

Our Vision:

A Parish and its people that are enriched by wildlife, where people enrich the natural world and help to safeguard it for the future.

Our aims are to:

Share knowledge of the wonderful wildlife in the Parish of Chudleigh.

Raise awareness through events and activities that involve and motivate the community.

Encourage positive action by local residents to attract and sustain more wildlife in the town and Parish of Chudleigh.

Conserve and enhance our existing wildlife and local habitats, features and species populations, through working together and with others.

Survey & record what we have, holding and sharing our wildlife records with others.

Advise groups and individuals on biodiversity and land management for wildlife.

Monitor development proposals that may result in damage to important wildlife.

Be environmentally and socially aware and responsible in what we do.

Interested in joining us?

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, are interested in joining the committee, or would like to volunteer, please contact

info.chudleighwild@gmail.com

A little late, but full of action!

Apologies from the editor for the delay in publishing the newsletter. Holidays and other commitments have played their part, but finally here it is and full of action.

What has been going on?

On **April 22nd** John Evans gave a fascinating talk on the geology of Chudleigh. This was followed by two guided walks to look at some of the rock formations and geological history of our town.

On **May 15th** we invited families to join us at Kate Brook, where we dipped for insects, shrimps and fish. Over 60 people dropped by during the afternoon and both children and adults were very excited to see how much wildlife there is in the brook. We will definitely make this an annual event.

June 25th and 26th saw Chudleigh Wild host 'Open Gardens' for the second year. Bobby Hughes organised the event again and twelve gardens were open to the public.



The school vegetable patch

Chudleigh Primary School joined us for the first time, with an impressive show of wildflowers and vegetables. We were delighted to discover that all the children in the school spend quality time working in the area, which is very extensive. Visitors were invited to dip a net into their

sizeable pond, to see what they could find. In total, this year's 'Open Gardens' raised an amazing £2477.58 for charity.

July 7th was our annual 'Swift Night' as part of Swift Awareness Week. We had a record count and you can read more in the 'Chair's Chat' on page 5.



Let's raise it for Hedgehogs.

We have tried, through our newsletter, to raise awareness of our local Hedgehog rescue centre, 'The Chudleigh Hog'.

Claire Larkins and her helpers have been inundated with injured, sick and baby hedgehogs this year, and through their dedication and hard work have managed to return many of them back to the wild. This costs a great deal of money for food, medicines and veterinary assistance, so we decided to make a surprise donation at the Chudleigh Fete.



We presented Claire with a cheque for £100, which will go some way to helping with the ever-growing costs of the rescue centre.

If anyone would like to contribute food or cash to 'The Chudleigh Hog', just go to their website:

<https://www.chudleighhog.com/>

Every little helps!



Family Events



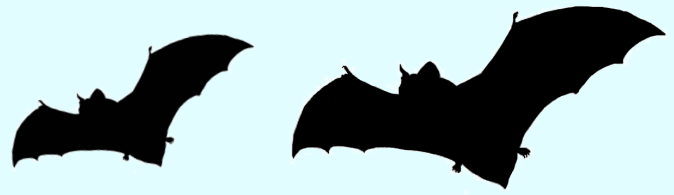
We are trying to engage with more young people, through family events, Scouts, Duke of Edinburgh students etc. We are very aware that the younger our children are when they become interested in nature, the more likely they are to pursue those interests in later life, and we all know how much this benefits our general and mental health, as well as our environment.

On May 15th, our 'Kate Brook Dipping Event' brought in over 60 people during the two hour session, all of whom were totally enthralled by what they found.



Coming soon:

Bat Nights



After the success of last year's bat evenings we have decided to run two events again this year. Over 100 people turned up over the two nights and were delighted to see a selection of birds and bats in the hand. We also had small mammals and Slow Worms to show them just what was living in Oldway Batfields.

This year's dates are:

**Thursday August 18th &
Thursday September 1st**

7.30 p.m. start at the Batfields

Introduce pollinating plants, watch and enjoy!

Many of you have introduced a variety of good plants for pollinators to your gardens. Although this has been a rather disappointing year for insects generally, you may well have noticed that the variety of insects you see has increased. It's still comparatively difficult to get hold of native plants, as our garden centres either don't stock them or can't suggest which of their plants are good for insects.

You can, however, find good healthy wildflower plants online; all those I have bought have arrived in excellent condition. The Chudleigh Wild allotment is also producing a wealth of healthy plants to give away next season as well as seeds from this season's plants.

Add to your garden some food for your birds or hedgehogs, some water for them and some places for them to shelter (log piles, nestboxes etc.) and you will be eligible for one of our **Gardening for Wildlife** signs. They are popping up all over the town!

