

THE WINTER OF 2001 – 2002.

The winter of 2001 – 2002 was the second most “open” in the last decade, better than last winter but not so good as that of 1999 – 2000.

Temperatures held up well with most showing positive anomalies. The 14.6°C/58.3°F observed on the 11th February was the best since 1998 that produced 16.8°C/62.2°F, the highest on record. In fact, only 7 winters have been more open since 1956 [1998, 1995, 1990, 1989, 1976, 1975 and 1974]. Frost occurred in the air on 28 days and on grass on 46 days, both figures better than expectation. The coldest night in the air was 31st December with -7.5°C/18.5°F, with the coldest on grass on the same date with a minimum of -11.0°C/12.2°F, both figures a little down on the immediate past.

Rainfall was marginally down on average, the 193.5mm/7.62ins being well down on the last 2 years, but still nothing exceptional. Rain fell on 57 days, above normal and the highest since 1999. Snow occurred on 7 days with snow or sleet on 9, the lowest figures for 5 years. Snow lay on 7 mornings the highest total since 1997 but still 2 days lower than expectation.

Sunshine was better than for an average winter though still the lowest total for 3 years, the 191.5 hours being seen against the record 219.8 hours for winter of 1999 – 2000. In all 27 days were sunless, well down on average though still the highest figures since the 38 seen in 1996 – 1997.

It was stormy in February with winds gusting to 50 knots/60mph on February 25th with a mean wind speed of 6.8knots/8mph for the winter as a whole, somewhat lower than the expected 9.7 knots/12mph. It would seem that the winter seasons are showing signs of becoming far stormier and with excessive rain, though still providing plentiful sunshine.