

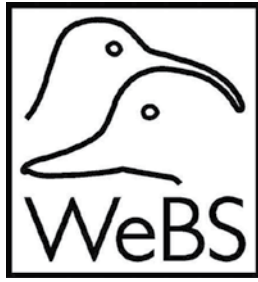
The Orwell Estuary
– see page 13

Local Wildlife news

September to December 2026

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





The Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) **Wanted: Volunteers to count birds on the River Orwell.**

Requirements :

- Maximum 3 hours, on a given Sunday, every month, between September and March.
- Identification of water birds by sight.
- Binoculars and telescope.

The river is split into 13 segments, most already have counters, the free sites include Ipswich Port, Orwell Country Park and Loompit lake.

Contact Margaret
(WeBS Local Organiser for Orwell Estuary)
for a chat, email: Orwell_LO_BTO@proton.me

Web site : www.bto.org/webs

Local Wildlife News is
available online at www.wildipswich.org
- or scan the QR code to the right.

Copies of LWN are also available at all Ipswich libraries, at the Reg Driver Centre in Christchurch Park, and from leaflet dispensers at the Stable Block in Holywells Park, the Greenways office at the Scout Hall on Stoke Park Drive, Millennium Wood (Bobbitts 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 another wonderful issue of Local Wildlife News – full of information, stories, news and events for the wildlife lover in the greater Ipswich area.

It feels somewhat inevitable that I have to focus once again on the serious effects of climate change on our wild habitats and species. Almost every article in this issue refers to the long, hot, dry summer in one way or another – and few are positive news. The devastating heathland fire at Dunwich and Minsmere has perhaps brought the issue to the fore, locally and even nationally – but there are many other visible signs and symptoms of a struggling natural world.

Despite some still trying to deny the existence of human accelerated climate change, most of us are intelligent enough to recognise what is happening – and can also see that it is happening more quickly than we dared to hope. It is clear to me that the way we manage our nature reserves and semi-

natural habitats is going to have to change drastically if we are to retain them and the species they support. We also need to avoid calling these fires ‘wildfires’ – they are not wild, they are human ignited (in almost all cases) and are happening due to human induced climatic change! It is not acceptable to blame them on ‘rewilding’ or nature reserve management, as many have tried to do!

As some of our contributors have pointed out, it is likely that our summers are going to continue to be hot and dry – this year, we have had to cancel some volunteer sessions as the temperature has crept up to human body temperature, making outdoor physical work not just unpleasant, but frankly, dangerous! Looks like we’ll have to cram even more of our work into the busy autumn and winter months than before! Enjoy the lovely cool winter days ahead (!), and make sure to get out and show support for the organisations that are fighting for nature on our behalf.



Contents

	Page
Suffolk Wildlife Trust	4
Greenways Countryside Project	8
Wildlife Wise	13
Butterfly Conservation	11
Ipswich Wildlife Group	12
Wildlife Wise	13
Friends of the Dales	14
Wild Ipswich - Swift disaster	15
Friends of Belstead Brook Park	16
Portal Woodlands Conservation Group	17
Suffolk Bird Group	18
Friends of Holywells Park	19
Ipswich Borough Council Wildlife Rangers	20
RSPB Ipswich Local Group	21
Snippets	22
Events Diary	23

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Chaos Gardening – one solution for hot summers?

Sheila Roberts *Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group*



© Colin Hullis

As I write this, we're still in the middle of one of the hottest, driest summers ever recorded. I stare at my shrivelled-up wildlife friendly garden and wonder if this is what we're all going to have to get used to?

My summer 2026 experience has led me to ponder what changes I'll need to make in future years to minimise the impact the weather is having on the view from my kitchen window but, more importantly, for the wildlife that depends on it. And, as good gardeners know, autumn and winter is the perfect time to plan for next spring and summer

Firstly, what beneficial plants have thrived? Well... the star of my garden this year has been the salvias – the ones in the ground haven't been watered once but have flowered their little socks off. I experimented with including some in my (peat free) containers and again – they've flourished (with watering of course). Both are popular with pollinators – one even became home to a couple of small green caterpillars that I haven't managed to identify.

The other stars of my horticultural odyssey have been what the trendy Instagram gardeners call chaos gardening – or in

more down-to-earth terms – self-sown, survival of the fittest plants.

First up – the humble sunflowers. Half a dozen of them appeared out of no-where and I let them get on with it. No watering, no staking. The bees adored them and the birds will find a handy larder on them later this autumn. Around them are lots of bronze fennel – the result of a single (misguided) purchase at a plant sale years ago - which has self-seeded despite my best efforts to weed most of it out. Again, the flower heads are popular with all sorts of winged creatures and the seeds will be left for the birds to enjoy, insects to nestle into and as winter interest to enjoy from the kitchen window.

A climbing rose, chosen to be not too far removed from the wild version so there is nectar and pollen for pollinators, has provided me with two long flushes of flowers and evening scent to enjoy. All without the need for watering – just a thick layer of peat-free mulch and it's thriving.

Established herbs like rosemary, sage and lavender have soldiered on and provided a fabulous source of food – for bees, butterflies and most excitingly for me – they also attracted a hummingbird hawk moth.

And finally, calendulas. Dozens of them all self-sown from previous year's seeds. Okay by August, they had pretty much thrown in the towel but for weeks and weeks, they kept popping up and producing their cheerful orange flowers so beloved by solitary bees without any input from me except a little deadheading.

So, if you are lucky enough to have a garden and you are thinking about what to grow in 2027 and beyond, maybe give some consideration to what plants can cope with dry summers.

The Beth Chatto website and garden is an excellent source of inspiration. But also, maybe let some of those determined and more beneficial little self-sown seedling do their own thing. I'm sure if I'd paid good money for a packet of fancy sunflower seeds the results would have keeled over by June, while my self-sown ones are still going strong in August.

Oh, and one last gardening tip from me – please don't be too tidy this winter. Piles of leaves and some long grasses provide excellent habitat for invertebrates which in turn are a vital buffet for birds, amphibians and hedgehogs.

Conifers – love them or hate them?

Sheila Roberts *Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group*

A confession... I've never been much of a fan of conifer trees. I've always seen them as non-native, dark green things growing in straight lines, dropping thick carpets of acidic needles which shade out any kind of interesting flora.

Or sad trees, chopped down in their prime so they can shed needles all over our carpets at Christmas.

However, a trip to the Scottish highlands this summer made me think about them a bit differently. Just a bit.

There I saw our only truly native pine tree – Scots pine – growing as nature intended it. Spectacular bark tinged with orange towards the top. The greeny-grey needles changing hue as the clouds altered the sunlight.

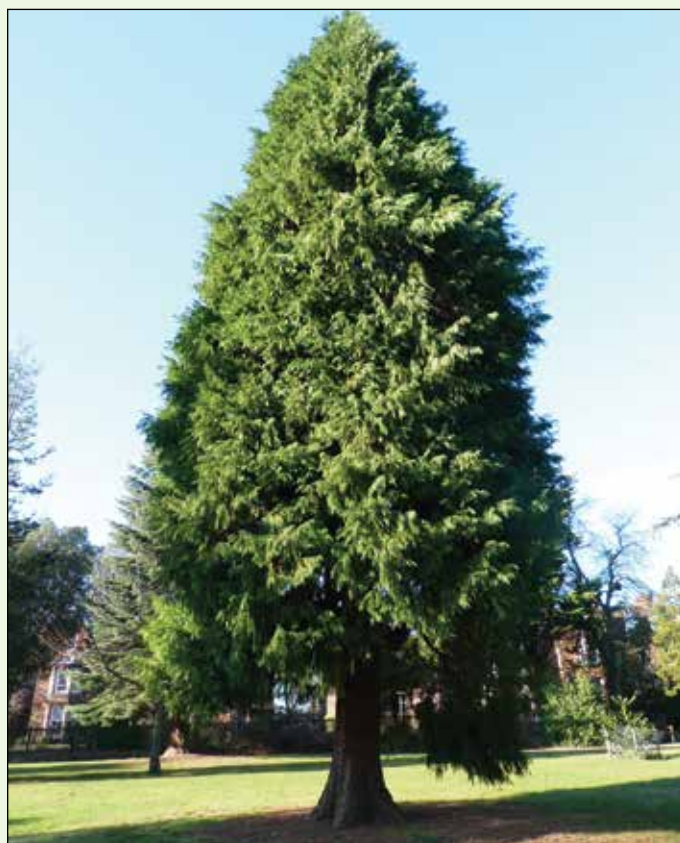
What struck me is how variable the Scots pine branches are in that habitat – twisting, stretching upwards and outwards, responding to their surroundings, the wind and the actions of grazing animals like the deer. The

result is a thing of beauty – especially as the sun catches the orange bark. And it can support upwards of 1500 native species from insects to fungi, so it's a wonderful ark for local wildlife.

Back home, I realised I honestly don't know much about conifers. There's a larch tree in Stonelodge park – distinctive because that species drops its needles every winter. Chantry Park has cedar of Lebanon near the main hall. You only have to stroll around Ipswich's big parks to get a sense of just how many species of non-native conifers we have. They may not support much in the way of wildlife but their shapes and colours are fascinating to observe.

