

Huge hornets nest  
– see page 22

# Local Wildlife news

© Colin Hullis

January to April 2022

A news and events  
diary from wildlife and  
conservation groups in  
the Ipswich area





## Come and Join us

Become a member of Ipswich Wildlife Group and support our work at local wildlife sites and our activities spreading enthusiasm for the nature all around us

*You can just lend us your support or get involved in our activities:*

- Learn how to coppice hazel
- Help maintain pathways in woodlands and by waterways
- Build hibernaculum for amphibians, reptiles and insects
- Create homes for stag beetles and holts for otters
- Make nest boxes for bugs, birds and hedgehogs
- Give advice and demonstrations to schools and societies
- Promote IWG at local wildlife events

Your membership will help provide valuable influence when we are standing up for local environmental issues

We don't do meetings or annual subscriptions but we will keep you informed of what's going on by email each month.

Just send your contact details to our secretary Leila at [iwg@wildipswich.org](mailto:iwg@wildipswich.org)



Copies of LWN are available at all Ipswich libraries,  
at the Reg Driver Centre in Christchurch Park  
and from leaflet dispensers at the Stable Block in Holywells Park,  
from the Greenways office at the Scout Hall, Stoke Park Drive,  
Millennium Wood (Bobbits Lane entrance), Kiln Meadow (Marbled White Drive  
entrance), The Sandlings, Rushmere (Bixley Drive entrance) and  
Mill Stream, Rushmere (Glemham Drive entrance).

# Welcome

by **James Baker** *Editor*

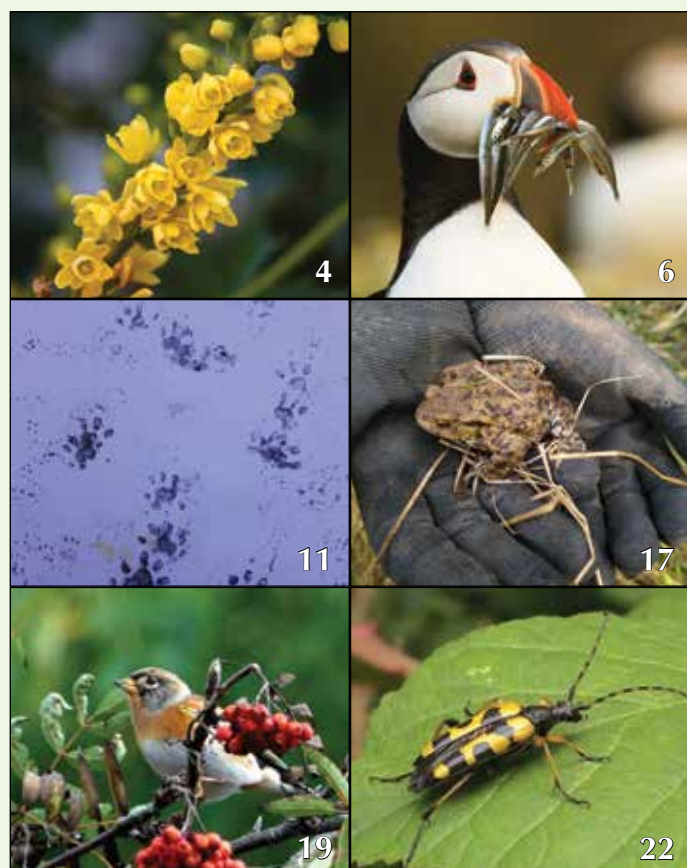
Welcome to the winter and spring edition of Local Wildlife News! As with the previous edition, it's wonderful to have some events and activities in the Events Diary - I hope there is something there of interest to everyone, whether indoors or out! Please do contact the organiser of an event before attending, just to make sure it is going ahead with whatever restrictions are in place at the time.

It's great to see so much practical activity going on around all of the different groups represented in this magazine - with volunteers returning to their favourite wildlife sites after many months of lockdowns and restrictions. I sincerely hope that we will all be able to continue with our efforts, as they are vital for so many habitats and species in the area. It's even better to see all the joint and partnership working - with Greenways and Ipswich Wildlife Group working together to supply all of Suffolk Wildlife Trust's bird box kits from local timber, being a great example (see pages 7, 9, and 12).

For the first time, we welcome an interesting article from Geosuffolk in this edition - highlighting the County Geodiversity Sites in Ipswich, and the importance of geology in influencing semi-natural habitats and their distribution.

It's also wonderful to see that after a few years' of not being able to progress with the management of Purdis Heath SSSI (site of Special Scientific Interest), Butterfly Conservation Suffolk have managed to work with the site's new owner to agree a resumption of their wonderful efforts to maintain and improve this priceless heathland on the edge of Ipswich for Silver-studded Blue butterflies and all the other wildlife species that depend upon this habitat.

I hope that you enjoy the magazine and get the same 'boost' from all the positivity at this unusual time! I'd also like to take the chance to wish you all the very best for a happy and wildlife-rich 2022!



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# Insects just love banana custard

**Sheila Roberts** *Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group*

Many years ago, I bought three perennial verbascum plants – a tall variety called banana custard which has spires of striking yellow flowers. They loved the conditions in my garden and seeded freely so, not only do I now have lots of them but I have plenty to pot up and pass on to friends.

provide a handy breeding site for dozens and dozens of caterpillars of the mullein moth. These are showy, big and very greedy. I find them

fascinating to watch as they munch the leaves in full view of the many birds that visit my garden. They might make the leaves look a bit untidy or eat some of the flower buds but in seven years they have never killed a plant.

But it's these caterpillars that got me thinking about whether our attitude to insects is all a bit muddled. Some of my wildlife-loving friends who happily seek out plants with the bee label at garden centres won't take up my offer of free verbascums growing in peat-free compost because they don't want something in their borders that will be attacked by caterpillars.

Yes, providing nectar and pollen is critically important to fuel the pollinators of our ecosystem. But that's only part of the solution – we need to think about providing food plants for caterpillars as well. And we need to learn to tolerate a few beasties having a munch on our plants if we want to increase the biodiversity of our urban areas.

This is not just because we want the butterflies and moths flittering around but because

caterpillars are part of a food chain – without them, most species of our much loved garden birds would be unable to rear chicks. Almost nothing we provide on the bird table can be used by a parent bird to feed its brood. They need soft, live foods like caterpillars.

Additionally, we all know bat populations are declining and a lack of one of their preferred foods – moths – is probably one of the causes of that decline. While the birds don't seem to eat the larger mullein moth caterpillars, I like to think that, once they hatch into the flying beasts, they provide a useful meal for the bats that flit around the eaves. And some of our most beloved birds like swallows and swifts probably take butterflies and moths as one of their food sources.

So as you sit and plan your environmentally-friendly gardening adventures for next summer, perhaps give consideration to including some species that don't just provide fuel for pollinators but also a habitat for insects to rear the next generation, so adding a few more links in the food chain. You never know, those caterpillars you host could be the difference between life and death for those adorable baby blue tits in your nest box.

Here are a few ideas to help provide food for caterpillars:

- Nettles - they are the food plant of small tortoiseshell and peacock butterflies. But you do need a bigish clump as they seem to favour the sheltered central area
- Lady's smock and garlic mustard - for orange-tip and green-veined white caterpillars
- Bird's-foot trefoil – for common blue butterflies to lay their eggs
- Ivy - which is an important food source for the caterpillar of the holly blue butterfly

They are one of the most preferred flowers in my garden for all kinds of pollinators, especially early in the morning when I assume nectar production is at its peak. Not just honey bees but a vast array of native bees, tiny wasps, hoverflies and other creatures I don't even recognise, all flock to feed on the flowers of these showy plants.

I guess the attraction of these verbascums to insects is that they are related to our native mullein. Which explains another interesting benefit they bring – they



## Ipswich Group Newsletter

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*We are the Ipswich Group of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust. We offer an interesting range of monthly meetings with guest speakers. Trust members and non-members are equally welcome. During the summer months we offer a variety of trips, some local, others by coach. Details of these and our monthly meetings can be found in our "Dates for your Diary" section or on the website, [www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org](http://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org).*

# The beauties of Bonny Wood

**Melvyn Eke** *Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group*

Not far up the road from Ipswich is the Suffolk Wildlife Trust nature reserve Bonny Wood. In this article, SWT Ipswich Group committee member Melvyn Eke, describes his trip to look for some of our less common butterflies.

“What does a committed birder do to spend his time when he retires?

He turns his mind to other species – particularly those you have previously never seen, so for me it was butterflies. My first task was to build a Suffolk list then an East Anglian list then .....well who knows?

So starting with Suffolk and putting the first target as arguably the best “tick “ was the purple emperor (or His Imperial Majesty as I prefer to think of him ) so off to Bonny Wood on a sunny day with very little breeze so the search could begin.

The eagle eyed (forgive the pun) birding skills were on full alert looking for any movement .

The first surprise of the walk came down the lane with a very small butterfly the size of a small stone which settled on the ground then flew off with a very low flight. It had me on my knees – I was following a purple hairstreak, its wings closed when it settled then darted off with the purple flash of a female clearly displayed. Trying to get a photo of it with the Canon DS 600 was a challenge even with a modern motordrive, the clear shots proved difficult but thankfully, one was successful .

Following the track to the edge of the main farmer’s field came the result of the day.

