

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 chudleigh.wild@gmail.com

SPREADING THE WORD ...

Chudleigh Wild supporters are doing an amazing job of letting friends, relatives and neighbours know what we are attempting to achieve.

Over 70 'Gardening for Wildlife' signs are now out about town and we are still getting requests for more. All the seeds and plug plants we offered went very quickly and hopefully some of you are seeing the fruits of your labour.

We have been asked for advice on digging ponds and are always available to have a chat about the best way to dig, stock and maintain a healthy pond.

**So, if you would like to see just a few of our
Chudleigh Gardens, wild, formal and community, visit**

CHUDLEIGH OPEN GARDENS

Saturday June 26th and 27th, 2021

10 am - 4 pm

All proceeds to charity

Tickets £6

(under 16 free)

**Available in advance from Dandelion, Gills
or any participating garden on the day.**

Twelve gardens, including some wildlife gardens, will be open for you to visit. Refreshments available all day, including wood-fired Pizzas, Pimms, light lunches, cream teas, soft drinks, tea and coffee.

The gardens are listed on page 2. Further details, including the food and drink on offer and a map of how to find them, are on the ticket.



List of gardens open to the public:

1. **Woodlands**, Milestone Cross, Old Exeter Road, TQ13 0DR (Saturday & Sunday)
2. **The Church**, Heathfieldlake Hill, Chudleigh TQ13 0DR (Saturday & Sunday)
3. **No. 1 The Square**, Town Centre, TQ13 0LD (Saturday only)
4. **No. 33 Clifford Street**, Chudleigh, TQ13 0LE (Saturday & Sunday 12am - 4pm)
5. **No. 17 Millstream Meadows**, Chudleigh, TQ13 0PG (Saturday & Sunday)
6. **Biddlecombe House**, Ugbrooke, TQ13 0AD (Sunday only)
7. **Parkway Mill**, Parkway Road, Chudleigh TQ13 0JL *No parking on site* (Sunday only)
8. **Cypress House**, Station Hill, TQ13 0EE *Access via Rock Road N.B. restricted parking* (Saturday only)
9. **Strangeways**, Lawn Drive TQ13 0LT. (Saturday & Sunday)
10. **No. 104 Palace Meadow**, Chudleigh TQ13 0PJ (Saturday & Sunday)
11. **No. 8 Twindle Beer**, Chudleigh, TQ13 0JP. *Limited parking* (Saturday only)
12. **The Bat Garden** (off Rock Road)

Our Wildlife Volunteers

We have a growing list of Wildlife Volunteers who carry out the many and varied tasks that make our town so admired and talked about for its commitment to improving the environment.

Lawn Drive has been a 'work in progress' and volunteers work hard to manage the wildflower beds, which are now looking magnificent. The Yellow Rattle seeds have finally germinated in large numbers. This plant is a 'hemiparasite' and stunts the growth of grass, allowing even more wild flowers to flourish. These verges should look even better next year and benefit lots of pollinating insects!

Planting along the wire fence at Millstream Meadow is going well and the new eating apple trees near the skate park have flowered magnificently and all look healthy. The new Oak trees at the top edge are doing well too.

We have been sharing ideas with the **Teignbridge Wildlife Wardens**, who now number more than 60 trained people. Chudleigh has three Wildlife Wardens who have recently hosted a 'Walk and Talk' for Devon Environmental Foundation, the scheme's main funders. They were hugely impressed by what has been done, which was very encouraging. We also took a group of Wildlife Wardens around town last Saturday and were able to share ideas and experiences with them.

One topic we discussed with them were possible plans for the Palace Meadow park area. Chudleigh Town Council have asked Chudleigh Wild to help with the design and management of this space, to give more opportunities for residents of all ages to enjoy themselves and to benefit wildlife. There will be consultation with residents to discuss improvements to the play areas and habitats and land drainage needs.

The future of Palace Meadow park looks bright.

If anyone would like to join our list of volunteers please contact:

Karen Castle - info.chudleighwild@gmail.com



Yellow Rattle

Chudleigh Bats update

The Bat Group meets most Thursdays at different locations around town and has been monitoring the Greater Horseshoe Bats in particular, trying to work out where they are flying and if they have changed their routes as a result of ongoing construction work in Chudleigh.