A quick search online reminded me that we only have three native species of conifer - the yew, juniper and Scots pine. (For any pedants reading, the alder is also a native conifer – but a broadleaved deciduous one! Editor)

If, like me, you are a curious beginner when it comes to



conifers, you would be very welcome to come along to a Suffolk Wildlife Trust talk on the topic in February when Fay Jones will help us all unravel our pines from our spruces and our cedars from our firs.



Suffolk
Wildlife Trust

Ipswich Group Newsletter

Liven up a winter walk with lichen spotting

Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group

As the leaves start to drop from the trees, you might be tempted to think that means deciduous woodlands will soon look a bit dull – all those browns and greys.

I want you to think again! Winter is a splendid time of year to start spotting lichens. Okay, you might think crusty bits stuck to trees are a bit dull but hold on... I'd like you to look again at one of nature's most unusual types of plants.

Drag your memory back to school days and you might recall that a lichen is the result of a symbiotic relationship between a fungus and either algae or cyanobacteria. One gives it

the framework to grow and absorb water while the other photosynthesises to produce carbohydrates to feed both.

They come in all sorts of shapes and colours. Old bits of concrete and even headstones and tombs are a great place to start looking – some wear a dull coat of greys and olive but others shout their presence in a bright yellow that could easily pass for a slick of paint. The Victorian stonework in Chantry Park is a good place to start.

The veteran trees found in parks like Christchurch support good populations of lichens – including one

called tufted strap lichen – a branched silvery grey lichen that hangs from tree branches. At Holywells park, look for yellow mustard lichen around the stable block.

Lichen spotting is a great way

to liven up a winter walk. If you want to know more, there's a great website www.britishlichensociety.org.uk/ but for absolute beginners, may I recommend coming along to our talk on 9th December?





Ipswich Group Newsletter

An easy way to learn a little about wildlife

Have you ever wished you knew more about wildlife? Fascinating facts you can share with your mates down the pub or little-known knowledge that might just bring you a point or two in your next charity fundraising quiz?

Well, if that's the case, we have a treat in store for you. Every month the local group supporting the work of the countywide Suffolk Wildlife Trust, puts on an event to help everyone find out more about one aspect of our natural world.

You don't have to be an expert, in fact beginners are especially welcomed. You don't have to be a member of the Trust or even go to the trouble of booking. You can simply turn up, pay your £4 (free for under 25s) and enjoy a lovely, friendly and relaxing evening. There's free tea or coffee in the interval, the chance to win a prize in the raffle and you can even chat to the speaker to get even more information about the topic on offer.

Every penny of profit raised from these talks goes to support the work of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust so we need to make sure we have a good audience for every talk. So, why not get your diary or online calendar out now and add these dates?

Wednesday 28th October 2026 7.30pm

Black Poplars: How to Save a Tree. Discover more about Native Black Poplars, the situation in Suffolk and what we can do to help, A fascinating talk with David Appleton.

Wednesday 25th November 2026 7.30pm

A Brazilian Adventure: Exploring Mato Grosso in search of birds, mammals and more. Ian Barthorpe reveals some of the wildlife wonders he captured on film in South America.

Wednesday 9th December 2026 7.30pm

Lichens: Join us as Dr Anthony Specca reveals the little-known yet fascinating world of lichens.

Wednesday 27th January 2027 7.30pm

Worlingham Marshes: A missing piece of the Southern Broads landscape. Discover the wonder of the Trust's newest nature reserve, with Vicky Eyles, senior wilder communities officer.

Wednesday 24th February 2027 7.30pm

Cool Conifers: : Learn all about the fascinating world of conifers with Fay Jones. Get your pines sorted from your spruces and your cedars from your firs. A relaxed talk, ideal for beginners, taking a fun look at this wonderful group of plants.

All meetings start at 7.30pm in Museum Street Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich, IP1 2EF. What 3 Words cotton.meal.leader. Doors open 7.15pm. The hall is fully accessible with comfortable seating, large screens and there is a hearing loop. You can pay by cash or card.

Please note – despite the name, the church entrance is on Black Horse Lane. There is no access to the doors from Museum Street.

There is some free parking in the church car park – otherwise use on-street parking in Black Horse Lane or use the car park beside the Wolsey Theatre (both charged)

We'd love to see you – why not get together with some friends and make an evening of it? And the cost? A very reasonable £4 per person.

Ipswich is Wild – Smaller scale impact

Daniel Payne *Wilder Communities Officer, Suffolk Wildlife Trust*

The drought which has parched Suffolk over the summer will likely be mentioned by pretty much every contributor in this newsletter, both for its severity and more importantly its impact on nature. Nature will likely be much reduced by the effects of the heat and take time to recover, and in a way my work in Ipswich is also reduced, but not by the heat.

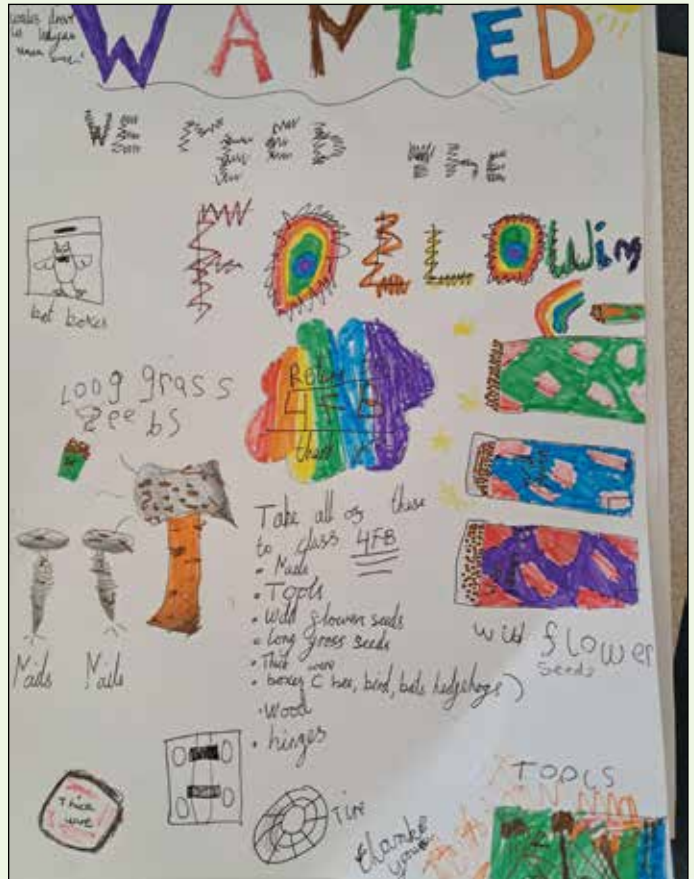
The Suffolk Wildlife Trust recently went through a re-structure on both the engagement and conservation sides, streamlining everything and giving staff a clearer direction rather than spinning a whole bunch of plates!

That re-structure has meant that my role has changed to be focused much more around our nature reserves and our learning activities, specifically schools, which has drawn me away from the community work in Ipswich. I have still been delivering some fantastic events and sessions, from Wild Tots in the holidays to work with Grow with Us community garden in Castle Hill allotment. It's smaller scale

impact, but no less vital.

For the moment my work will continue in that trend, with the winter shifting my work to bat walks, hedgehog home building, and practical conservation work in the green spaces in Ipswich. It also gives a chance to review the year so far, and where to focus our work in future.

As mentioned it's smaller scale impact from me, however the Nature Action communities team are ramping up their efforts in Ipswich with groups and schools. The wilder school program, where schools work with our communities officers to make their grounds and buildings better for nature,



Wilder school programme

is growing and growing, with bug homes, wildflower patches and ponds sprouting everywhere. School staff are also being trained in outdoor learning, bringing the classroom into nature and building deeper connections with the wild.

So while my work is like nature at the moment; smaller scale, there are green shoots forming in my



**Suffolk
Wildlife Trust**

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suffolkwildlifetrust.org

own work for next year and across departments with our communities team!



Building bug boxes



Youngsters build habitat piles



GREENWAYS countryside project

Scout Headquarters (next to St Peter's Church),
Stoke Park Drive, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP2 9TH
Office: 07736 826076
greenways.project@ipswich.gov.uk
www.wildipswich.org
Twitter: @greenwaysproj
Instagram & Facebook: @greenwaysproject

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.

Annual Report - April 2025 to March 2026

James Baker *Manager, Greenways Countryside Project*

Introduction

This Annual Report details some of the activities of the Greenways Project staff and volunteer teams over the period 1st April 2025 through to 31st March 2026.

The report only covers a small proportion of the work carried out to give a sense of the achievements. If you would like further details of a particular site or area of work, please contact the Project team.

The map below shows the rough locations of the main nature reserves and green spaces we have worked on throughout the year and the accompanying site list shows the names and relevant designations.