What don’t you want to do with a butterfly? Stand on it! But if you just



*Purple Emperor - His Imperial Majesty*

miss a wonderfully camouflaged purple emperor with its wings closed you know it’s your lucky day so following it into the field meant I was on hands and knees again to take many photos over ten minutes whilst it sucked up nutrients from the soil - behaving totally naturally. Then with a flick of its wings it was off - up into the tree tops and gone from view .

Into the wood I then went and, in a sunny glade, it was silver washed fritillary party time with over twenty mating pairs on the brambles with several single males trying to gatecrash, a good sign for next year . Then further into the wood a single male white admiral lead me a merry dance until



**Ipswich Group Newsletter**

it settled. Others spotted included gatekeeper, ringlet, meadow brown, small skipper and large white.

Plus that day, Bonny Wood also yielded a few dragonflies over the pond area. Now that gives me an idea.... Let’s find my dragonfly ID book in readiness for the spring!



*Silver washed fritillary*



*White admiral*

All pictures © Melvyn Eke



## Ipswich Group Newsletter

### Carry on learning

In the last couple of years, many of us have rediscovered the joy of learning something new. It might be learning a musical instrument, baking or simply broadening knowledge about the natural world around us.

If your new year's resolution was to give your grey matter a bit more of a work out or a determination to learn something new, we might have just the answer.

Every month from autumn to spring the Ipswich group of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust invites a speaker to come and share their knowledge of some aspect of the natural world for an hour or so. It's all very informal – no-one is expected to have any prior knowledge and we promise there's no exam on the way out. It's just a sociable, informative evening spent in the company of like-minded people keen to learn more.

These talks take place in the Methodist church which is accessed off Black Horse Lane in the town centre. It's handy for public transport or there is parking on the nearby streets and the car park beside the Wolsey Theatre (fee payable).

No need to book the talks - tickets are available on the door for only £2.50 (cash only) and everyone is welcome regardless of whether or not you are a member.

See below for details of the speakers coming up soon – and we look forward to welcoming you.

### Evening Talks Diary

All meetings held at 7.30pm at Museum Street Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich IP1 2EF. £2.50. There is access for people with disabilities.

#### **Wednesday 26th January 2022**

##### **Weird and Wonderful Wildlife in Ipswich**

Discover Ipswich's weird and wonderful wildlife with SWT Wild Learning Officer Lucy Shepherd. It is usual for us to think we have to venture into the countryside to see wildlife, but this is not necessarily so. In Ipswich's magnificent parks, and even in some of its more urban areas it is possible to see an amazing variety of wildlife. Lucy will show some of the items she has found and hopefully encourage you to go and look too.

#### **Wednesday 23rd February 2022**

##### **Puffins galore**

Skokholm Island off the Pembrokeshire coast has thousands of puffins, along with a multitude of other birds. In this talk Simon Hooton reflects on 50 years of visiting this special island and its wildlife. And of course a lot of pictures of puffins.

#### **Thursday 24th March 2022**

##### **Otters**

Meg Amsden, a member of the Suffolk Otter group will show a short film compiled from sightings of otters at different sites around the county, followed by a talk. The otters in Suffolk had suffered a near extinction in the 1960's and 70's. due to agricultural pesticides, but they are now found widely throughout the county. The Suffolk Otter Group is investigating the numbers, feeding habits and breeding successes of these charismatic animals.

#### **Thursday 28th April 2022**

##### **Wasps! Malicious or misunderstood?**

We all know what a wasp is. Or do we? Come along and find out more about this amazing group of insects from SWT's Hawk Honey, and see if they are your friend or your foe. There are far more types of wasp than the black and yellow ones which spoil our picnics.

This talk is preceded by a short AGM.



© Josie Hewitt

# Hammers at the ready!

**Lucy Shepherd** *Wild Learning Officer, Suffolk Wildlife Trust*

This year as you are going in and around Ipswich's green spaces and parks, you might expect to hear the rapid "tititic" of wrens calling, the sharp "tsip" of song thrushes, chaffinches calling "pink, pink" abruptly and great tits singing "tea-cher, tea-cher". Different to the usual hammering of the town's resident woodpeckers, this year you might also hear busy hammering and people hard at work, building nest boxes as Suffolk Wildlife Trust celebrates National Nest Box Week.

Every year, Suffolk Wildlife Trust hosts several nest box building sessions where we invite members of the public to join us to make a nest box for their own gardens and green spaces. This year, we are going bigger and better than ever before as we hope to make hundreds of nest boxes in one week, with sessions



*Lucy receiving the delivery of nest box kits from Martin of IWG*

every day across the county throughout the February half term.

So why are we upping our game this year and ambitiously trying to make

hundreds in just one week I hear you ask? Well, research shows that if just one person in every four takes up a cause, this can be enough to change the minds and behaviour of the majority. Imagine what we could achieve if that cause was nature: if a quarter of people in Suffolk created more space for wildlife to bring back what we've lost. That's our goal: to harness the collective energy and talents of our county and bring everyone together into a bigger, bolder movement for nature's recovery.

Whilst we know that large scale change and nature recovery will take more than an army of people across Ipswich and Suffolk making nest boxes, it is an excellent place to start and an activity that people can do with us to kick start rewilding their balconies, work car parks, allotments, school grounds or their own gardens.

Is there anything more rewarding than watching wildlife benefit from something that you have made by hand and a patch that was previously devoid of anything wild, flourish with life?



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Our efforts in Ipswich are often made possible by working with our friends in the town and 400 nest box kits have been lovingly and painstakingly prepared by Ipswich Wildlife Group, and we can't wait to turn these into nest boxes with you in a greenspace in Ipswich near you. Many thanks to IWG for all their hard work preparing the locally sourced, Ipswich timber from Bridge Wood and all of the kits for our team ahead of our ambitious feat.

See our [suffolkwildlifetrust.org](http://suffolkwildlifetrust.org) website for more details of sessions in Ipswich green spaces and across the county. We hope that you can join us.



*Hammer at the ready*

# The river through the town

**James Baker** *Manager, Greenways Countryside Project*

The Greenways Project has been involved with maintenance of the river path and corridor through Ipswich since the mid-1990s – initially working alongside the Gipping Valley Project (now long since disbanded). It is a matter of some debate exactly where the River Gipping becomes the River Orwell and there are many different locations and reasons offered!



**GREENWAYS**  
countryside project

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*The Greenways Countryside Project exists to protect and enhance the countryside, landscape and open space across an area of about 100 square kilometres in and around the town of Ipswich, and home to around one quarter of the population of Suffolk, for the benefit of wildlife and local people. The project relies on volunteers to complete much of its practical conservation work.*

*The Greenways Project is a very successful and well-established partnership between Ipswich Borough Council, Babergh District Council, East Suffolk Council and the local community.*

Generally, we take the tidal limit to be the point at which the name changes – Handford Sluice (next to West End Road bridge) and the big 'lock gates' next to Sainsbury's – as there are two courses of the river at this point.

Most of our effort today is spent on routine maintenance – cutting vegetation alongside the path and, sadly, picking up large volumes of litter!

It is very sad that so much of our time and that of our wonderful volunteers is spent simply picking up rubbish dropped by people as they use the river path or pass by in cars etc. Local litter superhero Jason Alexander (founder of the CIC UK Rubbish Walks) is an ever-present reminder of the seemingly endless need for litter picking, and we are extremely grateful for his unstinting efforts along the river path (and throughout the town and beyond!).



*Jason Alexander, founder of UK Rubbish Walks, collecting some of the one million cigarette butts he has amassed in Ipswich!*

We are also very grateful to all the other local people who go out of their way to help reduce the litter problem, including Ipswich Borough Councillor Carole Jones, who recently encouraged some local residents to join with our regular volunteers for a clear up between Riverside Road and Boss Hall industrial estate.



*Litter picking along the river's edge – IBC Councillor Carole Jones getting stuck in!*

Managing the path-side vegetation is also an endless task! This year (2021) after a cooler than usual early spring, the growth suddenly exploded as the weather warmed and produced huge plants in no time – a real challenge

for cutting. Our work along the river is of course limited by our very small staff and resource level – meaning that we only visit each stretch of the path roughly monthly through the growing season, with no time available in the winter months due to our habitat management commitments across our other 30+ nature reserves.

In addition, we carry out some habitat management work to maintain and hopefully increase the biodiversity of the river corridor. This is largely meadow management – mowing the wildflowers at the end of the flowering season and raking up the cuttings into habitat piles. Removing the cut material is vital for wildflower meadows as it helps to reduce nutrient levels in the soil (giving a chance to less vigorous plant species) and prevents the build-up of a layer of 'thatch' which can physically stop seeds germinating and establishing.

In recent years, we have started to look after the new Sproughton Nature Reserve for Ipswich Borough Council, as part of the redevelopment of the former sugar factory site. Considerable effort has been committed to this area, creating new ponds, pollarding riverside willows, removing accumulated rubbish, planting new hedges, trees and shrubs, constructing artificial otter holts and much more. In the coming months, we will be carrying out the largest single task we have ever undertaken – rebuilding the river path for almost a mile from the Borough boundary to the A14. More on this in future editions!



*Annual mow and rake of wildflower grassland areas*



# Wood Products, Mobile Sawmill and Sustainability!

Sustainability isn't such a popular buzzword as it once was, but the idea of minimising your environmental impact (or footprint) has to make sense at any time, but especially now as the world faces an unprecedented challenge to wildlife and humans, from the effects of a warming climate.