Numbers of GHBs have been very low so far this spring, due to the unusually cold and wet weather. The large beetles and moths they eat have been very scarce, so these bats have been very late coming out of hibernation. It's quite possible that many will decide not to breed this year.

We plan to run a beginners' bat course for our members later this year. If anyone is interested in coming out with us and learning more about bats, just get in touch with Sue at info.chudleighwild@gmail.com. We have spare bat detectors, so you will be able to borrow one to play with. Most of the group are beginners and just want to understand and learn more about these lovely mammals.



One local couple, while watching bats in their Troarn Way garden, were delighted to discover that they had bats emerging from a gap in lead flashing on their roof. Members of the group subsequently counted no less than 106 Common Pipistrelle bats leaving the roost! The Common Pipistrelle is the commonest bat around Chudleigh and you may have noticed them feeding over your garden or around the street lights. They are tiny and can use an entrance as small as 2cm x 1cm. They love to roost under tiles and behind soffits.

If you see bats coming out of your roof and you think you may have a roost, just let us know and we will come and

check it out for you. Living with bats is easy: they don't smell or cause any damage; in fact, you may never know they're there. If you need to do work which may disturb them we can give advice on free surveys; you will probably be asked to do work in the winter when bats are not there. Just remember, they are protected by law and it is an offence to disturb or destroy a roost.

Sue Smallshire

Chudleigh Wild's 5th annual Community Bat Evening 12th & 26th of August

This event has been so popular that this year we are going to run two evenings so ...

Look out for further details of this exciting event!



Swift Watch - Tuesday 6th & Thursday 8th July



Our swifts are back! Join us to watch their antics around the Town Hall, where several pairs nest.

Meet at 7.30 pm in the car park and watch and count these amazing fliers. They are aerial gymnasts and their shrill calls are captivating.

Some people have put Swift boxes on their houses, in the hope of attracting Swifts to nest. Do let us know if you have a box that a Swift is using.

Swifts also nest in the eaves and other roofs of houses in Chudleigh: keep an eye open for them and let us know!



Everyone loves an orchid!



Bee Orchid

Chudleigh Wild volunteers made several coordinated counts of the orchids and other interesting plants that grow around the A38 junction at Harcombe and in Holman's Wood Holiday Park. The Highways Authority had done a thorough job of cutting and removing excess vegetation over the winter, which made walking around much easier this spring. Flowering was a couple of weeks later than usual because of the cold weather and it seemed that the April frosts may have damaged some of the orchid leaves, but in the end they grew well and some fine specimens of Greater Butterfly Orchid exceeded knee height by mid-June. Although visibility splays on the Exeter-bound approach were mown in late May, a few dozen Common Spotted and several Bee Orchids and Twayblades survived and flowered – this happens each year, so at least some orchids can survive this apparently barbaric treatment!

Seven species of orchids flowered this year, including about 300 Greater Butterfly, 161 Early Purple, 5 Southern Marsh, 6 Bee, 38 Twayblades and well over 1000 Common Spotted. These exclude dozens of Common Spotted Orchids in a meadow at Holman's Wood, where 9 Bee Orchids and one Pyramidal Orchid flowered alongside the entrance drive. The orchids are quite an attraction to visitors and Chudleigh Wild has provided a laminated poster, illustrating four of the species, for the reception office.

Proud as we are of our orchids, we were very envious of an amazing display of over 1000 Bee Orchids that flowered on a sparsely-vegetated bank this year at Trago Mills!

Tess Frost & Dave Smallshire



Chair's Chat

Exceptional is the word to describe spring 2021! April was very dry and very cold, while most of May was cold, wet and windy. It was as bad as any spring I can remember, and the Met Office records seem to support that. As a result, insects were extremely scarce, which will have implications not just for them but also for the bats and breeding birds that depend upon them. Sun and warmth finally arrived at the end of May and continued to mid-June, when grasses and other plants seemed to surge up in front of our very eyes!