Partnership and funding

The Greenways Countryside Project has run as a very successful partnership for 32

years, managing green spaces for wildlife and for local people to enjoy. The partnership is led by Ipswich Borough Council, who employ the staff and provide management support. The current supporting partners are Babergh District Council and East Suffolk Council.

Over many years, the proportion of the total Project costs covered by the partners has fallen due to inflation and other pressures. Since April 2024, the Project Manager has also performed other roles in the IBC Parks and Cemeteries Service, so the associated costs are not now covered by the Greenways budget. This has reduced the overall income target for the Project, but a substantial sum still needs to be generated from external income each year. This income is generally found by seeking grants and by providing land management services to

the partner local authorities, parish councils and residents' associations.

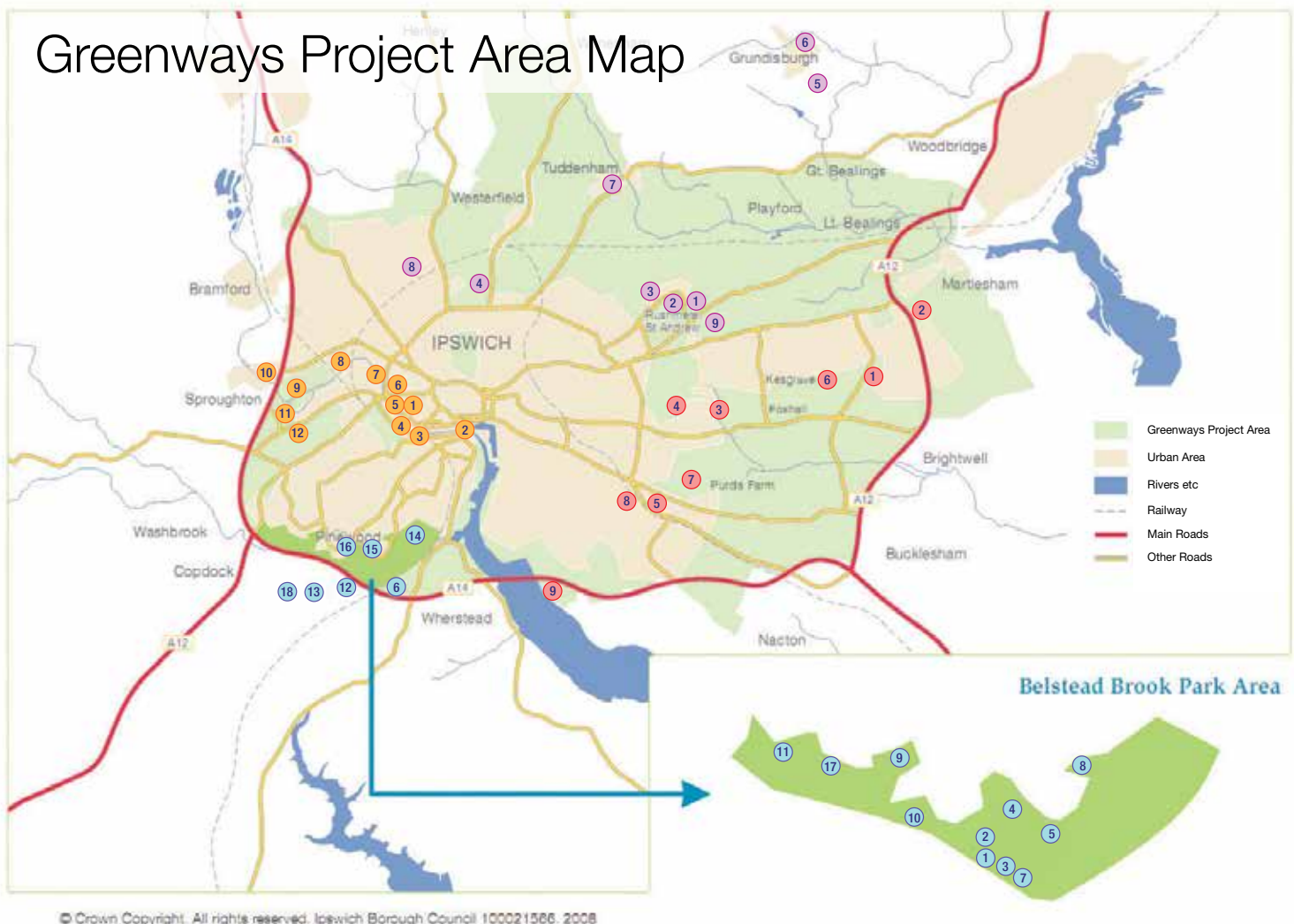
The importance of volunteers

With a very small staff team, the importance of our wonderful volunteers cannot be overstated. Each week, we run several work parties across the sites, carrying out essential maintenance and habitat management work – all supported by dedicated and skilled volunteers.

It is difficult to accurately assess the true value of this volunteer input, but even just looking at the value that many grants attach to volunteers, the contribution this year would exceed £75,000. In terms of hours, this can also be shown to equate to 5 full time staff – a massive contribution.

Volunteers undertake a wide range of activities including

Greenways Project Area Map





Invaluable volunteers

practical site management (more details below under Nature Reserves and Green Spaces), preparing wildlife homes kits for events, attending public events, monitoring wildlife species, advocating for wildlife, producing this wonderful magazine and more!

The Project staff team and Joint Advisory Committee would like to take this opportunity to formally thank all of those who give their time to help Greenways in whatever way – the effort is quite simply irreplaceable and very much appreciated.

List of sites

Belstead Brook Park and Southern Fringe

- 1 Spring Wood (LNR)
- 2 Kiln Meadow (LNR)
- 3 Millennium Wood (LNR)
- 4 Bobbitts Lane Meadows (LNR)
- 5 Ashground Plantation and Whitland Close area
- 6 Bobbitts Lane – upper area
- 7 Butterfly Ride
- 8 Stoke Park Wood (LNR)
- 9 Ellenbrook Meadow and open space
- 10 Burnet Meadow and Thorington Park area
- 11 Belstead Meadows
- 12 Thorington Hall Farm area
- 13 Belstead Heath
- 14 Bourne Park
- 15 Netley Close open space
- 16 Lynbrook Wildlife Area
- 17 Quilter Drive open space
- 18 Belstead nature reserve

Eastern Fringe

- 1 Martlesham Heath (SSSI)
- 2 Martlesham Common (CWS, LNR)
- 3 Mill Stream (LNR), Rushmere St Andrew
- 4 Sandlings, (LNR), Rushmere St Andrew
- 5 Warren Heath (CWS)
- 6 Long Strops Pond, Kesgrave
- 7 Ipswich Golf Club, Purdis Heath
- 8 Malcolm Road Wildlife Areas
- 9 Pond Hall Farm

Northern Fringe

- 1 Chestnut Pond, Rushmere St Andrew
- 2 Rushmere Street Wildlife Corridor
- 3 Limes Pond
- 4 Fonnereau Way
- 5 Grundisburgh Millennium Meadow
- 6 Lyttleton's Meadow, Grundisburgh
- 7 Tuddenham footpath
- 8 The Dales LNR
- 9 Woodbridge Road, Rushmere St Andrew

Western Fringe and the River

- 1 Alderman Canal (LNR)
- 2 River Path – Stoke Bridge
- 3 River Path – Princes St to West End Rd
- 4 River Path – West End Road
- 5 River Path – West End Rd to Handford Rd
- 6 River Path – Handford Rd-Yarmouth Rd
- 7 River Path – Yarmouth Rd to Riverside Road
- 8 River Path – Boss Hall
- 9 Sproughton Nature Reserve (LNR)
- 10 River Path – A14 to Sproughton
- 11 Churchman Way
- 12 Chantry Park

LNR = Local Nature Reserve
CWS = County Wildlife Site
SSSI = Site of Special Scientific Interest

Events and publicity

We have continued to attend a series of events through the year, ranging from the Suffolk Show to small nature reserve open days. We attended the Suffolk Show once again as guests of Suffolk Wildlife Trust, in their fantastic wildlife area on the showground. Along with Ipswich Wildlife Group volunteers, we helped families and young people make over 300 insect homes to take home to their gardens. There were also many useful and interesting conversations with visitors to the show and opportunities to promote our other activities.

The Project continues to maintain as much public visibility as possible via regular posts on social media and coverage in the traditional media whenever possible. There was wider interest in the new Waterfront Walk project (see below) with local and regional coverage on TV, radio and local newspapers.

Nature Reserves and Green Spaces

Greenways works regularly across around 45 sites – ranging in size from a couple of hundred square metres to over 40 acres. In total the sites we manage extent to over 400 acres and are distributed across around 100 square kilometres of Suffolk.

Our regular habitat management work, aimed at maximising biodiversity on each site, follows a strict seasonal pattern – with winter being our busiest time. During the winter, most wildlife is relatively dormant or has migrated away – so this is when we do all of the necessary woodland management, heathland scrub clearing, wetland management along with any tree and hedge planting and hedge cutting etc.