At Greenways we have always taken this very seriously and have tried to reduce our impact and ensure there is no wastage. One way we have been achieving this for the last few years has been through using as much as possible of our own wood, produced from the 'sustainable' management of our sites and other local parks and woodlands, run through our mobile sawmill to meet some of our timber needs.



*Greenways' mobile sawmill in action*

Most notably, working in partnership with Ipswich Wildlife Group (see related article on page 12) and Ipswich Borough Council Wildlife Team, we have been producing hundreds of 'wildlife homes' (bird boxes, hedgehog homes and insect hotels) from Corsican Pine trees felled in Bridge Wood in the Orwell Country Park. The non-native Corsican Pine 'crop' was planted around 50 years ago on what was previously an Ancient Woodland site, and the Wildlife Team is continuing to thin the pines to allow native broadleaf tree species to return to the Wood, bringing with

them all the species of insects and birds that have been lost due to the conifer plantation. Moreover, the timber that might previously have been bought to build these boxes would almost certainly have been imported from northern Europe or even further afield, with all the obvious environmental impact of the transport.



*300 bird box kits on their way to Suffolk Wildlife Trust for public events*

Similarly, whenever any oak or sweet chestnut trees are felled in the towns Parks (for safety or arboricultural reasons), we try to make use of these very durable timbers for more productive uses than simply being sold away for power station fuel. We recently installed two galvanised framed oak-clad planters at Nansen Road Baptist Church for Ipswich Borough Council, lovingly made by our volunteers.

*The planters are designed to last for decades, unlike most of those available commercially ...*

The planters are designed to last for decades (unlike most of those available commercially) with the design carefully thought through with local furniture designer and maker Tim Germaine. The galvanised steel frame is strong and very long-



*New local oak planters at Nansen Road Baptist Church*

lasting; the oak planks (kept dry by airflow around them with a recycled plastic board keeping the soil away from the wood) will last for many years and can be replaced if ever needed. The oak timber for these planters came from a tree that had to be felled for highway safety reasons on Belstead Road in the town (less than 3 miles away).

The set of 50 or more steps we built to access the steep end of the 'Tump' at Ravenswood a couple of years ago were all made from our own local oak timber, from trees from Chantry Park and Belstead Road.



*Oak steps up the 'Tump' at Ravenswood*

## Malcolm Road wildlife areas

Following the completion of a new housing development in the Priory Heath area by Ipswich Borough Council a few years ago, small areas of open space were retained as wildlife mitigation areas to support species on site as well as linking to the adjacent railway – an excellent ‘wildlife corridor’.

In order to maximise the wildlife value of the areas, Greenways presented a proposal to the Council’s Area Housing Panel to improve the areas by planting over 600 new native hedge plants; installing log habitat piles for



*Scouts from the 32nd Ipswich Group planting the hedge*

reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates; clearing rubbish; creating small holes under the fence to connect species with the railway corridor; installing an information board, and seeding some new wildflower patches. The Panel supported the proposal and made finances available for the work to go ahead.

Most of the new hedge plants were planted during National Tree Week, including a public planting day which included help from the 32nd Ipswich Scouts, alongside local people and our regular volunteers. The areas are small (less than an acre in total), but

as is often the case, location can make them more significant, and that is true here thanks to the railway corridor adjacent.

As well as the grassland, there are patches of gorse and scrub, larger trees and small areas of bare ground – ideal for many heathland invertebrates. The new site information panel will be installed in due course and will feature several species likely to be seen in the area, including common lizards, house sparrows, hedgehogs and red admiral butterflies.



*IBC Councillors Sarah Barber and Dan Maguire with Housing officer Mark Kinlan, helping with the hedge planting*



*Log habitat piles for reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates*

## Limes Pond, Rushmere St Andrew

**‘The Limes’ pond at Rushmere St Andrew is probably the smallest site that we look after!**

That said, ponds always have a disproportionate value for wildlife, with water being the common need for almost all species of wildlife! For the last three years we have been carrying out simple maintenance tasks at the pond for Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council, who are responsible for it. The pond was dredged several years ago and this greatly increased its value for a wider range of species. At the same time, local people were discouraged from feeding ducks at the pond, as the inevitable waste (uneaten food and duck poo!) has a serious adverse effect on the water quality and thus other wildlife in the pond. Just like with Chestnut Pond, just 400m to the east, a massive reduction in duck feeding and thus in the duck population, has hugely increased the range of other species using the pond, including water beetles, dragonfly nymphs and toads.

Our work each year is centred around controlling the spread of Canadian pondweed – a good oxygenating plant, but a non-native species which grows very quickly and can easily dominate the habitat. We remove about half of the weed each September (generally agreed to be the least damaging time to work on ponds), letting it drain beside the pond to allow aquatic life to return to the pond, before being moved into habitat piles. We also remove rubbish from the pond and its surroundings and occasionally cut back some of the trees and shrubs hanging over the pond to reduce shading and leaf-drop.

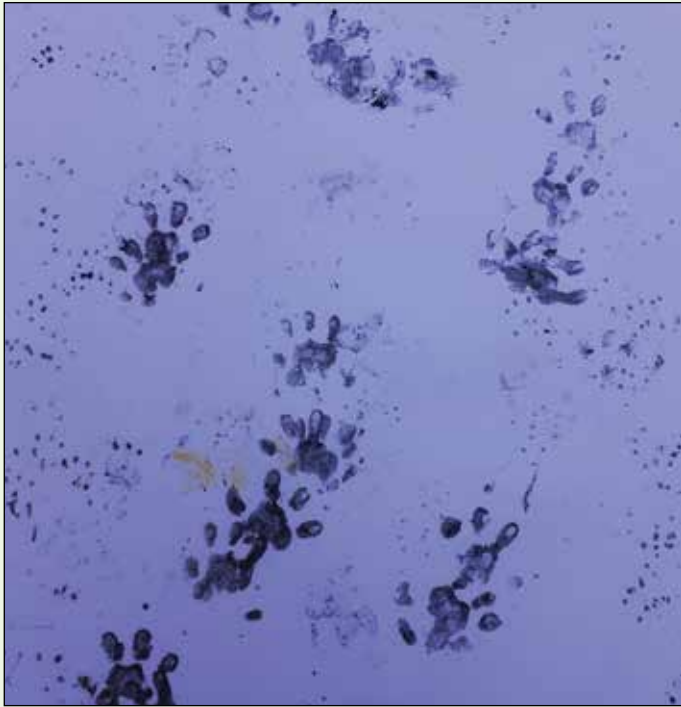


*Use of a boat to remove invasive Canadian pondweed*

# Holywells Park Orchard Ramblings

**Yvonne and Andy** *Friends of Holywells Park*

It's been over 20 months since the Friends of Holywells Park have been able to host an event in the orchard in the Park. In October, we were thrilled to be able to hold Apple Day - Peared Down!



*Hedgehog prints in the tracking tunnel*

Despite the drizzly weather, the community turned out to support us and we were really heartened by all the wonderful comments about how good it was to be at an event again. We welcomed friends, old and new and chatted with some young people who had attended our events when they were children. They were now bringing their own little ones to the orchard! Hopefully, in 2022, we will

be able to run more events.

Over the winter months, the main task of the 'Friends' will be to prune the fruit trees. During January and February, 2021, due to the pandemic, we were unable to carry out this task because of 'lockdown' restrictions. The autumn harvest was poor. Could this be due to the weather conditions or the fact that the trees had not had their

annual prune? Or, perhaps it's because we weren't able to Wassail them in January! Let's hope for a better harvest in 2022!

Decomposers, such as earthworms, have been busy at work during the Autumn months, breaking down the multitude of leaves that have fallen. This hidden army of recyclers are eco-system engineers. It is calculated that they can move up to 15 tonnes of soil per acre, aerating the soil and bringing nutrients to the surface. Earthworms themselves are a good source of food for native mammals such as foxes, moles, hedgehogs, birds and amphibians.

fallen or had to be felled in the orchard. This is due to damage, decay or simply, that they were old trees. It is vitally important that, where possible, some of the old trees' lower trunks have been left as dead standing wood, habitat for many insects, birds and fungi. When an old Maple split in two, it was observed that the branches looked like 'Stick Man' from the childrens' book of the same name. The Wednesday Work Party set to work to install the Stick Man on the woodland path, creating an amusing and educational feature. Look out for him next time you're in the orchard.

## **Hedgehogs detected**

Recently, while surveying the orchard with footprint tracking tunnels, one of our partner groups detected that hedgehogs were present. This is a first for this area of the park, so really exciting news, especially considering that hedgehog numbers have been in rapid decline over recent years.

## **Stick Man discovered**

Over the past few months, a number of trees have



## **Friends of Holywells Park**

*The Group aims to work in partnership with Ipswich Borough Council to improve and promote the Park.*

Contact: [fohpi@ipswich.gov.uk](mailto:fohpi@ipswich.gov.uk)

[www.holywellspark.org.uk](http://www.holywellspark.org.uk)

[facebook.com/holywellsparkipswich](https://www.facebook.com/holywellsparkipswich)



*Stick Man on display*



*Spot the Stick Man*

# 'Barnies' boxing clever

**Colin Hullis** *Ipswich Wildlife Group*

As Covid restrictions have been relaxed during the last year, the IWG Wildlife Homes volunteers (known as 'The Barnies'), have been hard at work in the barn workshop at Thorington Hall making box kits for hedgehogs, birds and bugs from mostly recycled or home grown timber.

