years of age and still thinks he has not done enough...

His energy and enthusiasm for all living things sets him apart from many in our industry. He not only cares about the natural world and the challenges it is facing due to human actions, but also cares very much about people making sure everyone feels included, humbly sharing his vast knowledge, whilst in partnership with his wife Mary he feeds anyone that has forgotten their lunch.

Talk to an ecologist in the area and they will all have a story about Tony. His non-nonsense attitude, his enthusiasm, but probably most of all his kindness, giving his time freely to a wide range of activities and providing the driving force for so much conservation work.

In short, the world would be a much better place with more Tony Atkinson's and I know of nobody more deserving of winning the Pete Guest Award than Tony, a man who I am proud to call a friend.

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Appendix 2. Supporting statement for Karen Healy

Mairead Parke

Northern Ireland Bat Group

I want to nominate Karen Healy from the Northern Ireland Bat Group for the award.

She is the most amazing, caring and dedicated person I have ever seen! She rescues and rehabilitates bats from all over and has even dedicated a whole bedroom of her house by making it into almost a bat hospital for the injured ones and a bat hotel for those who have been healed but can't be released yet 😊. Not only does she love and do anything humanly possible to help bats but she also puts lots of time and effort into educating everyone in Derry and beyond about how amazing and cute bats are and how we can help them.

Karen loves every single animal on the planet and her job as an environmental officer really fits in well with this because she gets to use that platform to get funding for volunteers to come and build bat boxes, plant flowers that attract insects that bats like to eat (bat cafe) and to bring schools and businesses up to get them to see that bats aren't scary and how we should appreciate bats and what they do for us in the environment.

I used to be terrified of bats until Karen showed me a PowerPoint about how amazing they are and I instantly fell in love with them when I actually got the chance to see a real bat up close. I couldn't believe how small and cute they were.

There is no better candidate in my eyes for this award. Karen is batwoman in Northern Ireland and is literally a hero!

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Appendix 3. Supporting statement for Michelle Young

Charlotte Bell

Gloucestershire Bat Group

Michelle Young is an exceptional example of an extremely dedicated, enthusiastic, conscientious and hard-working bat worker and bat carer, who is enormously generous with her time and knowledge, despite having her own health issues to deal with. I have known Chelle since taking up my role as Secretary of the Gloucestershire Bat Group four and a half years ago, where she covers the role of Treasurer of the group. As I have got to know Chelle more over the years, it is hugely apparent that behind her amusing grumbles, deadpan sarcasm and witty social media updates, she is an amazingly caring, dedicated and inspiring ambassador for bat care and bat conservation and is a well-deserved candidate for the Pete Guest Award!

When I considered nominating Michelle for this award, I consulted with some of my fellow committee at GBG, as well as some of Michelle's other contacts in the 'bat world', and the numerous responses I received expressing their whole-hearted support for this nomination told me it was the right thing to do. I wish I could share all of their words of support in this statement!

Chelle has been the 'go to' person for Reverend Philip Morton whenever they are doing building or maintenance work on one of the six medieval church buildings in his benefice, where bats are almost certainly going to be involved - this includes everything from overseeing major repairs down to picking up an exhausted pipistrelle found in one of the churches, later named Jude (in honour of St. Jude, the Patron Saint of Lost Causes), nursing him back to health and releasing him back into the churchyard. Chelle has also helped out with special bat events in the churches, including a bat walk for a local Beavers group, and organising surveys ahead of building work. On each and every occasion, Chelle has exhibited the exact qualities that the Pete Guest Award promotes: she has shown dedication beyond what is normally reasonable, innovation in her ways of engaging with people new to bat watching, she has been enthusiastic in every circumstance and inspired many church-goers to view bats in a new and positive light. I cannot commend her more highly for this award, and I am delighted to support GBG in their nomination of Chelle.

As well as all her contributions to bat conservation through the church work mentioned above, NBMP monitoring, leading countless walks and talks, public engagement events, organising and delivering bat care training events and fulfilling her role on the GBG committee, Michelle has been a registered bat carer since 2014 and is the co-founder of Evesham Bat Care. Evesham Bat Care is now a group of twelve people who have all been trained and supported by Michelle.