During the spring and early summer we focus our energies on improving and maintaining the infrastructure that allows local people to visit and enjoy nature across our sites – everything from building bridges to picking litter and

lots in between. Late summer and autumn are filled with the management of all of the areas of wildflower grassland – it is vital to mow these areas and remove the cuttings to prevent a build up of 'thatch' and nutrients. Meadows are generally more diverse when nutrient levels in the soil are lower – so removing the cuttings allows more unusual plants to germinate and develop successfully. Some areas of our meadows are left long to provide cover for small mammals, amphibians and reptiles as well as the opportunity for many invertebrate species to complete their lifecycles.

Changing Climate

As this summer has clearly demonstrated – the immediate and obvious effects of our changing climate are forcing us to reconsider the way we manage our reserves and green spaces in many ways. With tree planting schemes, we now have to avoid species beset by pests and diseases – trying to second guess which may survive into the future. Meadows tend to mature and set seed earlier, turning yellow and worrying local people about the risk of fires. We are generally starting our cutting season earlier now to allay fears, but don't want to damage the habitats and species therein – so we are cutting our meadows bit by bit from July through to October, ensuring as long a flowering window as possible and maintaining cover for as long as possible.

Heathlands are perhaps the most vulnerable, especially to fires. Our management for several years has focussed not only on priority species but also on creating firebreaks – but gorse now grows at about double the rate it did 25 years ago, which makes controlling it a very laborious task. It is highly likely that further changes to our management plans will be needed as the pace of change is accelerating, and additional funding is likely to be needed nationally to ensure risks can be managed and biodiversity maintained.

Continued on next page

Examples of site work

Waterfront walk

Following the official opening of the King Charles III Coast Path along the Orwell estuary, the Suffolk County Council (SCC) Green Access Team suggested an alternative route avoiding crossing the Orwell Bridge, that instead takes walkers into Ipswich and out again. Greenways helped with the project by supplying local oak for fingerpost signs that were made by students at St Joseph's College, and we organised a day with SCC staff volunteers to install the finger posts and information boards at both ends of the walk route and carry out some conservation work at Pipers Vale in the Orwell Country Park.



Pond Hall Farm (Orwell Country Park) tree planting

During the late winter, our volunteers helped with the planting of a belt of new native trees and shrubs between the new coast path route and the river, to grow up to help reduce disturbance to feeding birds on the estuary by screening it from walkers and dogs. We hope to carry out further such planting in the coming winters.



Alderman Canal LNR

One of the bridges installed by our volunteers about 20 years ago, had started to deteriorate and one of the decking planks failed leaving a small hole. Volunteers replaced the deck with new oak boards, all cut by our own sawmill from trees fallen or felled for safety reasons in Ipswich's parks. Our regular work party on the first Saturday of each month has attracted good numbers of volunteers recently – helping us to manage the site. Every month includes litter picking, sadly, but the group have also rebuilt boardwalks, mowed and raked areas of wildflower meadow and kept paths open and clear. Work with other Council departments has been ongoing to try to find ways to improve the water quality within the canal. Some trees have been removed to reduce leaf-drop into the water and thus reduce overall nutrient levels. Further work is planned for the coming years.



Sandlings LNR, Rushmere

As well as all of the usual annual management across the reserve, a new information board was installed by our volunteers, to highlight in particular the wealth of butterfly species the site tends to support, including the White letter hairstreak (caterpillars feeding on the elm hedgerows), small heath and common blue.

Each winter, the volunteers coppice an area of scrub and developing woodland in order to maintain a mosaic of micro-habitats across the site. This increases the amount of 'edge' habitat – where two different habitats meet. This tends to increase the diversity of species present on the reserve.



Tuddenham footpath repairs

On behalf of Suffolk County Council's Public Rights of Way Team, our volunteers helped to resurface a vital footpath through the middle of Tuddenham village. The steeply sloping path allows walkers to avoid walking along the main road through the village, past the back of the church. Greenways had previously re-laid this path about 25 or more years previously, so the Parish Council kindly asked for us to do it again!



Summer Leps

Julian Dowding *Branch Secretary, Butterfly Conservation Suffolk*

Butterflies responded magnificently to the sunshine, though we could do with the rain. Certainly, there will be losers as well, e.g. very few reports of Small Tortoiseshell.

In order to focus a bit more on migrants (and Swifts) I'm condensing my summer Lepidoptera thoughts to just a few.

Marbled Whites - seen beyond Pond Hall Farm, far from their historical Landseer Park base. Spreading county-wide. Silver-studded Blue - good numbers at Purdis and Pipers Vale, fewer at Minsmere/Dunwich. Gatekeepers - good year. Holly Blue - good. Small Heath - exceptional. I'm wondering if it's becoming continually brooded! White-letter Hairstreak - OK locally. Purple Hairstreak - good summer. Whites - good. Ringlet - below average. Meadow brown - good - (still our commonest species). Speckled Wood - good.

Grayling and Brown Hairstreak - the last local native species to emerge and on the wing now. Grayling - virtually disappeared from the Ipswich area but still be found on the Sandlings and Thetford Forest. Brown Hairstreak - only a few records but hard to see. Wall Brown - found around Carlton Marshes and Sudbourne area. In the late 1990's they could still be seen on Sidgate Lane allotment! Jersey Tiger Moth - spectacular moth with bright red or orange hindwings, spreading fast across Suffolk. 6-Belted Clearwing - Seen well. Nationally Scarce species. Dark Crimson Underwings. Nationally Rare.



6-belted clearwing

Migrants

Hummingbird Hawkmoth - a bumper year. It is likely that some are now surviving our winters. Foodplant - all members of the Gallium family though Mark Brewster found one laying eggs on valerian.



Painted lady

Painted Lady - a very good summer. Lays eggs on Thistles, Mallow, Nettles and Boraginaceae. Clouded Yellows - 2026 could go down as a 'Clouded Yellow year'. Trevor, our previous Suffolk Argus editor counted 78 on one site. Lays eggs on legumes, e.g. Birdsfoot Trefoil and Clovers.



Clouded yellow

Queen of Spain Fritillary - 3 seen at Kesgrave. Small numbers in Norfolk. Lays eggs on Field Pansy and Violets.



Queen of Spain

Swifts

As part of Eco-church, I'm involved in a project at Holy Trinity, Ipswich, to attract Swifts linked to Save Our Suffolk Swifts campaign. We are very grateful for their input of a small Swift call system donated in the first year. We are also grateful for the first 10 boxes made by Martin Cant and Ipswich Wildlife Group. This year we received a grant of £107 from Suffolk Wildlife Trust for



Butterfly Conservation
Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Membership Secretary
01379 643665
www.suffolkbutterflies.org.uk
email: 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.



Swift boxes construction in progress

more nest boxes! Happily, the birds have again nested successfully raising three young.

I believe last year's nesting female was young (first breeding attempt). She arrived very late and the solitary chick fledged late. This year she was on time and by 3rd August all young had fledged. We currently have 28 boxes in the belfry. One evening in mid-July we witnessed groups of three, five and then eight birds all noisily circling the belfry with some alighting on the East facing louvre. The behaviour went on over the course of about a month. We hope they'll return in 2027 or 2028 to nest but know we must be patient as it takes three years for a young Swift to achieve breeding readiness.

Ipswich Wildlife Group News Update

Ipswich Wildlife Group

Wildlife Homes work party grows

Our work party at the Greenways Barn goes from strength to strength and has recently attracted new recruits to the occasional Friday sessions.



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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.

Lisa, Sandra and Glenda have recently joined the Group and are thoroughly enjoying getting to grips with the woodworking skills needed to create the variety of nest boxes and wildlife homes we make.

Currently the sessions are making kits for bird boxes, bat boxes and wildlife homes for insects and hedgehogs. Mostly, the group produce kits for visitors to complete themselves at various environmental events held around the town. The group



The Barn

have recently provided several hundred kits for Suffolk Wildlife Trust to use at their events throughout the county. In addition leader Martin Cant also produces homes for owls, butterflies and dormice and at Christmas martin makes reindeer and Father Christmasses.

All the wood used is taken from locally sourced felled trees or recycled planks from old fencing, sheds or general scrap.

Channel Islands Moth

From mid-July, several members got in touch to report that they had encountered a particularly



Martin shows the way

attractive moth in their gardens. This turned out to be the Jersey Tiger Moth which certainly is a stunner. Mel Eke took this photo of one of several seen in his garden at the end of July. Over the following weeks the moth was reported in great numbers across eastern England – another welcome visitor no doubt



© Mel Eke

due to the long, hot summer.



Lisa and Glenda lend a hand unloading

Regular work parties

If you would like to join one of our regular work parties see the contact details in the Events Diary Regular Events on the back pages of the magazine.

Spring Wood work party, third Sunday morning of the month.

River work party, first Saturday morning of the month.

Botanical Surveying, last Sunday morning of the month

Box Kit making, occasional Friday mornings.

Send us an email to get more details in our monthly newsletter.