It seems that our reputation for producing high quality work is spreading, as we have also been kept busy fulfilling specific orders for quantities of boxes for Swifts, Tits, Owls and Dormice.

We have fulfilled an order from Suffolk Wildlife Trust to produce 400 Tit box kits. The wood for these has come from Corsican Pine trees felled by Ipswich Borough Council arboricultural staff in Bridge Wood reserve. The seven 3-metre long trunks were cut on site by the Greenways Countryside Project's mobile saw mill which produced planks 150mm wide by 18mm thick. 'Barnie' Martin



*What kits for 100 boxes looks like*

Cant has worked out that to make the kits, 130 planks were used, 2,800 saw cuts were made and 4,800 holes drilled. All very satisfying knowing that the material was sourced locally, has travelled a very short distance and that IWG volunteers have played a major part in a valuable conservation project.

Martin has also made detailed calculations for other commissions carried out during the year. We were asked to make 20 complete Dormouse boxes to be sited in local woodlands. These were made out of a sheet of 8ft x 4ft marine plywood that needed 240 saw cuts, 100 holes drilled, 350 nails and 40 screws, 25ft of wire to hold the removable roof in place and 30ft of wood battens.

We also had another order from Suffolk Wildlife Trust to make 24 complete Swift boxes. These also were cut out of three 8ft x 4ft marine plywood sheets that needed 204 saw cuts, 264 holes drilled and 504 screws used. The majority of these boxes have been put up on the 'One' educational building along Scrivener Drive, Pinewood.

Many congratulations to the regular 'Barnies', Martin, Andy, Derek, Peter and Colin and thanks to those who lend a hand now and again. Keep up the good work fellas.

Details of the Friday Wildlife Homes barn work party are in 'Regular Events' on page 24.



Secretary Leila Matata

iwg@wildipswich.org www.wildipswich.org  
Facebook@IpswichWildlifeGroup

*Ipswich Wildlife Group is a registered charity, relying entirely on volunteers, that promotes interest in, and conservation of, wildlife and habitats in and around Ipswich.*



*The barnies at a regular boxing session.*



*Tit box, Swift box and box for Dormouse*

# Back in the great outdoors

**Stephen Corley** *Chairman Portal Woodlands Conservation Group*

**Hooray!! Our first volunteer work morning since lockdown, took place in August. We did not get a huge number of people but all were very enthusiastic to get stuck in.**

Over the following months we have had a steady flow of new members joining. With coronavirus still very much with us, we have been taking precautions to help stop the spread. Volunteers brought their own gloves and refreshments, and tools where possible. Although inconvenient, at least it has been fantastic to be back in the great outdoors and working together in relative normality. Unfortunately, we will have to wait quite a few more months before we return to providing cake and refreshments.

We have been focusing on clearing overgrown foliage from the paths which had become very narrow in some places. Also, clearing around the wartime fuel tanks - these are 4 buried 12,000 gallon tanks that stored aviation fuel for the aircraft that flew from Martlesham Heath airfield. The information board next to the tanks provides much more information. We also planted a varied selection of tree saplings and shrubs that people in the local area had kindly donated over the past couple of years. We welcome more donations of wildlife-friendly plants suitable for hedging.

We have had some wildlife reports of interest. Muntjac deer have been seen around dusk and several grass snakes in the pond area. We were particularly pleased that great crested newts have been found in the pond, confirming their continued annual return for breeding. Not only are these a rare and protected species, but their presence suggests that we have a good quality habitat. Butterfly species have included speckled wood, orange tip, peacock, ringlet, large white, small white, red admiral, gatekeeper and meadow brown. Often unrecognised, being so different from its spring form, the bright red berries of the lords and ladies plant stood out in the green undergrowth.

The autumn season changed the woodlands. A keen eye spotted fungi bursting out - sulphur tuft and chicken of the woods creating impressive displays. Also, the oakmoss lichen on tree trunks and branches growing seaweed-like shapes. Squirrels and jays were seen foraging for acorns to stash for the winter.

As we move into the New Year, we hope that you get a chance to get out into the woods to enjoy the natural world. If you do, please let us know if you see any interesting flora and fauna. Whatever you do, we wish you a healthy and happy 2022.



© J Cook

*An impressive display of sulphur tuft fungus*



## Portal Woodlands Conservation Group

Enquiries: Martlesham Parish Council  
01473 612632 [pwcg.onesuffolk.net](mailto:pwcg.onesuffolk.net)  
or email [pwcg.martlesham@gmail.com](mailto:pwcg.martlesham@gmail.com)  
*The PORTAL WOODLANDS CONSERVATION GROUP is dedicated to conserving the woodlands west of the Suffolk Police HQ and alongside the A1214 encouraging the local wildlife to thrive while preserving historical sites of interest and inspiring people to enjoy the nature surrounding them. Volunteers meet each month to work on a variety of projects and everybody is welcome to join this friendly group. All required training and necessary tools are provided.*

### Volunteer Work Mornings

(all ages welcome - no need to book) Meet at the Education Area from 10.00am – Noon.

Saturday 15th January, Sunday 20th February,  
Saturday 19th March, Sunday 24th April.

*Please bring your own gloves, refreshments and, if possible, tools. Please visit [www.pwcg.onesuffolk.net/volunteer-work-mornings/](http://www.pwcg.onesuffolk.net/volunteer-work-mornings/) for full details of how we are operating our volunteer work mornings post-covid. For more details of the Group's events, and to check for date changes, please go to: [www.pwcg.onesuffolk.net/](http://www.pwcg.onesuffolk.net/) or join our members' Facebook Group by messaging Duncan Sweeting.*



© S. Corley

*Volunteers clearing the pathways*



© S. Corley

*Willing hands planting tree saplings*

# In and near Christchurch Park...

**Reg Snook** *Friends of Christchurch Park*

The morning after Guy Fawkes' dawned clear, sunny and quite cold, redwings and a few fieldfares were flying down towards Christchurch Park. The air seemed still rather thick with the smell of bonfires and expensive fireworks. I suppose that many of my neighbours had thought that the fifth of November was a good opportunity to burn some garden rubbish.



## Friends of Christchurch Park

Secretary: Sylvia Patsalides 07971 467042  
Membership Secretary: Robert Fairchild  
01473 254255

[www.focp.org.uk](http://www.focp.org.uk) Follow us on Facebook@Christchurch Park and Twitter@ChristchurchPk

*The sole purpose of the Friends Group is to help look after the Park for the public good, and to promote its welfare. Anyone who shares this aim is welcome to join. For a small annual fee of £10 you can join in Friends activities all year round, including Illustrated talks and discussions, Guided Park walks and Practical conservation work. You will also receive an informal seasonal newsletter.*

The Park's jays have been particularly busy this autumn; it must have been a good year for acorns. No doubt in the spring my garden will grow small oak trees as well as potatoes and onions! The jays seem manic,



© Colin Hillis

*Everybody loves waxwings - beautiful winter visitors*

even burying acorns in the pots where I plant tête a tête daffodils and iris reticulata. Still, despite their raucous cries, jays are the prettiest of crows. Speaking of crows, our resident male crow – I have known him for a number of years now – spends a lot of time on my TV aerial. There he keeps a steady eye on a pair of magpies. He does not like them and they are wary of him. Occasionally, he coughs a croak and shudders his wings. Perhaps because of his age he is a little bit cantankerous or he might be just plain grumpy.

Every morning herring gulls from the town centre and a few black-backed gulls which have not migrated make their way to the fields around Westerfield and Tuddenham. Just before dusk they return. Is there not enough junk food in Ipswich these days for them? There was a time when it was perilous to hold an ice cream or a chip in your hand if these large gulls were around. How

quickly birds adapt to new feeding methods.

As I sit in my garden near to the Park on this bright November morning, the thirty or so feral pigeons that raid my bird-feeders will soon have to keep an eye out for our Park's resident female sparrowhawk. She is a very large bird with a keen eye and keeps the population of feral pigeons down. As soon as she appears over Westerfield Road, the ferals rise and scatter over the nearby gardens. She rarely fails to catch one. Yesterday a sea eagle drifted over our Park, very high in the sky but there was no mistaking this, nowadays, regular visitor. Surreal really. The local feral pigeons do not panic when a buzzard appears but the old crow immediately takes umbrage. In fact this corvid likes no other bird really. What a grumpy crow he is.

Nearly every night a dog fox jumps over my fence into my garden, a six-foot clearance being nothing to him. He searches amongst my compost heap sometimes snapping at a long-tailed field mouse but I don't mind this visitor from the Park – there are no longer grey squirrels in my garden! This handsome fox catches squirrels

with ease and aplomb, my bird-feeders are safe.

Philip Murphy held a Friends' bird walk in the Park at the end of October, a welcome resumption of some FoCP activity after the Covid lockdowns. Perhaps the weather forecast and lack of publicity kept the numbers of attendees down but before the rain arrived, Philip pointed out the wildfowl on the Wilderness Pond. In the last couple of years little grebes have successfully nested in the vegetation on the edge of the pond and three grebes were seen during Philip's walk, one grebe preening on a fallen log. I found that unusual because I have never seen a grebe on a log before! Philip also pointed out five ring-necked parakeets (there used to be three!). Ominous or what?