One of her fellow carers and trainees said the following about her: *"For me, as a fellow bat carer, she is both an inspiration and an invaluable source of support. I never cease to be amazed at how much she achieves while having health issues that could prevent people with less inner strength. Her installation of a flight cage in her back garden has made a major difference to what I and other bat carers in the Evesham Bat Care network are able to achieve. Her continuing fundraising for EBC provides us carers with vital supplies and the time and energy she puts into that is quite amazing. Her successful application for charity*

status has given her new sources of funding but also new challenges and time-resource pressures. As a bat carer, there are times when the desire to save every bat and every pup leaves me drained and feeling low. Michelle has always been there for me, with encouragement and understanding, no matter how she herself is feeling. I think she would be a very worthy winner of this award." The number of bats that Michelle and her care network have managed to rehabilitate, picked up across several different counties, is staggering.

She was presented with one of the first Wildlife Heroes award in the summer of 2018 by Worcestershire Wildlife Trust. In March of 2019 she was a finalist at the Wychavon Volunteer Awards in the 'Individual Volunteer' category. She was nominated for the same category again in 2020.

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Appendix 4. Supporting statement for David Cottle

Ed Wells

Somerset Bat Group

Dave Cottle is a founder member of the Somerset Bat Group and became its second Chairman a role he undertook many times over the succeeding three decades. The Group's constitution does not allow any officer to serve more than two consecutive terms or we would probably not have looked elsewhere. He has also served as Vice-Chairman and Secretary. He has been one of the most important voices on the committee throughout the last 35 years.

The SBG has been successful through the efforts of many people but none more than Dave. It has had a number of strong characters but has never had any serious disagreements. That is largely due to Dave. He is very good at handling bats but even better at handling people. His quiet good humour and real passion for bat conservation have inspired a huge number of people. The same skills made him the key figure in establishing good relations with the Mendip caving community to the considerable benefit of the bats hibernating there. It helps that Dave has either taught or played cricket with most of the locals.

Dave was licensed as a Roost Visitor by NCC in the mid-1980s becoming a Trainer soon afterwards. He has been training bat workers for well over 30 years until finally giving up his licence last year. For much of the time the Somerset Environmental Record Centre was running a nationally renowned training course and Dave helped with the bat work aspect of that. I sometimes look round at Bat Conferences and wonder how many of the delegates were trained by Dave and inspired by him. I know they include members of several leading consultancies and even some BCT staff. More recently, Dave has held the position of Chief Trainer within Somerset helping to guide other Trainers and his own group of trainees. He has been a constant source of inspiration and advice for everyone involved.

Dave was heavily involved with the Regional Meetings back when the regions had a representative on BCT Council and until restricted in part by his wife's poor health he was a regular at Conference. I cannot remember him giving poor advice. It is not always the most extravert and loudest advocates for wildlife who have the greatest impact and Dave Cottle with his quiet manner and passionate commitment has done more for bat conservation in the West Country than anyone. I remember Pete Guest from my own days on BCT Council in its infancy. Dave remains a well-loved member of the Bat Group and, though no longer a Volunteer Bat Roost Visitor himself, is one of the most helpful and knowledgeable people in providing advice, handling tricky situations and supporting everyone involved in helping homeowners. I am sure that Pete would approve of Dave's nomination whole-heartedly.

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Appendix 5. Supporting statements for Roger and Sylvia Jiggins

Graham Hart

Essex Bat Group

The Essex Bat Group Committee Members and I would like to nominate Roger and Sylvia Jiggins for a Pete Guest award. Roger and Sylvia have been joint secretaries of Essex Bat Group for over 15 years and involved with both the bat group and bat conservation in general for even longer. During this time they have played a significant role in the bat group – training new VBRVs, highlighting the importance of Essex churches as bat roosts and inspiring both new members and the general public with their passion for bats and their extensive knowledge.

As licensed Voluntary Bat Roost Visitors, Roger and Sylvia undertake countless surveys (probably more than any other Essex VBRV), the majority of which are to churches. Through these surveys Roger and Sylvia have developed an incredible amount of knowledge about bats in churches. They are considered to be two of the leading experts on bats and churches in the UK and are always happy to share their knowledge with other bat workers. In addition, they dedicate a significant amount of their time to supporting the Chelmsford Diocese by reading through the quinquennial reports and flagging up which churches in Essex need a VBRV survey. Roger and Sylvia also liaise with architects and contractors to increase awareness of how bats use buildings and the importance of bats and their protection.