To claim a sign just contact: info.chudleighwild@gmail.com





RIVER TEIGN RESTORATION PROJECT

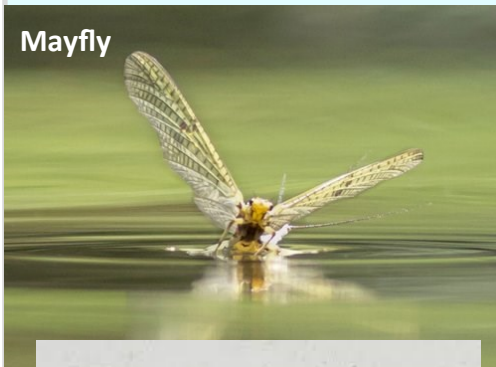
The River Teign Restoration project is a four-year river conservation project centred around improving the river and its tributaries for migratory fish species particularly Salmon and Trout.

Trained members of Chudeigh Wild are helping out with the project by sampling the Kate Brook and our section of the River Teign. This is done by 'kick-netting' in the watercourses and then identifying specific invertebrates, including selected insect larvae.

Why are we doing this?

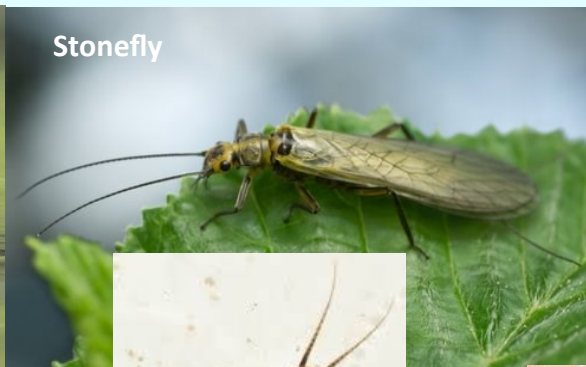
Freshwater invertebrates are at the heart of river and stream ecosystems and are vital links in the aquatic food chain. We are looking specifically for 'riverflies' (the larvae of mayflies, stoneflies and caddis-flies) and freshwater shrimps. These have limited mobility and relatively long life cycles; are present throughout the year; and have specific tolerances to changes in environmental conditions. These make them good indicators of changes in local environmental conditions, such as pollution, siltation and low flows.

Mayfly



Mayfly larva

Stonefly



Stonefly larva

Caddis-fly



Caddis-fly larva

So far the Kate Brook is looking pretty healthy. Let's hope it stays that way!



Chair's Chat

Chudleigh Wild held a 'Swift Watch' evening on 7 July for members and anyone else interested in seeing and learning more about these amazing birds. While there are concerns about the numbers of another insect-eating bird of the air, the Swallow, the same cannot be said for Chudleigh's Swifts this summer.



We located at least 10 active nests, five of which were in the roof at the back of the Town Hall and three on the side of The Globe, with at least one nest each on the side of Gill's shop and behind the Con Club. We also know of potential sites in Woodway Street and Old Exeter Street where there have been nests in the recent past. Please let us know if you see Swifts entering or leaving any of the town's roof spaces. As with the previous two years, birds have visited the apex of a relatively new house in Lower Trindle Close. If only every new house built could incorporate nest-bricks for Swifts, Starlings, House Sparrows and bats! There are no signs yet of Swifts using the nestboxes put up below the traditional (and still occupied) nest sites on the Town

Hall and The Globe, although Sparrows are nesting in at least one of them.

The numbers of 'screaming' Swifts engaged in their spectacular evening displays have been higher than usual. They seem to gather in the evenings and whirl around at high speed before most fly up high for the night (yes, they can sleep on the wing!). During the Swift Watch we saw about 35 over the car park at 9.30 pm and 40-50 were counted a few nights later – about twice the usual numbers. Very little is known about the composition of such gatherings, as some young birds and/or non-breeders may join them. Some young birds remain in their equatorial wintering grounds, while others come back to Europe for several years before breeding. Before Swifts made their homes in our buildings, they nested in caves, clefts in rock faces or in holes in big trees; there is known to be at least one ancient tree in Scotland where hole-nesting still occurs.

Swifts feed on aerial plankton – flying insects and 'ballooning' spiderlings – that they somehow manage to see and catch in their enormous gape. While collecting food for their young, they may cram several hundred food items into a food ball in their mouth: during Swift Watch we were able to see their bulging throats gleaming white in the evening sun. During inclement weather when their aerial food is scarce, nestlings can become torpid for a few days, lowering their body temperature and heart rate. At such times, flocks of adults may gather in their hordes to feed on midges over large water-bodies or follow weather fronts that may concentrate the aerial plankton. Such movements may even take them back across the English Channel!

Having returned to us with typical promptness in early May, after barely three months 'our' Swifts will depart equally promptly in early August. I'm always saddened to realise one day that the skies have gone silent and they're no longer there.

Dave Smallshire