So the year is drawing to a close which means fieldfares, redwings and, with luck, waxwings. Everybody loves waxwings. If it is cold enough these beautiful winter visitors will arrive to feed on our garden berries. It has been a good year for berries with lots of hawthorn, and in my garden, berberis and cotoneaster berries. So here's hoping!



© Reg Snook

*Grumpy crow*

# Ipswich's County Geodiversity Sites

Caroline Markham *GeoSuffolk*

GeoSuffolk used the early summer of 2021 to monitor County Geodiversity Sites (CGS) in our town. The four Ipswich CGS include parts of Holywells Park and Christchurch Park, the Pocket Park sarsen stones, and in the Bridge Wood area of Orwell Country Park.

Springs and water features are a notable feature of our Ipswich parks, giving them a distinctive landscape and enhancing their biodiversity. Much of the town sits on London Clay (54 million years old, Eocene) and Red Crag (2½ million years old, Pliocene). The permeable Red Crag holds water, which gushes out as springs where it meets the impermeable London Clay below. Thus Holywells Park and Christchurch Park have a constant and plentiful supply of natural water for their various lakes, ponds and canals, issuing from the Red Crag/London Clay junction.

Holywells Park CGS includes the spring-fed stream which emerges from near Nacton Road in the east of the park. When GeoSuffolk visited in July this year we found fragments of Red Crag fossil shells in the water -evidence of its origin in the Crag. In Christchurch Park the main area of CGS designation is immediately to the north of the Wilderness Pond where



*Vegetation change at the Red Crag/London Clay junction in Christchurch Park*

the spring which feeds the pond appears. There are many seepages here making the area on the east of the path quite boggy. In very dry weather such as in July 2018 the junction between the London Clay and the Red Crag shows clearly in the grass on the steep 'toboggan' slope just above this area. Erosion by spring water from the Red Crag has created the attractive slopes and valleys of these two parks whereas in Bridge Wood CGS the London Clay junction has given rise to a much more spectacular landscape. Here, ground descends from 35m to sea level (the Orwell

Estuary) over a distance of about 250m in a series of spectacular landslides created by undercutting by the River Orwell and lubrication by ground water issuing from the sands and gravels on top of the London Clay.

Sarsen stones are the other distinctive Ipswich geological feature. These extremely hard siliceous stones originate in Eocene deposits beneath the London Clay and have occasionally been dredged out of the River Orwell. Those in Christchurch Park rockery are believed to be from the 19thC excavations for the dock



*GeoSuffolk promotes the understanding and appreciation of the landscape and geology of Suffolk*  
– see [www.geosuffolk.co.uk](http://www.geosuffolk.co.uk)  
and contact us on [caroline.markham1@btinternet.com](mailto:caroline.markham1@btinternet.com)

and those in the Pocket Park beside the River Gipping were dredged out of the river in the 1970s. These are particularly large, fine specimens and were arranged into their present positions by local sculptor Bernard Reynolds.



*The two large sarsen stones in the Pocket Park*

We were pleased to report Holywells Park CGS, Christchurch Park CGS and Bridgewood CGS in 'Good' condition and have given this information to the Suffolk Biodiversity Record Centre and Ipswich Borough Council. Thank you to everyone who looks after them so well. The sarsens at Pocket Park have been recorded as 'Good declining' due to the irreversible graffiti damage to the surfaces of the two largest stones. For more detail on this see 'The Sarsen stones on the river path' by Bob Markham in the Ipswich Society Newsletter July 2021.

# You don't believe in climate change?

**Julian Dowding** Secretary, Suffolk Butterfly Conservation

Holly Blues are still on the wing as I write in November. I watched two females laying eggs on Ivy flowers a week ago. You don't believe in climate change?

winter as a caterpillar before emerging as a butterfly the following year, warm conditions encourage the caterpillars to quickly turn into a butterfly by September and October."

So, it's important to keep recording species and send them to our County Recorder, James Corton. In this way we can monitor populations and try and address concerns. James' details can be found on the Suffolk Butterfly Conservation website. It's also important to try and do your bit for conservation.

Whilst it's clear that climate change is affecting UK species, it's also clear that habitat loss still has a huge negative impact. Please therefore get involved with conservation work parties and support groups like Greenways, IBC Wildlife and Education Rangers and others like Suffolk Butterfly Conservation.

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*... for those of you who are BC members we also hope to be giving away Buckthorn bushes ...*

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Right now, we are hoping for consent to begin work again at Purdis Heath SSSI on the outskirts of Ipswich. The work is to improve habitat for Silver-studded Blue (SSB) butterflies. We've been unable to work there for over three years with a result that the good habitat is now threatened by encroaching gorse and birch scrub. We hope to have work parties to address the problem soon and will be looking for volunteers to help. Please contact me through the website if you are interested. Your input would be greatly appreciated.

In other news, two of our members have begun a



Chalkhill Blue - a wonderful project for Suffolk

wonderful project to increase habitat for Chalkhill Blue (CHB) in the county. Until relatively recently, the butterfly was absent from the Suffolk list but a few years ago a small population was discovered in the west of the county on private land with limited access. Thus, it's possible that the species has always been here but gone unnoticed. The new project aims to provide areas deeper into Suffolk, by planting the larval foodplant of CHB (which is Horseshoe Vetch) on suitable areas. Already, plants have been introduced on a sunny aspect of a reservoir bank not far from the existing colony.

It's not all bad news is it! We might be fearful at times about the effects of habitat loss and climate change but in my humble view, I believe

we should use our concerns to motivate us to do whatever we can to try and improve things. We hope to run more butterfly and moth events in 2022. You'll find details of this on our website [www.suffolkbutterflies.org.uk](http://www.suffolkbutterflies.org.uk) in the New Year. Of course, much depends on what's happening with the coronavirus plague, but if things go well, we'd love to see you at one of these.

Finally, for those of you who are BC members, we also hope to be giving away Buckthorn bushes. Planting one or two of these almost guarantees you will be visited by the lovely Brimstone in spring and summer. The females are known to seek out the bush to lay their eggs upon. Again, details will be available on our website.



## Butterfly Conservation

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Membership Secretary  
01379 643665

[www.suffolkbutterflies.org.uk](http://www.suffolkbutterflies.org.uk)  
email: [butterflies@sns.org.uk](mailto:butterflies@sns.org.uk)

*Butterfly Conservation is dedicated to saving wild butterflies, moths and their habitats throughout the UK. All Butterfly Conservation members who live in Suffolk are automatically members of the branch and receive our newsletter, the Suffolk Argus, three times a year. The Suffolk branch is run by volunteers and we would be very pleased to hear from you if you would like to get involved.*

Wall Brown is now all but extinct in Suffolk. The remaining population is mainly around SWT Carlton Marshes. As a boy, I used to find the caterpillars across Ipswich, and in the late 1990's, they were found at Sidegate Lane allotments. People studying this decline have come to a conclusion as put forward in an article from Dorset butterflies' website: "The disappearance of the Wall Brown (*Lasiommata megera*) from swathes of southern England has mystified conservationists for two decades but new evidence suggests that the butterfly has seen a serious decline (-86% since 1976) because warmer weather is causing generations to hatch out too late in the year to survive.

In recent years, instead of the offspring of the wall butterflies found flying in July and August spending



# Warming winter work

**Ann Havard** *Friends of Belstead Brook Park*



*Raking in Belstead Meadows*

At our work party in August there were eight of us doing a very summery job – raking the meadow in Belstead Meadows. It never ceases to amaze me that this task would have been crucial in days gone by in order to provide food for livestock during the winter months. Our ancestors must have been a tough old bunch as this is always a back breaking job. Unfortunately, we have no livestock to feed on our reserves, so the vegetation gets put into big heaps which various insects and amphibians can use to keep warm during the winter. The heaps eventually just rot down and doing this saves us trying to cart it off site.

In September we were in Stoke Park Wood doing some more raking in the meadow area of this varied Local Nature Reserve. We also went around the paths in the woodland area making sure they were passable. The rain and warm weather meant that this path

gets overgrown quite quickly with brambles so we did a bit of path cutting so people didn't get entangled in the thorny branches.

Guess what we did in October? Yes, more meadow raking, this time in Millennium Wood – it isn't all woodland! We even found one of the toads that live here and put him somewhere safe.

Fortunately we had a change of task in November as it was the usual Mega bash No.1. Always a good day out and with about 20 folk from Ipswich Wildlife Group, Greenways Project and others we got a good amount of work done. It was a day of woodland management work in both Spring Wood and Millennium Wood. Coppicing (taking the mainly hazel trees down to stump level) is always a warming winter job, as sawing gets the blood pumping and also the muscles aching the next day!



*A resident of Millennium Wood*

One hazel stool had over 60 smaller trunks that had to be cut out – this may be a record for Spring Wood apparently! The cut material is not wasted as the good, straight 8 foot lengths are used as bean poles. Shorter 6 and 4 foot lengths can also be used around the garden for staking and used for putting fleece over vegetables to protect them from pigeons. The top bits with smaller twiggy branches can be used as pea sticks. All these woodland products are available to buy from Ipswich Wildlife Group so if you are interested in having a locally grown bean pole rather than a bamboo one imported from China, head over to their website: [www.wildipswich.org](http://www.wildipswich.org) or their Facebook page.