Every year Roger and Sylvia run a church training day for new Bat Conservation Trust helpline staff so that these new staff members who will be giving advice to church wardens etc. have first-hand experience and a greater understanding of how bats use churches. They are also involved in the BCT churches project and have previously run training courses for church surveying.

Roger and Sylvia are also VBRV trainers and have trained several new VBRV's in the county since becoming licensed. They have organised annual VBRV training days, where the county's licence holders come together to share experiences from the past year, and they are always happy to provide advice and support to newly trained VBRVs.

On top of this Roger and Sylvia also undertake bat walks and talks in their local area for members of the public and church congregations, sharing their knowledge and love of bats, increasing the public's understanding of bats and improving their perception of bats.

In addition, Sylvia is also the Voluntary Warden of Essex Wildlife Trust's Phyllis Currie Nature Reserve in Great Leighs where she organises work parties to maintain the habitats for various species, including of course our beloved bats.

In summary, Roger and Sylvia have dedicated many years to working hard to help bats in Essex and across the country. They don't just undertake their own surveys but help to train others, spreading knowledge and confidence so that more people can be involved in bat conservation work. Their work with the public aims to inspire them to get involved in bat work, to appreciate the bats around them and to encourage bats in their area.

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Appendix 6. Supporting statements for Morgan Hughes

Scott Brown and Matt Armes

Birmingham and Black Country Bat Group (Brumbats)

I'd like to nominate my mentor Morgan Hughes for the Pete guest award. I feel that Morgan's dedication to bat research, education and conservation is merit alone, however, I will elaborate.

Morgan has trained me from a complete novice engineer with no prior knowledge of wildlife other than David Attenborough documentaries to the point I am now, a professional ecologist with class 3 and 4 bat licences and a first class degree.

Her commitment to the education of her volunteers is truly astounding and I honestly believe every one of them has benefitted both educationally and emotionally from her exposing them to bats. I feel that her conservation impact will be felt long after she no longer has professional presence through her volunteers who will carry her pedigree with pride I am sure. It is safe to say people very easily catch the bat bug from Morgan's enthusiasm.

Morgan has had many roles throughout her career ranging from strictly conservation to consulting and more recently carrying out her self-funded PhD. She has ranged from bat carer to a lecturer on bat ecology. Carried out activities from practical conservation for bats in the midlands to trapping bats in the Andean cloud forests of Ecuador. Her knowledge base is vast and her skill set wide. Her social media presence alone reaches 1000s of people who prior to which will have had no knowledge of the complexity and wonder of bats. Her communication and education skills have also even led to her projects with Dudley zoo on native bats being awarded a silver BIAZA award.

She is well respected by her peers and it is honestly a task to find an ecologist or naturalist in the Midlands that does not in some way know of her. I feel that her research will go on to contribute greatly to the conservation of urban bats and as a result have no hesitation in nominating her for the Pete Guest award.

Scott Brown

Morgan Hughes is a bat worker who fully deserves to be awarded the Pete Guest Award. Through the Birmingham and Black Country Bat Group and Urban Bat Project, she works tirelessly to promote the understanding and appreciation of bat ecology and conservation, focusing her work on bats within an urban landscape – an area where bat community structure is often misunderstood and underestimated. She is currently undertaking her PhD studying this phenomenon, which will undoubtedly make significant bounds towards us understanding bats in Britain.

During the bat survey season, as well as working as an ecologist professionally, Morgan also spends her weekends with volunteers conducting trapping surveys and bat box checks around the Birmingham and Black Country area. She also develops novel surveying methodology which ecologists can use to better understand bat movements throughout urban landscapes. During the winter, Morgan continues to stay busy, undertaking training courses in endoscope surveys, potential roost feature assessments, and bat call analysis.

As a further testament to her professionalism and commitment to bat conservation, when Covid-19 struck, Morgan kept her volunteer group informed on developments on the impacts on the survey season. By keeping everyone informed, as well as developing survey protocols in this new situation, Morgan was able to keep surveys and group engagement going, whilst taking the steps required to put surveyor and bat health and wellbeing into focus. Due to this, the bat group and their activities could continue in a safe manner, rather than stopping altogether.