Orwell Estuary – a vital sanctuary

Lily Fraser *Wildlife Wise*

Every autumn and winter, the Orwell Estuary becomes a vital sanctuary for tens of thousands of wintering and passage birds. Some of these incredible water birds travel a huge distance to spend the cold months here, while others use the estuary as a migratory pit-stop to rest and refuel before continuing their long journeys south.

The landscape is so beautiful that author Eric Arthur Blair was inspired to take its name, writing under the pseudonym George Orwell. It has ancient woodlands, leaning trees along the bank and incredible river views. But beyond its scenic beauty, the estuary is an ecological powerhouse. It's rare, underwater meadows of eelgrass and exposed mudflats provide a rich nutrient source, making it an important habitat for waterbirds.

The section of mudflats in front of Orwell Country Park is essential. Located in the upper reaches of the estuary, it is the very last area to fill with water as the tide comes in. This unique geography offers birds the longest possible feeding window to hunt for worms and sea creatures. However, because it is also the area of highest recreational use- frequented by dog walkers, runners, and bait diggers- the birds here face constant pressure.

As the tide rises and submerges the mudflats, these birds rely on 'high tide roosts' on the saltmarsh further inland to rest, preen, and socialise. Over twenty species can be spotted here. Visitors might see:

- The Redshank with its vibrant, bright orange legs.
- The Curlew featuring an elegant, long, down-curved bill.



© Paul Skirrow

The Orwell Estuary

- The small Dunlin distinctively marked by its black belly patch.
- The Grey Plover camouflaged against the winter shoreline.
- The Black-tailed Godwit probing deep into the mud.

Human activity can easily scare these birds. Actions like cycling, bait digging, or dogs running off lead can cause the birds to flee. Every time they are forced to fly away, they waste valuable energy reserves. In the freezing winter, conserving this energy is a matter of life or death, as they must build up fat stores to survive the cold and complete their exhausting migrations.

Our team has created a dedicated safe refuge for the birds by putting up a small section of protective fencing in this high-traffic area. This fencing ensures our local wildlife has an undisturbed space to land and rest. By respecting this zone, visitors play a direct role in the survival of these



Wildlife Wise delivers the Suffolk Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS). From water sports to birdwatching, we work with residents and visitors to raise awareness of how we can all enjoy nature sustainably.

Sign up for our newsletter at www.wildlifewise.co.uk to stay updated on our latest news, blogs, and events.

species. We have also facilitated a dedicated off-lead area at Orwell Country Park so the dogs can run around without scaring any birds.

We are constantly working to protect our local wildlife, whether that means updating signage, engaging with the community or implementing new infrastructure. Wildlife Wise is always looking for ways to help.

How can you help?

You can enjoy this spectacular natural habitat without disrupting the wildlife by following our simple **Get Wildlife Wise** guidance:

- **Look out for birds:** Give roosting and feeding birds plenty of space.
- **Read the signs:** Follow the information on nearby signage.
- **Keep paws on paths:** Keep your dog on the lead and on the designated tracks.
- **Clean up after your dog:** Dog poo can include nutrients to the soil that changes the types of plants that grow, damaging the habitat. Make sure to pick up what they put down!



Curlew

News from The Dales

Kaye Roberts *Friends of 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 find us on Facebook by searching Friends of the Dales.

Although plants are struggling to grow in our gardens through the lack of rain, this problem does not seem to apply to the brambles and nettles encroaching onto the paths in the Dales. The volunteers are spending most of their time clearing these and also bracken.

A welcome visitor earlier this year was this Firecrest. They



Firecrest

are only very slightly larger than the more common, resident Goldcrests, our smallest birds at about 4.5g, which are always present in the Dales. Firecrests have bold black and white stripes on the head, which differentiates them from the plainer head of

the Goldcrest. The bird was originally identified by call, which is quite similar to that of the Goldcrest, but without the flourish at the end. However, if your hearing is deteriorating, the high-pitched calls and song of both these birds are the first to be lost.



Ornate tailed digger wasp

Another find in the Dales was an Ornate Tailed Digger Wasp. This is a solitary wasp preferring sandy soils. Its prey consists of small bees, which it paralyzes by stinging.

Moth Trapping at The Dales

Sam Chamberlin *IBC Wildlife Ranger*



During the evening of 23rd May the Friends of The Dales hosted a public moth trapping survey. Two types of lights were used to attract moths which could then be observed up close and identified. With a 125w MV bulb and a twin 40w Actinic tube we recorded 30 species within a two-hour period. Although we experienced hot day time temperatures, the evening



was cool and partially cloudy, however the sunset was spectacular!

Attendees enjoyed seeing a

range of moths and it wasn't long into the survey when a sizeable moth landed on an egg tray with a thud, a female Lime Hawk-moth. With a



brief lull, half an hour later two males joined her! This species can be common and widespread in towns where its preferred foodplant of lime is abundant.

Other moths of interest recorded included, Waved Umber, Pale Oak Beauty, Common Marbled Carpet and a Jersey Tiger moth larvae.

Swift disaster

Colin Hullis *Ipswich Wildlife Group*

This year has been a disaster for the pair of Swifts that have used one of my nest boxes for the past seven years. Violence, torture, death and destruction. Far from the peaceful domestic scenes from previous years, watched on screen through the camera in the box, 2026 has been marred by trauma and family breakdown.

The breeding season began ordinarily enough with the parent birds arriving May 9th. The first egg appeared May 30th, the third egg seen June 4th during a period of chilly, wet weather.

*... 2026 has
been marred by
trauma and family
breakdown ...*

All was well, with a gang of birds flying and screaming around the neighbourhood each evening, numbers peaking at around 30. Then on June 30th with both adults in the box, Jane and I watched as a Swift interloper entered the box. A vicious fight ensued with each bird clawing and pecking each other and taking an occasional rest before starting all over again.

Amazingly this fight continued for three and a half hours, culminating in the resident bird pushing the interloper back through the entrance hole but hanging on to its tail causing the interloper to hang suspended outside the box before eventually releasing it after about five minutes. Deliberate torture! Apparently this scenario is not uncommon in the circumstances.

Over the next few weeks the three chicks flourished and by July 20th were virtually fully feathered. Checking the screen the next morning – disaster – two dead youngsters. Both were on the floor, out of the nest. The weather was hot but there were no signs of them suffering. The one surviving chick was still being fed by the parents.

A couple of days later, disaster again – one of the adults lying dead on top of one of the dead chicks.

We now have three dead, one surviving adult and one surviving chick. On the evening of July 25th we check the camera to find six Swifts in the box! Three dead and what we assume is the surviving chick and two interlopers – the interlopers had gone by the morning. A mystery.



The family before disaster struck

On the 29th July the one remaining chick plucked up the courage and launched out of the box on his maiden flight. Informed opinion is that he will now be flying continuously for the next three years when he will be able to breed and find a nest site of his own. Good luck.

**wild
Ipswich**

*All the conservation organisations
working together to inspire local
people to help wildlife throughout
the town and beyond.
www.wildipswich.org*



Hanging by the tail



The surviving chick with the deceased

A hot and busy summer

Ann Havard *Friends of Belstead Brook Park*

As I write this article, in the middle of a heat wave and in drought conditions, it seems a long time ago since we were coppicing in Spring Wood in March with our jumpers on and flasks of hot coffee! We did indeed coppice a lot of trees and these were all processed into bean poles, stakes and firewood, with some pea sticks. We had a very satisfying stack of wood to show for our efforts.



Friends of Belstead Brook Park

www.wildipswich.org

Email: fobbp@btinternet.com

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.

In April and May we were busy in the new Stag Beetle Wood in Bourne Park, mulching the young trees and removing grass and weeds from inside the tree guards to give the saplings the best possible chance over the summer. As it turns out, they have needed all the help they can get as this summer seems to have been endless, wall-to-wall sunshine and intense heat. Time will tell if any of the young trees have survived these testing conditions.

In June we were in Belstead Meadows with Carl from Greenways mowing large swathes of grass with the tractor, James

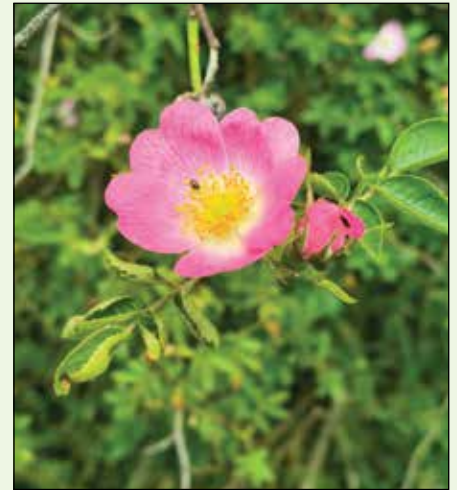
with the bar mower and us following behind raking up the arisings into habitat piles. We also went along the paths cutting back any vegetation that was ready to snag the unwary. Lots of lovely wild flowers out including dog rose, ox eye daisy and the wonderfully symmetrical heads of thistle.

Into Stoke Park Wood in July where the summer heat was beginning to bite and it was good to work in the shade of the trees. Some trusty volunteers did a lot of clearing of the overhanging vegetation at the top of the site – always a difficult job.