## Friends of Belstead Brook Park

[www.wildipswich.org](http://www.wildipswich.org)  
Email: [fobbp@wildipswich.org](mailto:fobbp@wildipswich.org)  
*Friends of Belstead Brook Park (FoBBP) was set up in 2002 to help look after the 250 acres of informal country park on the south-western fringe of Ipswich. The group runs practical work parties, helps raise funds for improvements and acts as 'eyes and ears', passing information back to the Greenways Project.*

They can also supply boxes for birds, bugs, bats and hedgehogs with all the proceeds going to the IWG.



*More raking in Stoke Park Wood*



*A warming winter job at the megabash*

# New Year roundup

**Chris Courtney** *Chair Suffolk Bird Group*

As for everyone, the past year has delivered huge challenges, I am pleased to report that SBG has, thanks to the dedication of our Council, and the support of our members, emerged even stronger than before.

one third of UK regularly occurring species are now red listed.

Suffolk Bird Group have continued to work alongside Suffolk Wildlife Trust to help restore the fortunes of at least one of the above, with our Save Our Suffolk Swifts project. Swifts have declined by 58% since 1995 and one major factor has been the loss of nest sites as buildings are modernised. Consequently, I am pleased to report that over the past 12 months, SOS Swifts have been responsible for some 800 new swift boxes, installed throughout Suffolk, most with call systems. During this period all new boxes with swift pairs taking up residency have included call systems, clearly demonstrating how a call system advertises to passing swifts, the availability of a new 'des res'.

In addition to putting up nest boxes we are also looking for swift trackers to report on screaming parties and nesting sites, so you think you could help please do get in touch. See [www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/swifts](http://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/swifts) for further details.

Other projects we are currently involved with includes an initiative in Ipswich being led by The Green Light Trust on Rushmere Heath. In consultation with our Projects Officer, Chris Keeling, the project's aim is to improve the mosaic of heather and acid grassland.



*Red-listed common swift*

It is intended to achieve this by means of a managed removal of some gorse and scrub, while acknowledging the value of scrub itself, which can provide a living fence around more vulnerable habitats, thereby creating safe areas for butterflies and reptiles.

The first phase postponed from 2020 due to Covid, is to establish baseline surveys used to inform the subsequent management plan. If you'd like to get involved with bird surveys, butterfly transects or moth-trapping evenings please email Peter Foster at [peter@greenlighttrust.org](mailto:peter@greenlighttrust.org) and Suffolk Bird Group Dave Pearsons at [davepearsons204@btinternet.com](mailto:davepearsons204@btinternet.com) and Chris Keeling at [chris.keeling@icloud.com](mailto:chris.keeling@icloud.com)

Two further projects we are running during 2022 - First is for the benefit of another red-listed species, the ringed plover. For this species increasing human disturbance (and dogs), has significantly

impacted their breeding success for many years. We are initiating a pilot project to trial the use of fencing during the breeding season at several sites on the river Stour.

Second, once again postponed by Covid, we will be continuing the second season of our Rookery Survey, (begun in 2019), with data recording and mapping facilities, provided by Martin Sanford through the Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service. This survey is undertaken during late winter and early spring as birds return to their breeding colonies and before leaf burst makes the task too difficult. It can be a great way to get out with a sense of purpose to explore different parts of Suffolk although keeping a weather-eye out for rookeries.

For further details on these and other projects and surveys see our website [www.suffolkbirdgroup.org](http://www.suffolkbirdgroup.org).

**Suffolk Bird Group**  
Enquiries:  
[info@suffolkbirdgroup.org](mailto:info@suffolkbirdgroup.org)  
[www.suffolkbirdgroup.org](http://www.suffolkbirdgroup.org)  
Twitter: [suffolkbirds1](https://twitter.com/suffolkbirds1)  
SBG is the Group for people interested in the birds of Suffolk, providing a network and a voice for birdwatchers in the county.

We remain a group more than 400 strong, and by virtue of on-line streaming were able to continue our indoor talks with healthy numbers of attendees by reaching an audience beyond our membership. Following this success, we are planning to continue future talks both face to face and live streamed online.

As I write this, the latest report on UK Birds of Conservation Concern has just hit my inbox, sadly placing 70 of the 245 regularly occurring UK species onto the Red List. This means almost twice the number of UK species are now threatened with extinction in comparison to the report's first incarnation 25 years ago. Those newly added, include several previously common and familiar species for the first time such as house martin, greenfinch and swift. Altogether approaching



*Ringed plover suffer from human disturbance*



*House martin now on the red list*

# Good work by the volunteer work parties

**Kaye Roberts** *Secretary, Friends of the Dales*

The work party in September comprised two volunteers only who carried out some strimming work and removal of bramble and nettles from the path edges. The day was very hot and sunny and a Red Admiral and a few Speckled Wood were seen but not much else. IBC Rangers were busy putting in further posts for the two newly-created circular walks.

The annual cutting of the wildflower meadow and other areas was the major job for the October work party with a good number of volunteers present to assist with the raking of the vegetation cut by IBC Ranger Sam Chamberlin. Many Field Voles were in evidence, either scurrying for safety or burrowing deeper into the cut grass. As the wildflower area is now more



© Matt Gamham

*Brambling*

mature, it may possibly be more favourable for these animals. Sam also spotted two wasp spider nests in the meadow.

Those remaining at lunchtime were rewarded when a party of approximately 15 Bramblings descended into trees bordering the meadow.

Another well-attended work party took place in November and more essential cutting and clearing of dead vegetation was achieved, including the 'snake meadow', the bluebell area near the top log circle and behind the two small ponds. These works should enable new growth to emerge healthily in the spring. IBC Rangers checked that all the new waymarker posts were secure.



© Jan Cavston

*Autumn colours in the Dales*



## Friends of the Dales

The Dales is a small Local Nature Reserve situated off Dales Road in Ipswich.

For details of the Friends Group please contact secretary Kaye Roberts [kayefotdsec@virginmedia.com](mailto:kayefotdsec@virginmedia.com) or find us on Facebook by searching Friends of the Dales

While the work party was taking place, IBC facilitated a litter pick by the enthusiastic children from the local Montessori school.

On the 25th August whilst undergoing routine site maintenance work at the Dales, we decided to stop for lunch by the artificial football pitch. The Dales has a wonderfully structured wealth of woodland, mature bramble, scrub and wildflowers. Woodland areas are lined with flowering climbers.

It was a perfect moment to observe a flowering cascade of white bryony which was teeming with insects obtaining nectar from the flowers. A stand-out species was a small, striking, black and white bee which was busy visiting the flowers, this was *Lasioglossum sexnotatum*, the Ashy Furrow Bee. It is known that this species has a stronghold in urban Ipswich, elsewhere very rare on the British mainland. Nesting habits indicate the species favouring excavating nesting chambers in sandy-loamy soil close to shrubs and trees.

The Dales has exposed sandy soil which the species could be using as nest sites and bordering gardens with exposed sandy soil would also be favourable. The Ashy Furrow Bee is certainly a species that we should keep a close eye on and an important record for the site.

*Sam Chamberlin, Ipswich Borough Council Ranger*

© Sam Chamberlin



# Maybe its cold outside

**Matt Garnham** Ipswich Borough Council Wildlife Team

As the colder/shorter days draw in, some creatures find refuge in sheds and other cool places out of the cold during the winter months. Like a long sleep, many creatures lower their heart rate and body temperature to save energy.

These are some of the creatures encountered in our Ranger tool-sheds last autumn.

- **Moths – Herald and Buttoned Snout**

They overwinter as an adult moth, sheltering in outhouses, cellars, ruined buildings and caves. They tend to rest on ceilings, underneath ledges or high up on walls but can be quite hard to spot with camouflage matching dead leaves.



Herald moth

To deter predators such as mice, they are known to rub their wings together to create a high pitched sound, and if that fails, will open their wings revealing their large Ocelli (eyespot).



Comma butterfly

- **Spiders – house spiders and cellar spiders**

Several species of spider live indoors all year round, normally hiding in the corners waiting for unlucky prey to fall into their trap.

The fragile looking cellar spiders often known as a daddy long-legs are surprisingly efficient predators that prey upon other spiders and will even tackle



Cellar spider

their significantly bulkier cousins, house spiders and false widows.

- **Bees and wasps**

In social bees and wasps, only the queens survive during the winter. Queen bees burrow beneath the ground or in areas of loose soil such as compost heaps. Queen wasps and hornets find a safe place in hollows to hibernate and hunker down. In order to survive cold conditions these tiny insects produce a kind of 'anti-freeze' by consuming fermented sugars (ie rotten fruit) which they circulate throughout their body to prevent ice crystals forming in their cells.



- **Mammals – mice, hedgehogs**

Sheds can be good places for mammals. Mice can build their nest within an old boot and will regularly come into the house, sometimes chewing up old paper and fabric to make a cosy nest. Hedgehogs typically would build their winter nest in thorny vegetation but have found a new niche under garden sheds.



- **Butterflies – Peacocks, commas and small tortoisellls**

Peacock butterflies are one of five common butterflies that hibernate in the UK as an adult. They can be found in the bark of rotten trees, log piles, garden sheds and our homes.