Her commitment and dedication to bat conservation is inspiring, and there is no one else more suited to receive the Pete Guest Award.

Matt Armes

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Appendix 7. Supporting statements for Stuart Smith

Natalie Todman, Claire Hopkins & Susan Falconer

Lothians Bat Group

Nick Tomlinson, Liz & Gaz Watkinson

Dorset Bat Group

John Haddow

Central Scotland Bat Group

To me, Stuart is the embodiment of BCT's vision to create a world where bats and people thrive together. In the 30+ years that Stuart has been involved with bats he has shown a dedication and enthusiasm for bat work that has been inspirational to many people, not just in the bat world. "Yeah, just bring them along, that's fine!" is Stuart's typical response when asked if someone can bring a friend with them on a bat survey – there is always room for anyone who shows an interest in bats and Stuart always goes out of his way to encourage and support that interest. I first met Stuart when I was one such friend who was brought along to help with some harp trapping at a local swarming site, Stuart judged me, as he does everyone, not by my age or gender, but by my interest and willingness to get involved and learn. And learn I certainly did! Before I knew it I was under Stuart's experienced wing and gaining knowledge at an incredible rate, his knowledge of bats and bat work is nothing short of encyclopaedic, even a drive to a survey site is educational, punctuated as they always are by the histories of roosts in buildings that are passed. As part of my training I accompanied Stuart on Scottish Natural Heritage roost visits, watching him read the building and work out how the bats were using it and then explain this to the householder, turning their fear and trepidation to relief and understanding, and from that to appreciation!

Over the years Stuart has been involved in many different bat conservation projects, providing each with a huge level of enthusiasm and dedication, and working tirelessly for their success. From the early 1990s until his retirement to Dorset in 2013, Stuart was the driving force behind Lothians Bat Group. Running the group in a style sometimes referred to as a benign dictatorship (!) Stuart took the lead in almost everything that we did – organising roost counts, hibernacula visits, bat walks and talks, not to mention the herculean task of ensuring that our many bat box schemes were all successfully monitored. His enthusiastic personality and good natured attitude fostered good relationships with landowners, roost owners, and the many other people with whom he made contact regarding bats. Stuart's reach extends beyond the range of his local bat group, he is a well-known face at local and national events and is always keen to engage and participate, and to help others do the same.

There is no doubt that Stuart has made a massive difference to both the bats and the people that he has worked with over the past thirty years. He has been an inspiration to many bat workers and provided training and support without ego or bias. For me, Stuart provided the gateway into bat work for which I will always be grateful; he has unquestionably made an outstanding practical contribution to bat conservation in many ways and would be a more than worthy recipient of this award.

Natalie Todman

I would like to nominate Stuart Smith because as a newbie to Edinburgh in the mid noughties he was the Lothians Bat Group leader and organised many of the first voluntary activities I took part in here. His enthusiasm was infectious, dexterity with bat handling very impressive and he seemed to run the group almost single handedly, recalling the locations of boxes, hibernation sites and fine details of who went on which visit. Thanks Stuart!

Claire Hopkins

Stuart was a stalwart of Lothians Bat Group and I first met him back in the late 1990s while I was working as a Countryside Ranger and he came to check bat boxes on some of our sites. This was a catalyst for me to become more interested in bats. Stuart was always keen to share his knowledge and enthusiasm for bats and was a supportive trainer and mentor whilst I trained for my bat licence, something that I thought I'd never have been interested in achieving.

He has a wealth of knowledge and was able to persuade many people to join the bat group and help with surveys and bat walks. I was also introduced to techniques such as harp-trapping and hibernacula visits. He had a phenomenal memory and could recall where and when bats were using particular bat boxes and sites. Stuart also has a great sense of humour and helped everyone feel welcome and part of the team. Stuart is an advocate for bats and is able to communicate this to people who may have been uncertain or negative towards bats, including householders and landowners, using facts to dispel fiction. Nominating Stuart for the Pete Guest Award would be the best way to show him what an inspiration he has been to so many people. It was a loss to Lothian Bat Group when Stuart returned to Dorset, although it is typical of Stuart to continue all the fantastic work that he began in Scotland. He would richly deserve to win this award in recognition of all that he has achieved.