When writing these articles, I realise that our activities follow a well-worn pattern – Winter coppicing, spring and summer vegetation clearing and bench making, autumn mowing and raking and start of coppicing. However, with the unprecedented (yes, I know a well-worn word) summer drought this year, I do wonder how this pattern will change. Certainly, the seasons have shifted with harvest 3 to 4 weeks earlier and yields down, blackberries are ripening earlier but the fruit seems to be small and dry.

In my own garden, the three water butts ran dry very quickly and the hosepipe ban meant filling lots of watering cans to keep my French climbing beans and lettuce going. The plants in my flower beds have had to make do with cooled washing up water – which they don't seem to mind. But I keep wondering what I can do with my lawn which (as I type) is just a straw field and goes crunch when I walk on it!

A quick Google for alternatives to my green, striped lawn (in my dreams) suggests herbs – thyme, oregano or marjoram, red or white clover, chamomile



Dog rose

and of course growing a wildflower meadow or patch. Different options with different characteristics and resistance to being walked on. Perhaps a mixture of all in various patches? At least the weekly mowing of the grass is becoming a thing of the past!



Thistle



Oxeye daisy

Volunteers at work

Stephen Corley *Chairman Portal Woodlands Conservation Group*

After the wet weather earlier in the year, the woodlands were looking exceptionally lush and overgrown in places. Our Volunteers kept paths clear, prioritising the fire-service access route behind Deben Avenue. They trimmed back the holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) hedge that was blocking sunlight from reaching the pond. It was exciting to see great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) rising to the surface for a gasp of air.

Then came the heat. Despite the dry conditions, visitors enjoyed wonderful displays of bluebells (*Hyacinthoides*) and lesser celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*) glowing in the



Clearing the northern tumulus



Clear fire access

sunshine. A careful eye might have been lucky to glimpse a slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*). Work continued clearing the overgrowth on the Bronze Age burial mounds (*tumuli*).

Our annual glow-worm (*Lampyris noctiluca*) survey recorded 24 (our highest count for years), while pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus* sp.) and noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) bats flew overhead and a muntjac (*Muntiacus reevesi*) barked in the dusk.

We are relieved that the sale of part of the woodlands has been postponed, giving hope of saving it. If you wish to support this worthy cause, please email enquiries@martleshamcouncil.org.uk.



Pond hedge trimming



Portal Woodlands Conservation Group

Enquiries: Martlesham Parish Council 01473 612632 pwcg.onesuffolk.net or email 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.



Glow worm

Volunteer Work Mornings

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

Saturday 19th September
Sunday 18th October
Saturday 14th November
Sunday 20th December

For more details of the Group's events, and to check for date changes, please go to:
pwcg.onesuffolk.net or join our members' Facebook Group by messaging Duncan Sweeting.

Bad news and good news

John Kornjaca Suffolk Bird Group

The Dunwich Heath/RSPB Minsmere wildfire has devastated nature in the area – of that there is no doubt. Woodlark, Dartford Warbler, Nightjar are some of our rarer species and the area is home to many of these birds.

the fire and ultimately extinguished it. Nature will slowly recover and we look forward to the heath returning to its former glory.

A few miles north of the fire at the Walberswick National Nature Reserve (NNR) good news was received regarding the breeding attempts of one of the UK's rarest birds – Zitting Cisticola (*cisticola juncidis*). The first record of breeding on the UK mainland was received from the site in summer 2025. This year the NE Suffolk NNR team recorded

Barn Owl Support Suffolk (BOSS) moves from strength to strength

SBG members are appalled at the damage caused by the fire and like our friends at the National Trust and RSPB are extremely grateful for the tremendous efforts of the fire service, farmers and other organisations that eventually controlled



Enquiries:
info@suffolkbirdgroup.org
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.



© Chris Darby

Barn Owl

11 birds present with seven juveniles seen from three broods (as at 6 August 2026). The NNR team and birders in the area had to monitor the site closely, needing lots of ropes and stakes erected in order to discourage disturbance from photographers and walkers who had been seen entering the sedge and grasses where the birds were nesting.

More good news is developing regarding one of the UK's iconic species – Barn Owl (*tyto alba*). One of several SBG projects Barn Owl Support Suffolk (BOSS) moves from strength to strength.

A grant from East Suffolk Farmland Bird Support Fund will assist project lead Sally Nelson and her team with the installation of more nest boxes in suitable sites – many of which are provided by the Debenham Shed. Barn Owls had a very tough year in 2025 with brood sizes down and many nests failing. This year the Barn Owl population of Suffolk is bouncing back with more nest boxes occupied and brood sizes increased – indicating a plentiful supply of food.

More news available at:
www.suffolkbirdgroup.org



Barn Owl owlet

© Duncan Ford

The Orchard – an enjoyable challenge

Yvonne and Andy *Friends of Holywells Park*

The Friends of Holywells Park have been managing the Orchard for 25 years. Originally, this site was part of the Holywells Allotments, but the area became difficult to manage due to excessively wet conditions because of the underground springs, so was abandoned. Some years later, in the 1980's it appears that some of the springs had shifted, leaving the area much drier so an orchard and surrounding woodland was planted.

When the Friends group was formed in 2001, we were asked if we would take on the task of looking after the orchard. We saw this as an enjoyable challenge and considered how we might use the space for community events. Over time, the area has been transformed by regular volunteer work parties into the delightful space we have today. We continue to achieve our aim to host community events here as well as providing a space to be used by other local organisations.

Holywells Park orchard is an organic area. The main crop is apples, of which there many Suffolk varieties such as Clopton Red, Crown Pippin, St Edmunds Russet, Sturmer Pippin, Maxton and Honey Pippin. There are soft fruit trees including gage, plum and damson and we have two magnificent quince trees which provide an abundance of these unusual fruits most years.

Holywells orchard is rich in wildlife



Clopton Red

including foxes, muntjac deer, squirrels and a variety of birds. We have a regular 'fly past' by our 3 resident buzzards when we're working there on Wednesdays. And more recently, a pair of green woodpeckers reared their brood here, taking advantage of this secluded space. Green Woodpeckers are the largest of the three woodpeckers that breed in Britain now and can be recognised by their vivid green colour and distinctive 'yaffle' call.



Green woodpecker



Friends of Holywells Park

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

Contact: fohpiptswich@gmail.com

www.holywellsark.org.uk

facebook.com/holywellsarkipswich



Our annual Apple Day event will take place in the Orchard on October 17th this year. Look out for more information on Friends of Holywells Park website, Facebook and noticeboards in the Park.

Glow-worms in Orwell Country Park - a 12-year study

David Dowding *Wildlife Ranger, Ipswich Borough Council*

Once a common sight of midsummer, the Glow-worm is in decline in the U.K. National Survey data has shown this Bioluminescent beetle to have declined by 75% since 2000. The more we can understand the species' ecology, the more we might understand why this has happened and the better we can mitigate for it.



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.

Long term monitoring of this population in Orwell Country Park has shown that glow-worms are not too fussy in their requirements. They will make use of many different habitats, from heathland to woodland, reedbed and meadow, even allotments and gardens can show promise, but they have poor abilities of dispersal (as the females are wingless), so particularly vulnerable to habitat fragmentation and light pollution. New developments and roads, even with minimal

loss of natural habitat can devastate populations. Extreme weather conditions such as droughts, which are becoming increasingly common, are also likely to be a risk to their survival.

The better the mosaic of habitats, and the more connected, the better they can deal with these threats. Unfortunately, despite the insect's decline, they still have no legal protection in the U.K.

Orwell Country Park is a very well-connected habitat patch, of around 250 acres to the south east of Ipswich. There is a very good spread of glow-worms across the reserve which has been well monitored over the last decade, but these animals are still absent from certain areas despite seemingly suitable habitat, so potential barriers can begin to be realised.

Distribution

There is a good spread of glow-worms north of the A14, but they are seemingly scarce to the southeast due to the dual carriageway and the historic use of Pond Hall Farm. Glow-worms can do OK in livestock pasture, provided not overgrazed, but arable farming/cultivation destroys the eggs/larvae.

Since 2020, more of the farm has been brought out of cultivation into natural habitat, through the creation of heathland/meadows and the planting of native hedgerows and the insects have begun to spread south-eastward as a result.

When Bridge Wood was planted up with pine and sycamore for timber production in the 1950s, it became very dense. Dense plantation is typically poor glow-worm habitat as although there's no shortage of snails, a lack of edge habitat means mate recognition is hampered. In recent years effort has been made to turn this site back into a more managed ancient woodland, with a series of



Orwell Country Park glow-worm sightings 2026 across 7 nights in June/ Early July

rides and coppiced glades which glow-worms favour, so hopefully they can start to spread back into Bridge Wood through Pond Hall Farm. It may take decades for them to recolonise though, as not only are they poor dispersers (moving just a few metres in their larval stage), but they can also take 2-3 years to reach maturity and breed!

Daniel Cable-Davey and I have also regularly observed larvae on the foreshore, and wonder whether they were feeding on marine molluscs, which would not be affected by drought conditions, though it is currently unknown whether they could deal with the salinity of this potential prey source.