**IPSWICH**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Wildlife Rangers

Office : 01473 433998  
park.rangers@ipswich.gov.uk  
Stable Block, Holywells Park,  
Cliff Lane, Ipswich IP3 0PG

*The Wildlife & Education Rangers are responsible for the management of wildlife areas within the town's parks and other green spaces. As well as carrying out practical management, the team runs an events programme and works with many local schools to engage and inspire the public about the wildlife Ipswich has to offer.*

# Wildfowl over the border

**Tim Kenny** *Leader, RSPB Ipswich Group*



© Colin Hillis

*Lovely avocets on the river Alde*

Firstly, you may be wondering what I'm still doing here. My attempts to step down as leader of the local group of the RSPB, as reported in previous issues of this august publication, have been thwarted by a lack of volunteers to replace me. It was looking a stark choice, as RSPB local groups can only continue without a leader for a period of twelve months, so I have agreed to stay on as leader until such time as a suitable replacement comes forward. If that's you, please do get in touch.

Meanwhile we have restarted post-Covid with indoor meetings, held in a suitably Covid-safe environment, but as I write this there is a new variant doing the rounds and there is no guarantee we won't be subject to further restriction in the coming winter months. Any changes will be broadcast on our website [www.rspb.org.uk/groups/ipswich](http://www.rspb.org.uk/groups/ipswich) so make sure you stay tuned to that. This is where you will also find details of our 2022 programme of indoor and outdoor meetings.

The fresh air is great for flushing away unwanted particles although I must admit that leading a walk at the River Alde at Iken, with the worst cold I've had for many a long year, was somewhat of a challenge. Plenty of wading birds were to be seen, amongst them the lovely avocet, which I'm pleased to say seems to be increasing around our coast. Not bad for a species that only recolonised the UK in 1947, with the single pair at Minsmere.

Our November outdoor meeting saw us

crossing the border into Essex. Thankfully all of us had our documents in order, and we enjoyed a few hours in a biting northerly wind at Abberton Reservoir. The area has become home to three species of egret (cattle, little and great white) of which we only missed out on the cattle egret – as Meatloaf says, two out of three ain't bad. There were plenty of wildfowl highlights too; the north wind had blown in a trio of Bewick's swans, at the end of a two month migration from the Siberian tundra. Winter ducks such as goldeneye and goosander were also to be found along with huge flocks of tufted ducks and pochards, with a few of the rarer red-crested pochard amongst them.

I very much hope to see some of you very soon on some of our walks with the Ipswich Local Group.



© Tim Kenny

*Bewick's swans with teal, Abberton Reservoir,*



**giving nature a home**

### Ipswich Local Group

Group Leader Tim Kenny  
Tel 01394 809236  
[ipswichrspblocalgroup@yahoo.com](mailto:ipswichrspblocalgroup@yahoo.com)  
[www.rspb.org.uk/groups/ipswich](http://www.rspb.org.uk/groups/ipswich)

*Ipswich RSPB Local Group is for everyone interested in birds and other wildlife in the Ipswich area and beyond. Come along to our indoor talks, held monthly between September to April at Rushmere St Andrew Church Hall, get out and experience nature first hand on one of our regular field meetings. Three times a year you will receive the 'Orwell Observer' magazine. Membership costs £3 per year (£1 for Juniors). For more information see the Events Diary in this magazine, visit our website or email as per details above.*

# Snippets

## Clopton Red - Suffolk born and bred

James Baker with a splendid Clopton Red apple from one of the trees in the community orchard in Kiln Meadow. It is a dessert apple with a delicate flavour, raised at Wickhambrook Nurseries in 1946. The meadow is in the Pinewood/Belstead area of Ipswich and can be reached from Bobbits Lane or Marbled White Drive.

There are most of the Suffolk fruit varieties represented in the orchard here, all planted by Greenways volunteers in the last few years.



## Always a privilege to come across a grass snake.

This fine specimen was seen by a group of IWG members basking in the autumn sunshine on the main pathway in Kiln Meadow. Grass snakes are non-venomous and are fond of wetland habitats, but can also be found in dry grasslands. They hunt amphibians, fish and small mammals and hibernate, usually from October to April.



## Huge hornets nest discovered



This hornets nest was discovered 30ft up in the roof of the Greenways barn at Thorington Hall. A huge specimen, about the size of a basketball, the nest is made entirely from chewed wood.

Like wasps, hornet queens hibernate in winter, and emerge in spring to build a new nest. Their eggs hatch into sterile female workers who take over nest building and collecting food for the larvae. In the summer males and fertile females hatch. These mate and the females become next year's queens. The males, old queen and workers die in the autumn. Hornets will only sting humans if attacked, they have never been a problem to people using the barn as the hornets come and go through gaps high up in the timbers.



## A Longhorn in the woodpile

During a Greenways saw milling session, it was noticed that several of the pine trunks, originally from Bridge Wood, had lots of bore holes. When sawing the trunks into planks, a large white grub was discovered. Although appearing similar to a stag beetle larvae it was identified as one of the over 60 native species of Longhorn beetles. The larvae can be inside the wood for two years before emerging as an adult beetle. Although causing damage to trees, Longhorns are of great ecological importance in many ecosystems, providing an invaluable pollination service.



# Events Diary

## JANUARY

**Saturday 15th January 10am - noon**  
**Portal Woodlands Conservation Group**  
**VOLUNTEER WORK MORNING**  
All ages welcome, no need to book. Meet at the Educational Area. For more details of the Group's events and to check for date changes, **please go to: [www.pwgc.onesuffolk.net/](http://www.pwgc.onesuffolk.net/) or join our members' Facebook Group by messaging Duncan Sweeting.**

**Sunday January 9th 8.30am Suffolk Bird Group WALK**  
Levington and Trimley. Meet at Levington Marina, park along the approach road. (Long walk possible). Map Ref: TM247382. **Leader: Dave Pearsons Tel. 07913 620665.**

**Saturday 22nd January 10am - 3.30pm**  
**Greenways Project MARTLESHAM**  
**COMMON WINTER MEGABASH**  
Join Greenways and other groups to help maintain the Martlesham Common Local Nature Reserve – including scrub clearing and a bonfire (wind direction permitting!). Please bring your own food and drink. Meet at Martlesham Community Centre car park, off Felixstowe Road, Martlesham.  
**More info from Greenways 07736 826076 or [james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk](mailto:james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk)**



**Wednesday 26th January 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK**  
'Weird and Wonderful Wildlife in Ipswich'. Discover Ipswich's weird and wonderful wildlife with SWT Wild Learning Officer Lucy Shepherd. Museum Street Methodist Church, Black Horse Lane, Ipswich. £2.50.

**PLEASE NOTE:**  
**Due to restrictions concerning coronavirus (COVID-19) and the uncertainty surrounding this at the time of production, please check with the organisers of the events listed to see if they are still going ahead.**

**Thursday 27th January 7.30pm Suffolk Bird Group TALK**  
'Conserving curlews in the Brecks and beyond'. Dr Samantha Franks, BTO and Harry Ewing, BTO/UEA Ipswich Hotel, Old London Road, Copdock, IP8 3JD. May be subject to change, due to the covid situation etc. Please check on our website nearer the time to confirm details. **Additional information from Adam Gretton. Tel. 01473 829156. [Adam.gretton@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:Adam.gretton@naturalengland.org.uk)**

## FEBRUARY

**Sunday February 6th 9am Suffolk Bird Group WALK**  
Lakenheath. Meet at reserve centre car park Map Ref: TL719863. **Leaders: Val and Ivan Lockwood. Tel. 07505 952478.**

**Saturday 19th February 10am - 3.30pm**  
**Greenways Project MARTLESHAM**  
**HEATH WINTER MEGABASH**  
Join Greenways, Martlesham Conservation Group and others to continue heathland scrub clearing on Martlesham Heath, a wonderful Site of Special Scientific Interest. Please bring your own food and drink. Meet on site – pedestrian access via track from Eagle Way opposite the windsock (please park considerably in local streets). **More info from Greenways 07736 826076 or [james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk](mailto:james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk)**

**Sunday 20th February 10am - noon**  
**Portal Woodlands Conservation Group**  
**VOLUNTEER WORK MORNING**  
All ages welcome, no need to book. Meet at the Educational Area. For more details of the Group's events and to check for date changes, **please go to: [www.pwgc.onesuffolk.net/](http://www.pwgc.onesuffolk.net/) or join our members' Facebook Group by messaging Duncan Sweeting.**

**Wednesday 23rd February 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK**  
'Puffins galore' Skokholm Island off the Pembrokeshire coast has thousands of puffins, along with a multitude of other birds. In this talk Simon Hooton reflects on 50 years of visiting this special island and its wildlife. Museum Street Methodist Church, Black Horse Lane, Ipswich. £2.50.