Swallows and up to 25 House Martins could be seen over town in April and the first Swifts appeared on 1 May, although apart from a flock of 34 on 11 May, they were scarce or absent most of the month. The Swifts could have flown away to glean midges rising from lakes, where thousands often gather in bad weather, or even sought better weather back on the Continent! Perhaps interested in making a meal of one of them, a Hobby flew over on 2 May. Our little Rookery off Coburg Crescent suddenly became quiet as the young fledged around 11 May, although up to 11 noisy birds were sometimes back around the Oak tree in mid-June.

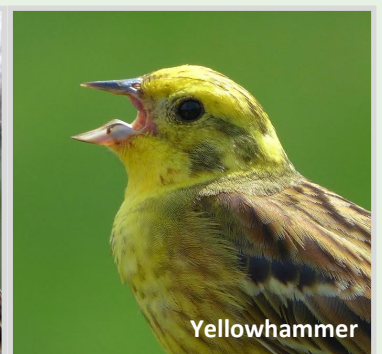
As part of the now annual 'spring holiday' migration of immature Red Kites to Cornwall in anticyclonic conditions, singles were seen over Harcombe on 28 May and over The Glen next day. Four Peregrine chicks were ringed by licenced climbers at Palace Quarry on 26 May. They were described as being fit and healthy, although after fledging one was grounded at Rock House and had to be returned to the quarry by one of the climbers. Listen out for the juveniles in the coming weeks as they screech over the town, honing their flying and hunting skills with their parents. Dippers bred as usual along Kate Brook, but with the water level very high during the May rains, one of the parents was seen diving in a nearby garden pond and feeding a juvenile – exceptional behaviour for this species!



After discovering Firecrests in the older spruce plantations on Haldon last spring, I was surprised to find at least three singing in deciduous trees in Riding Parks this year. Ironically, given the cold spring, this beautiful but elusive species has colonized Devon with the help of climate warming. Another rare species, which has its stronghold in South Devon, the Cirl Bunting, has a toehold in the Parish and a singing bird was seen in June.

This year I stayed in the Parish for the Global Birdwatch on 9 May and was pleased to find 55 species. It was heartening that our limited areas of arable land north-east of the town produced 4 Skylark, 2 Whitethroat and 5 Yellowhammer territories, with 6 Linnets and a Lesser Whitethroat nearby. The southern part of Haldon held Skylark, Stonechat, Tree Pipit, Whitethroat, Willow

Warbler, Crossbill, Linnet and Redpoll, while other sightings included Little Grebe, Sparrowhawk, 15 Chiffchaffs, 10 Blackcaps, Firecrest, Dipper, Grey Wagtail, 6 Song Thrushes, 10 Chaffinches, only 2 Greenfinches and 21 Siskins.



Birds have been much more obvious than usual at our garden feeders this spring, taking sunflower hearts especially. Most notable have been Siskins, which brought along an early family on 4 May and reached a peak of eight together on 20 June. Jay and Magpie were also more in evidence than usual, and one of the latter was seen bashing a Slow-worm on the study roof.

There were some notable ornithological events from sites just outside the Parish. Oystercatchers nested on the roof of Bookers in Kingsteignton for a second year - these are usually coastal breeders; one of a pair nesting in a field at Darts Farm, Topsham, is ringed and known to be at least 40 years old! Common Sandpipers were found with young at a Bovey Basin claypit - one of only two known pairs in England south of the Pennines! I wasn't hopeful that this year's national survey of Turtle Doves would find any in their old haunts in Haldon Forest, but I was delighted to find one singing there; this species has declined by over 90% in Britain in the last 25 years.

Dave Smallshire

What's that?

Identifying what's in the garden or what you find on your walks can be quite tricky, as there's so much wildlife out there. Field guides can be daunting for the beginner, as there are pages and pages of animals and plants that can all look so similar, and the results of Google searches are not always accurate.

The Fields Studies Council (FSC) produces a whole series of laminated fold-out guides for a whole range of species, from wildflowers to hoverflies, birds to reptiles. They feature many of the commoner species, which is always a good way to start. There is even one on Garden Bugs and Beasties, which will keep children amused for hours. These ID charts are cheap, light, waterproof and really easy to follow. They are on sale at RSPB shops and on-line at:

https://www.field-studies-council.org/product-category/publications/?fwp_publication_type=fold-out-guide

and several other outlets. Why not start collecting them as you start getting interested in particular species?