Light pollution

Glow-worms spend 99% of their life as a mollusc-consuming larva, only spending a few days as an adult. Unfortunately, however, when they are adults in June and July, they are heavily affected by light pollution as the males need "dark skies" to find their mates. Males are readily drawn



Glow-worms displaying by a streetlight on Morland Road at the northern entrance to Orwell Country Park

to streetlights which impairs their ability to find females.

As a result, females are often found glowing under streetlights, as although they typically glow for just a few minutes, they can carry on for up to a fortnight if unable to pair, so are more likely to be spotted by humans in these places.



Glowworm larvae found on Orwell foreshore May 26 seemingly on the hunt. (Photo Daniel Cable-Davey).



Ravenswood Tump in July 26, showing security lights. This level of pollution inhibits mate recognition and is likely contributing to their general absence in Ravenswood. (Photo Astrid Martin).

Dunwich Heath fire

Tim Kenny *Leader, RSPB Ipswich Group*

As I write this article, we are two weeks on from the first reports of fires on Dunwich Heath. It tells us everything about the seriousness of this incident that the major incident was only stood down yesterday (11th August) by the fire brigade.

Everyone with an interest in the natural world will be deeply concerned about the long-term effects of such an enormous burn, with the RSPB's Adam Rowlands being quoted as saying that the recovery of the heathland lost could take decades. The National Trust estimates that 92% of Dunwich Heath was affected, an area equivalent to 146 football pitches.

The birds affected, such as Nightjars, Dartford warblers and Woodlarks, had already bred and fledged, and could fly away from the approaching inferno, but the wildfires have left them without habitat to return to next year. The insects, mammals and reptiles however would not have been so lucky, and are likely to have perished.

From an RSPB point of view, Minsmere reopened on Tuesday 11th August. The affected heathland areas of the reserve are still cordoned off, but to our great relief the Scrape, Island Mere, the Visitor and Discovery Centres were unaffected. The RSPB have launched an appeal which you can donate to at www.rspb.org.uk/donate/minsmere. This also gives further information about the extent of the fire at Minsmere.

The prolonged drought, five official heatwaves (and counting) and the aforementioned fires point to some uncomfortable truths. It could be that 2026 is the coolest summer we experience for the rest of our lifetimes, which is a sobering thought.



Highlight

Locally, the ornithological highlight has been the long-staying Hudsonian godwit that has been frequenting the Suffolk – Essex border at Cattawade. This American species, which combines features of both of our more regular godwits, was first seen at Minsmere on July 1st with a group of Black-tailed godwits. It then disappeared before reappearing at Stour Mill on July 12th. It is still in the vicinity of the White Bridge and railway bridge over the Stour at the time of writing.

I made a trip to see it on July 13th and got good scope views. At the time it was mostly in breeding plumage, with a pale head and a deeper red than Black-tailed godwit. The white wingbar lacks the black borders of Black-tailed, and the bill has the slight upward tilt similar to the Bar-tailed godwit. If you get a good flight view, a sooty black underwing patch is diagnostic. The bird is currently moulting into grey winter plumage, making identification slightly more of a challenge, but the overall structure and distinctive bill should be enough to clinch it.



Ipswich Local Group

ipswichrspblocalgroup@yahoo.com
<https://group.rspb.org.uk/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 £5 per year (£1 for Juniors). For more information see the Events Diary in this magazine, visit our website or email as per details above.



Nightjar

Change coming

Meanwhile here at the Ipswich Local Group, change is coming. After nine years in the leader's chair, I'm handing over the reins to Mark Ford. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has been a member, served on the committee, or assisted us in any other way in that time. I will still be active in the group so I will see you on a walk somewhere at some point in the future.



Dartford Warbler

Snippets

Redtit *Robert Cullen*



A most unusual choice of nesting material found in the Bluetit nest box by Robert Cullen who says that other boxes in his garden also had some of the brightly coloured fibres.

Cute visitor

The Friends of Holywells Park were refurbishing the old bridge in the orchard, whilst removing an old sleeper, they had a visitor who was making sure they carried out the repairs correctly. A wood vole was living under the bridge.



Eggs mystery *Martin Cant*

It's a mystery where several eggs originated, having been found in a front garden, partly buried by something. Very strange! Any ideas? (Possibly tortoise – Prod Ed.)



Bamboo

The cut down bamboo in Holywells Park is always put to good use. Recently an empty hexagon was repaired and filled with bamboo and is now ready for hibernating bugs and solitary bees.



IWG Brownies

The leader of All Hallows Brownie group, Astrid Ivy Martin, invited IWG to join their weekly meeting to help the members appreciation of wildlife and the environment. Martin and Melvyn went along equipped with wildlife homes kits and involved the group in building bird and bug boxes and talking about the importance of wildlife and how to identify common garden species.



Events Diary

SEPTEMBER

Saturday 5th September 9am Suffolk Bird Group OUTDOOR EVENT

Walton-On-The-Naze. Meet in the visitor centre car park, Old Hall Road. Map Ref: TM265234. Post Code: CO14 8LE What3Words: blessing.automatic.unwell or free parking may be available along Naze Park Road Map Ref: TM262230. Post Code: CO14 8JZ What3Words: dairy.soup.myths **Leader: Ashley Gooding. Tel. 07808 044611.**

Sunday 6th September 9.30am RSPB Ipswich FIELD MEETING

Freston Shore of River Orwell for waders and woodland birds. Meet at layby next to Stoke Sailing Club IP9 1AA 2-3 hours. **Leader Tim Kenny.**

Thursday 10th September 7.30pm RSPB Ipswich INDOOR MEETING

'Winter at Minsmere' Steve Everett, Wildlife Photographer and RSPB volunteer. Rushmere St Andrew Church Hall, The Street, Rushmere IP5 1DH

Saturday 12th September 8.30am Suffolk Bird Group OUTDOOR EVENT

Shingle Street and Hollesley Marshes. Meet at Coastguard Cottages. Map Ref: TM369431. Post Code: IP12 3BG What3Words: apes.term.pays **Leader: Steve Fryett. Tel. 07593 382082.**

Saturday 19th September 10am – noon Portal Woodlands Conservation Group VOLUNTEER WORK MORNING All ages welcome, no need to book. Meet at the Education Area. For more details go to: pwcg.onesuffolk.net or join our Facebook page by messaging Duncan Sweeting.

Sunday 20th September 10am to 1pm Ipswich Wildlife Group SPRING WOOD WORK PARTY Meet at the field gate at top of bridleway in Kiln Meadow. Park on Marbled White Drive. **Details from Gerry Donlon 07733 968481**

Thursday 24th September 7.30pm Suffolk Bird Group INDOOR MEETING

Return to Morocco. Gi Grieco. Hintlesham Community Centre, Timperleys, Hintlesham IP8 3PS Admission charge £3, full-time students free. Non-members most welcome. **Additional information from Adam Gretton, adam.gretton12@gmail.com Tel 07394 923010**

Saturday 26th September and Sunday 27th Suffolk Bird group OUTDOOR EVENT

Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory. Limited to 12 spaces, including to stay overnight in self-catering shared rooms. For further details and to reserve your place contact Adam or Anne Wright 07767 755965. **Leader: Adam Faiers. Tel. 07708 521852.**

Tuesday 29th September 10.30am RSPB Ipswich MIDWEEK WALK

Christchurch Park for autumn birds. Meet at Soane Street entrance IP4 2BE. TM165448

OCTOBER

Saturday 3rd October 9.30am RSPB Ipswich FIELD MEETING

Abberton Reservoir for wildfowl and woodland birds. Meet at Essex Wildlife Trust Nature Discovery Centre CO2 0EU. TM962185 **Leader Stephen Marginson.**

Sunday 4th October 8.30am Suffolk Bird Group OUTDOOR EVENT

Lowestoft North Denes. Meet at Whapload Road car park, opposite Sparrow's Nest Gardens. Grid Ref: TM552945; Postcode NR32 1XG; What3Words owls.cheek.behind **Leader: Gi Grieco. 07951 482547.**

Thursday 8th October 7.30pm RSPB Ipswich INDOOR MEETING

'On the Trail of the Inca' Ian Barthorpe, Minsmere Visitor Experience Officer. Rushmere St Andrew Church Hall, The Street, Rushmere IP5 1DH. Sponsored by Southern Tractor Girl

Thursday 15th October 7.30pm Suffolk Bird Group INDOOR MEETING

The Nature of Seeing, a talk by Mark Cocker. Please note venue: Woodbridge Community Hall, Station Road, Woodbridge IP12 4AU. Admission charge £4, full-time students free. Non-members most welcome. **Additional information from Adam Gretton, adam.gretton12@gmail.com Tel 07394 923010**

Saturday 17th October 8am Suffolk Bird Group OUTDOOR EVENT

Autumn Open Morning at Landguard Bird Observatory. Meet at main car park, View Point Road, Felixstowe. Map Ref: TM284319. Post Code: IP11 3TW What3Words: teaching.kidney.hamsters **Leader: Nigel Odin. For details contact Gi Grieco. Tel. 07951 482547.**

Saturday 17th October 11am – 2pm Friends of Holywells Park APPLE DAY

In the orchard on Holywells Park. Come along and enjoy the fruits of Autumn with freshly pressed apple juice and apples galore. Fun for all the family, free event, all welcome.

