

THE WINTER OF 2000 - 2001.

The winter season of 2000 – 2001 was the worst in overall conditions since that of 1995 – 1996.

In terms of temperature it was generally cold with below average figures in many areas. The coldest night saw temperatures as low as -11.0C [12.2F], the lowest since 1987 that produced a night minimum of -13.0C [8.6F]. In addition the mean daily temperature of just 4.0C [39.2F] gave the lowest figure since the 2.6C [36.7F] seen in 1996. In contrast, the warmest night of the winter of 10.5C [50.9F] was the best since the 11.7C [53.1F] obtained in 1995. Grass radiation temperatures were also very low with a minimum of -14.3C [6.3F], the lowest since 1991 which saw a grass minimum of -17.7C [0.1F], or almost 32 Fahrenheit degrees of frost: cold indeed!

Rainfall was also up on recent seasons, the total fall of 257.0mm [10.12ins] being the highest since the 281.7mm [11.19ins] recorded in 1995. Rain fell on 48 days, the lowest total since 1998, this occurring over a time period of 251.7 hours, well above the winter average. The highest daily fall of 24.8mm [0.98in] was also above average fitting in well with the trend towards more intense rainfall than seen in earlier decades.

Total winter sunshine amounted to 221.9 hours, the highest seasonal total ever recorded here and some 61.6 hours above the 30-year average. However, the 27 sunless days was the worst recorded since 1997 that had 38. February 14th was the sunniest day with 9.2 hours, an hour above the expected value and enough to categorise the day as “sunny” with a daily total above 9 hours.

Snow lay on 5 days, the worst since 1997 that had 7 and fog occurred on 7 days, the highest figure since the 14 occasions recorded in 1996. There were 38 air frosts, the most since the 39 in 1997 that had 56, this the worst number since the 60 recorded in 1994.