**Thursday 24th February 7.30pm Suffolk Bird Group AGM**  
AGM followed by Review of the Year, Raffle and Mystery Bird Quiz! Please bring any unwanted bird books/magazines to exchange or donate for Save Our Suffolk Swifts. Ipswich Hotel, Old London Road, Copdock, IP8 3JD. May be subject to change, due to the covid situation etc. Please check on our website nearer the time to confirm details. **Additional information from Adam Gretton. Tel. 01473 829156. [Adam.gretton@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:Adam.gretton@naturalengland.org.uk)**

**Saturday February 26th 9.30am Suffolk Bird Group WALK**  
Wantisden Valley. Meet at Butley Corner car park along the B1084. Map Ref: TM350502.  
**Leader: Steve Fryett Tel. 07593 382082.**

## MARCH

**Saturday 5th March 10am - 3.30pm**  
**Greenways Project SPROUGHTON**  
**MEGABASH**  
Join Greenways and other local groups to help with path improvements and other tasks around the new Sroughton Nature Reserve. Please bring your own food and drink. Meet on the reserve by the Bailey Bridge – parking available near Sroughton Church and walk east along the river path, or in car park on Boss Hall Road and walk west along the river path. Some parking available within the reserve, please contact us for details.  
**More info from Greenways 07736 826076 or [james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk](mailto:james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk)**

**Sunday March 13th 8am Suffolk Bird Group WALK**  
Breckland. Meet at Santon Downham car park. Map Ref: TL815878. **Leader: Gi Grieco Tel. 07951 482547.**

**Saturday 19th March 10am - noon**  
**Portal Woodlands Conservation Group**  
**VOLUNTEER WORK MORNING**  
All ages welcome, no need to book. Meet at the Educational Area. For more details of the Group's events and to check for date changes, **please go to: [www.pwgc.onesuffolk.net/](http://www.pwgc.onesuffolk.net/) or join our members' Facebook Group by messaging Duncan Sweeting.**



**Thursday 24th March 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK**  
'Otters'. Meg Amsden, a member of the Suffolk Otter group will show a short film compiled from sightings of otters at different sites around the county, followed by a talk. Museum Street Methodist Church, Black Horse Lane, Ipswich. £2.50.

**Thursday 31st March 7.30pm Suffolk Bird Group TALK**  
'Birds of Chalkney Wood' and 'Birding the French Atlantic coast'. Dougal Urquhart, Ipswich Hotel, Old London Road, Copdock, IP8 3JD. May be subject to change, due to the covid situation etc. Please check on our website nearer the time to confirm details.  
**Additional information from Adam Gretton. Tel. 01473 829156. [Adam.gretton@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:Adam.gretton@naturalengland.org.uk)**

## APRIL

**Sunday April 10th 9am Suffolk Bird Group WALK**  
Carlton Marshes. Meet at reserve car park, Burnt Hill Lane, Carlton Colville Map Ref: TM508919.  
**Leader: Richard Smith Tel. 01502 586801.**

**Saturday April 23rd 9am Suffolk Bird Group WALK**

Shingle Street and The Sandlings. Meet at Coastguard Cottages car park. (Long walk possible). Map Ref: TM369431. Leader: Steve Fryett Tel. 07593 382082.

**Sunday 24th April 10am - noon Portal Woodlands Conservation Group VOLUNTEER WORK MORNING**

All ages welcome, no need to book. Meet at the Educational Area. For more details of the Group's events and to check for date changes, please go to: [www.pwgc.onesuffolk.net/](http://www.pwgc.onesuffolk.net/) or join our members' Facebook Group by messaging Duncan Sweeting.

**Thursday 28th April 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK**

'Wasps! Malicious or misunderstood?'. We all know what a wasp is. Or do we? Come along and find out more about this amazing group of insects from SWT's Hawk Honey, and see if they are your friend or your foe. Museum Street Methodist Church, Black Horse Lane, Ipswich. £2.50.

**Thursday 28th April 7.30pm Suffolk Bird Group TALK**

'Suffolk Raptor Studies' with Simon Evans. Venue TBC. Please check on our website to confirm details.

**Additional information from**

**Adam Gretton. Tel. 01473 829156**

**Adam.gretton@naturalengland.org.uk**

**Saturday April 30th 9.15am Suffolk Bird Group WALK**

Fingringhoe Wick. Meet at visitor centre car park, South Green Road. Map Ref: TM048192.

**Leader: Ashley Gooding**

**Tel. 07808 044611.**

**MAY**

**Monday 2nd May SPRING WOOD DAY**

At time of writing we are unsure what Spring Wood Day will look like or whether we will be able to hold this event. Please keep an eye on Ipswich Wildlife Group Facebook page and Greenways social media for updates nearer the time. Or email [james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk](mailto:james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk) for more information.



**Nest boxes, firewood and beanpoles for sale**

Ipswich Wildlife Group have a ready supply of boxes for birds, bugs, bats and hedgehogs and bean poles and pea sticks for your garden. All are made by IWG members from recycled timber and wood resulting from our woodland conservation work.

Take a look at the IWG Facebook page or at the website [www.wildipswich.org](http://www.wildipswich.org) where there is more information and prices. All proceeds go to Ipswich Wildlife Group, a registered charity.

# Regular Events

**THIRD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH 10am - 1pm SPRING WOOD WORK PARTY**

Join Ipswich Wildlife Group and Friends of Belstead Brook Park for a morning of work in the wood. Meet at the field gate at top of bridleway in Kiln Meadow. Parking in Marbled White Drive. **Details from Gerry Donlon 07733 968481**

**TUESDAYS 9.30am Greenways CONSERVATION WORK PARTY**

The Project's largest weekly work party – carrying out a wide range of practical tasks across the 50 or so sites that we manage. For all Greenways work parties, volunteers need to be registered via a short informal induction prior to joining us – please contact us for further details. Work party runs from 10am to about 4pm. **Contact [greenways.project@ipswich.gov.uk](mailto:greenways.project@ipswich.gov.uk) or call 01473 433995**



**EVERY TUESDAY AND FRIDAY 10am - 11.30am SWT Wild Learning WILD TOTS**

Outdoor adventure and play for children aged 18 months – 5 years in Holywells Park. £4. **Please book at [suffolkwildlifetrust.org](http://suffolkwildlifetrust.org) or 01473 890089.**

**WEDNESDAYS 10am Friends of Holywells Park HOLYWELLS PARK WORK PARTY**

Join our small team of volunteers doing valuable work around the Park. **Contact Andy Smuk for details 01473 728907**

**SECOND WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH Friends of The Dales WORK PARTY**

**Contact Kaye Roberts [kayefotdsec@virginmedia.com](mailto:kayefotdsec@virginmedia.com)**



**THURSDAYS 9.30am Greenways CONSERVATION WORK PARTY**

A smaller group than on Tuesday, but operates in the same way – please see details above for Tuesdays Work Party

**THIRD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH 7 – 8pm 'Green Drinks' Dove Inn, Ipswich DRINKS AND CHAT**

Join us at the Dove Inn for a drink, a chat and a bit of networking with other environmentally-minded people. Look out for the 'Green Drinks' sign on the table. All welcome

**FRIDAYS 9.30am Greenways CONSERVATION WORK PARTY**

Another opportunity to work on the 50 or so sites managed by the Project – please see the details above for Tuesdays Work Party

**FRIDAYS FORTNIGHTLY 9.30am Ipswich Wildlife Group/Greenways BOX KIT MAKING**

Come and join in making the kits for bird, hedgehog and insect habitat boxes for our Wildlife Homes project. Only the most rudimentary of woodworking skills needed. Thorington Hall Barn, Bobbitts Lane, Ipswich. **More information from Martin Cant 07858 436003 [martin.cant@ntlworld.com](mailto:martin.cant@ntlworld.com)**



**FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH 10am - 1pm Ipswich Wildlife Group RIVER WORK PARTY**

A joint work party with the River Action Group along Alderman Canal and the River Gipping, maintaining footpaths and making these splendid waterways areas to be proud of. Usually meeting at Bibb Way alongside Alderman Road recreation ground, but please get in touch to confirm location **More information from James Baker 07736 826076**

**FIRST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH 10am Butterfly Conservation WORK PARTY (October to March)**

**More information from Helen Saunders [helens919@gmail.com](mailto:helens919@gmail.com)**

**EVERY SECOND SATURDAY OF THE MONTH 10am - 12pm SWT Wild Learning WEEKEND WILDLIFE CLUB**

For children aged 6 – 10 years in Holywells Park. Join our wildlife-themed club to explore the park, learn about wildlife, meet new friends and earn awards as you go. £4. **Please book at [suffolkwildlifetrust.org](http://suffolkwildlifetrust.org) or 01473 890089.**

**EVERY SECOND SATURDAY OF THE MONTH 1pm - 3.30pm SWT Wild Learning YOUNG WARDENS**

For teens aged 11 – 16 years in Holywells Park (and other Ipswich locations). £5. **Please book at [suffolkwildlifetrust.org](http://suffolkwildlifetrust.org) or 01473 890089.**

**SECOND SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH 10am - 1pm Friends of Belstead Brook Park CONSERVATION WORK PARTY**

Come and join us for a morning working in the fresh air. **For further details visit our website: [wildipswich.org/fobbp](http://wildipswich.org/fobbp) or email [fobbp@wildipswich.org](mailto:fobbp@wildipswich.org)**

**MOST SATURDAYS 10.30am - 1pm Ipswich Wildlife Group Northgate Allotments WOODCRAFT & WILDLIFE**

Get involved in coppicing and woodland skills at the Wildlife area. **Call Geoff Sinclair to confirm dates 07860 595376**

**LAST SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH 10am - 1pm Ipswich Wildlife Group WILDLIFE ALLOTMENT**

Come and lend a hand to help create our wildlife friendly plot. **More information from Colin Hullis 07979 644134**