Susan Falconer

I have known Stuart for some years but it is only since his relocation back to Dorset that I have had the chance to work with him on a regular basis. His passion for bats is obvious, and infectious, and you cannot have a conversation with him without learning something. He shares his knowledge easily, and without ego, and his ability to bring many years of experience to any conversation is invaluable. He very quickly became a key member of the Dorset Bat Group, and, as an essential part of the team undertaking swarming and trapping studies in Dorset, was instrumental in expanding the involvement in these studies to those outside the county, which was central in helping us expand them to cover more sites and therefore produce better and more interesting results. He organises the counts for several significant colonies of serotine in Dorset, counts which had 'fallen by the wayside', and, as well as ensuring the ongoing collection of the data, helps members of the group get involved in these counts, a fantastic experience for all involved, and a real learning experience. Having established very good relationships with the owners (to the extent that they count the bats in between his counts!) he also organises the regular cleaning of one of the roosts so ensuring the householders remain happy to have the bats using their loft! At indoor meetings he is always to be seen chatting warmly to a range of people, from the more experienced to novices, treating all alike, and, drawing on his long years of experience, he readily contributes to the general discussions. Stuart is a very easy person to work with, and always trying to help others enjoy bats as much as he does. On a

very personal level, Stuart has been instrumental in helping me produce two reports, commenting on drafts and (gently) suggesting ways to improve them, helping shape them into a much better product than they would have been without his input.

Nick Tomlinson

Stuart has been voluntarily involved in Bat Conservation for over three decades and we believe he fits all of the criteria for being a worthy nominee and a deserving recipient of the Pete Guest Award 2020. Stuart's dedication and outstanding enthusiasm is clear to those who have had the pleasure of being involved in all manner of bat work with him; be it NBMP surveys and monitoring roost counts, catching and examining bats, or at hibernation and swarming sites, to name but a few. He is very engaging and approachable and happily shares his vast knowledge about different bat species, techniques, practices and thoughts on all things bat related. We have witnessed him helping and advising many volunteers in the relatively short time we have known him – not only here in Dorset but we have met volunteers from across the Country - who he generously invites to stay with him so they can join in with Dorset Bat Group activities.

His previous work and support for Lothians Bat Group has also been recognised for his expertise and enthusiasm, with many hours in the field as well as organising bat box schemes and sharing his knowledge, writing articles for 'Scottish Bats' publications along with leading bat walks inspiring the younger generation by stimulating an interest in bats and other nocturnal wildlife.

It is because of Stuart that my husband and I became further encouraged to undertake voluntary bat conservation work ourselves just a mere 6 years ago; we decided that we would like to know more about bats, after having had a bat talk via our local RSPB group we then went on a bat walk led by the DBG, we were fascinated and thought we would go along to one of the Dorset Bat Group meetings and autumn talks – we were very nervous as we didn't know anybody and felt in awe of the many bat experts present who all sounded so very knowledgeable – we stood quietly sipping tea at the break wide-eyed looking and listening and, if honest, felt somewhat out of our depth – we even contemplated that we should slip quietly out so that we didn't make fools of ourselves as we knew so very little.

Stuart had seen us huddled in the corner and made his way around the room and came right over to us and said – 'Hi I'm Stuart – Are you here because you want to learn more about bats? Would you like to come swarming with us at the weekend?'.....Well; Oh my goodness, what a weekend and introduction that was!!!.....as a result we have not looked back.

Stuart is and has been a true inspiration to all who have known him over the 30+ years he has been involved in bat work - he is highly respected and truly one of the friendliest 'go-to' people if ever you have a query or question – he does not judge you on your knowledge or ability but willingly gives help, advice and encouragement to even the most novice of bat volunteers – I, for one, am grateful and inspired after all those years he still regularly gives up his time and is eager to provide practical contributions as well as support to Bat Conservation.

Liz & Gaz Watkinson

I first got to know Stuart about 30 years ago when he and Jerry Herman were investigating mines and other hibernation sites all over central and southern Scotland. His enthusiasm was immediately obvious, and his cheerfulness in any situation was infectious. From that time he was a mainstay of the Lothians Bat Group, and later including Borders Bat Group. For many years, until his retirement and move south, he led the amateur batworker community in southeast Scotland, and through his hard work and personality influenced and enthused so many people to get involved with bat work and conservation. He is a distinctly larger than life personality who deserves to be recognised with the Pete Guest Award.