Sunday 18th October 10am to 1pm Ipswich Wildlife Group SPRING WOOD WORK PARTY

Meet at the field gate at top of bridleway in Kiln Meadow. Park on Marbled White Drive. **Details from Gerry Donlon 07733 968481**

Tuesday 27th October 10.30am RSPB Ipswich MIDWEEK WALK

Holywells Park for winter birds. Meet at Stable Block off Cliff Lane IP3 0PG. TM176432

Wednesday 28th October 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK

'Black Poplars: How to Save a Tree'. Discover more about Native Black Poplars, the situation in Suffolk and what we can do to help, A fascinating talk with David Appleton. Museum Street Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich, IP1 2EF. Please note There is no access from Museum Street. £4 includes tea or coffee.

Saturday 31st October 10am to 3.30pm Ipswich Borough Council Wildlife Team/ Greenways WINTER MEGABASH

Chantry Park. Join the Rangers, Greenways and others for a day of scrub clearing and dead hedging in Beechwater Meadow, Chantry Park – hopefully including a bonfire. Meet in the cricket pavilion car park at what.3.words location: [//jokes.begun.spoon](http://jokes.begun.spoon). **More info from the Wildlife Team on 07747 475494 or email wildlife.team@ipswich.gov.uk**

NOVEMBER

Saturday 7th November and Sunday 8th Suffolk Bird Group OUTDOOR EVENT

Orfordness (National Trust) Reserve. Some places available to stay overnight on Saturday in self-catering dormitories. Map Ref: TM425495. Post Code: IP12 2NU What3Words: permanent.jeeps.decrease For further details and to reserve your place, contact Gi Grieco. Tel. 07951 482547. **Leaders: Gi Grieco and Eddie Bathgate (N.B. Current entrance fees will apply.)**

Thursday 12th November 7.30pm RSPB Ipswich INDOOR MEETING

'Martlesham Wilds, letting nature take the lead'. A look at the development of this new reserve. Jeanette Gosney, Ipswich Group member and Suffolk Wildlife Trust volunteer. Rushmere St Andrew Church Hall, The Street, Rushmere IP5 1DH.

Saturday 14th November 10am – noon Portal Woodlands Conservation Group VOLUNTEER WORK MORNING All ages welcome, no need to book. Meet at the Education Area. For more details go to: pwcg.onesuffolk.net or join our Facebook page by messaging Duncan Sweeting.

Sunday 15th November 9am Suffolk Bird Group OUTDOOR EVENT

Dunwich. Meet at Dunwich beach car park. Map Ref: TM479707. Post Code: IP17 3EN What3Words: rating.couriers.discount **Leader: David Walsh. Tel. 07947 051223.**

Sunday 15th November 9.30am RSPB Ipswich FIELD MEETING

River Stour and Holbrook Bay for autumn birds. Meet at Stutton Church IP9 2SD. TM162344. 2-3hrs 2-3miles. **Leader Tim Kenny.**

Sunday 15th November 10am to 3.30pm Greenways Project WINTER MEGABASH

Belstead Brook Park 1. Join Greenways, IWG and the Friends of BBP for a day of coppicing in Spring Wood. Meet by the stag beetle pile sculpture (what.3.words location: [//zebra.cyber.prude](http://zebra.cyber.prude)) Please park considerably in local streets or contact us for access to park on site. **More info from Greenways: 07736 826076 or email james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk**

Tuesday 24th November 10.30am RSPB Ipswich MIDWEEK WALK

Bramford Open Spaces for winter birds. Meet at Open Spaces car park IP8 4AN. TM126465

Wednesday 25th November 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK

A Brazilian Adventure: Exploring Mato Grosso in search of birds, mammals and more. Ian Barthorpe reveals some of the wildlife wonders he captured on film in South America. Museum Street Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich, IP1 2EF. Please note There is no access from Museum Street. £4 includes tea or coffee.

Thursday 26th November 7.30pm Suffolk Bird Group INDOOR MEETING

A Learner Birder visits Trinidad. Anne Wright. Hintlesham Community Centre, Timperleys, Hintlesham IP8 3PS. Admission charge £3, full-time students free. Non-members most welcome. **Additional information from Adam Gretton, adam.gretton12@gmail.com Tel 07394 923010**

DECEMBER

Saturday 5th December 9.30am RSPB Ipswich FIELD MEETING

River Deben Woodbridge to Kyson Point for winter birds. Meet at Woodbridge Rail Station IP12 4AU. TM276487. Please note parking charges apply. **Leader Stephen Marginson.**

Wednesday 9th December 7.30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust Ipswich Group TALK

Lichens: Join us as Dr Anthony Specia reveals the little-known yet fascinating world of lichens. Museum Street Methodist Church, 17 Black Horse Lane, Ipswich, IP1 2EF. Please note There is no access from Museum Street. £4 includes tea or coffee.

Thursday 10th December RSPB Ipswich INDOOR MEETING

Christmas Social Evening with 'bring and share' finger buffet plus 'Why am I a Birder? The Life and Times of a Group Leader' Tim Kenny, former Ipswich Group Leader and Lifelong Birder.

Saturday 12th/Sunday 13th December Friends of Holywells Park REINDEER WORKSHOP

Meet at the Stable Block in the Park. **More information from Martin Cant 07858 436003 martin.cant@ntlworld.com**

Saturday 12th December 10am to 3.30pm

Greenways Project WINTER MEGABASH Belstead Brook Park 2. Join Greenways, the Friends of Belstead Brook Park and others for a day of scrub management at Kiln Meadow Local Nature Reserve. Hopefully including a bonfire! Meet on site (parking available) near the metal bollard entrance off Bobbits Lane (what.3.words location: ecologist.orchestra.effort)

More info from Greenways: 07736 826076 or email james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk

Sunday 13th December 9am Suffolk Bird Group OUTDOOR EVENT

Shotley Gate. Park in the front of the Bristol Arms or down Bristol Hill. A short riverside walk, then a festive lunchtime snack if desired! Map Ref: TM246336. Post Code: IP9 1QN What3Words: equivocal.variances.infants. **Leader: Anne Wright. Tel. 07767 755965.**

Tuesday 15th December 10.30am RSPB Ipswich MIDWEEK WALK

Kiln Meadow and Spring Wood for winter birds. Meet at Marbled White Drive Ipswich IP8 3TL. TM143417.

Sunday 20th December 10am – noon Portal Woodlands Conservation Group VOLUNTEER WORK MORNING All ages welcome, no need to book. Meet at the Education Area. For more details go to: pwcg.onesuffolk.net or join our Facebook page by messaging Duncan Sweeting.

Sunday 20th December 10am to 1pm Ipswich Wildlife Group SPRING WOOD WORK PARTY Meet at the field gate at top of bridleway in Kiln Meadow. Park on Marbled White Drive. **Details from Gerry Donlon 07733 968481**

JANUARY

Saturday 16th January 2027 10am to 3.30pm Greenways Project WINTER MEGABASH

Martlesham Common Local Nature Reserve. Join Greenways and local volunteers for a day of heathland and woodland management, which may include a bonfire. Meet in the Community Centre Car park off Felixstowe Road, Martlesham. **More info from Greenways: 07736 826076 or email james.baker@ipswich.gov.uk**

Regular Events

THIRD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH 10am - 12:30pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust IPSWICH YOUNG WARDENS

For 11-16 year olds in Holywells Park. Looking for practical experience, whilst making friends? If so, Young Wardens is the group for you!

Book online suffolkwildlifetrust.org

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

Join Ipswich Wildlife Group 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**

LAST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH (except December & January) Ipswich Wildlife Group BOTANICAL SURVEYING OF SPRING WOOD AND SURROUNDING AREA

Meet at 10am by the stag beetle sculpture near Spring Wood. **Details from Leila ipswichwildlifegroup@gmail.com**

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 or call 07736 826076**

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 07722 749440**

FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH 7.30pm - 9pm Ipswich Friends of the Earth MEETING - for venue please phone 07931 585672 or see Facebook page www.facebook.com/ipswichFOE/

SECOND THURSDAY OF THE MONTH 10am Friends of The Dales WORK PARTY

Meet by the notice board at the lower entrance on Dales Road.

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

FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH 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. *Volunteers need to be registered via an informal induction prior to joining us.* **More information from Martin Cant 07858 436003 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**

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 or email fobbp@btinternet.com**

LAST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH 11am-1pm Suffolk Wildlife Trust ECO ACTIONISTS Location varies. A meet-up and creative session for 18-25 year-old eco actionists. **Book online suffolkwildlifetrust.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**



Spring Wood Day 2028

A reminder that Spring Wood Day now takes place every other year - next date will be Monday 1st May 2028.