John Haddow

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Appendix 8. Supporting statement Amanda Millar

Louise Smith

Sussex Bat Group

I would like to nominate Amanda Millar for the Pete Guest Award 2020.

Amanda has been providing bat care to the bats of Sussex (and further afield!) for nearly 20 years. In addition to her role as a Voluntary Roost Visitor and Chair of Sussex Bat Group for the last 10 years, she singlehandedly runs a bat hospital in West Sussex. She expertly co-ordinates bat carers in Sussex to manage bat rescues and provides care, rehabilitation and releases. This summer has been particularly busy for her. Even after another sleepless night of feeding young pups, she always opens her door with kindness and a warm welcome whilst taking another delivery of casualties in need of care.

Amanda truly makes a difference to both bats and people, daily. She tirelessly promotes bats and delivers numerous talks throughout the year. She takes every single opportunity that comes her way to educate others about bats, from my four year old to 90 year olds! Additionally, Amanda writes a regular column in the Sussex Bat Group's newsletter sharing good news stories and providing an insight into life at the bat hospital.

Not only does she educate others about bat conservation, she goes further and encourages everyone to learn more about how they can provide short-term care also. Over the years, she has created her own bat care course (which is always over-subscribed!). She delivers the training herself to enthuse and upskill others, arming them with the expertise and confidence needed to start their own bat care journeys.

As far as innovation goes, Amanda's Bat Hospital is also home to the 'Batzebo'. This purpose built gazebo allows rehabilitated bats to polish off their flight and foraging skills, whilst having their progress assessed prior to release.

Amanda's commitment to wildlife conservation doesn't stop at bats. She is also a huge advocate for bees, and is the current president of the Brighton and Lewes Beekeepers. Before social media had even coined the term 'influencer', we had Amanda and are very lucky indeed...as are the bats in Sussex!

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Appendix 9. Supporting statement for Stephen Davison

Aislinn Harris

Monmouthshire & Newport Bat Group

We would like to nominate Stephen Davison of the Monmouthshire & Newport Bat Group.

Stephen has been an active member of the bat group since its formation in 2007. He is a very valuable member of the group committee offering support and advice to his colleagues and is a thoughtful voice of reason in bat conservation being strongly lead by the latest scientific evidence and the welfare of the animals. Stephen is a very encouraging bat worker and is always keen to welcome and support our new and less experienced bat group members. He is always willing to share his knowledge through talks to the bat group that engage with the whole range of knowledge and experience.

For almost 10 years Stephen has been running a rare woodland bat project focusing on species such as barbastelle and Bechstein's bats but also increasing our knowledge of the behaviour and distribution of other species including those that were previously cryptic in SE Wales such as Serotine and Leisler's bats. This project has required an enormous amount of dedication to the cause requiring Stephen to find suitable trapping sites, gain all the relevant permissions and licences, complete preliminary survey work and then return to carry out dozens of trapping nights and radio-tracking sessions every year. The project continues to discover new information every year particularly on the temporal and spatial use of key sites for bats. His hard work on this project has led to the discovery of the only known maternity roost for Bechstein's in Wales.

Stephen also generously invites along key volunteers to give them invaluable experiences; including seeing rare species in the hand; expanding their knowledge, and encouraging them to develop their own research projects. This has included a project with a bat group member that he was able to support in the development of her MSc. which resulted in the discovery of spring swarming of lesser horseshoe bats in the lower Wye Valley and the discovery of new hibernation and maternity sites for both horseshoe species.

The time and effort Stephen puts into the project is inspirational and encourages other bat group members to continue supporting bat conservation. Stephen supports wider species conservation by submitting his records to local record centers and gladly shares his knowledge on bat species and trapping surveys to any who need help.

Recently, Stephen has taken time to help ensure protected bat sites and supporting habitats in South Wales are appropriately considered by decision makers. He has challenged the consideration of bat species in forestry woodland taking the time to ensure that relevant authorities are following environmental legislation. Without local people like Stephen taking an active role within the local environment, our bat species would most definitely suffer.

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