

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

Charity Open Gardens 2025 was a resounding success!



Charity Open gardens took place over two weekends this year. The weather was amazing for both and, although we didn't sell quite as many tickets as last year, we raised over £2,500 for charity.

Thanks to all our wonderful gardeners for their time and the huge effort they put into making this event such a success.

The charities who received the money raised are: *Rowcroft, Devon Air Ambulance, Guide Dogs, Gorce, Prickly Hedge, Chudleigh Youth Centre, the Parish Church, The Garden Show and Chudleigh Wild.*

We are collecting feedback from everyone and will set a date for next years event as soon as possible. If you think you might like to open your garden next year, please contact info.chudleighwild@gmail.com



Chudleigh Garden Show

The 'Best Wildlife Garden' award winners were Graham and Julia Moysey, for their amazing Court Ralla garden.

Runners up were Dave and Liz Pilgram of Old Exeter St. and a special prize went to young Jasper Kingswell, whose knowledge and enthusiasm for his Lawn Drive garden amazed and impressed the judges.



Autumn/Winter talks and walks

Friday 10th October at 7.30pm in the Woodway Room, Town Hall



Wildlife of the Teign – from moor to estuary

Dave Smallshire



Waxcap Walk at Deer Park Farm: Sunday 9th Nov. 2pm-4pm

• MAGIC MUSHROOMS •



Waxcap fungi are BEAUTIFUL - come and see them at Deer Park Farm TQ13 0NH

We will be searching for the many different species found on this Nationally Important Grassland Fungi site - and hope to find the Ballerina, Honey, Slimy, Golden, Crimson and Scarlet Waxcaps and more!

We aren't looking for edible fungi to eat - we are looking at rare and extraordinary fungi. Go to [BBC waxcaps at Deer Park farm](http://bbc.waxcaps.atdeerparkfarm) to find out more.

Our farm is very steep, so may not be suitable if you have any mobility problems. Some of the fungi

that we find will be poisonous, so please only bring children who will follow your instructions, in order to keep them safe. Email deerparkfarm@btinternet.com to book places, which are limited. More details when you book. **No dogs.**

Audrey Compton



Murder in the Garden

Speaker - Wildlife Warden Shira Rüb

There is life and death in your garden and that's all part of a thriving, healthy natural system. But what happens when we try to control what lives and what dies? Come and find out.

Friday 13th November at 7.30pm in the Woodway Room, Town Hall



Lichen Walk - 26th September 2025



On a rather dull and wet Friday morning a dozen people from Chudleigh and its surroundings were introduced to lichens on stone walls, young trees, old trees, paving stones and plastic benches.

We learnt that some lichens need fresh air, some are more tolerant of air pollution and some even enjoy nitrogen from fertiliser dust. Noses were pressed to trees and stones as we looked through x10 hand lenses and our photos showed the absolute variety and beauty of their colour and form.



Thanks to Anna and Sonia for a fascinating morning and a relatively simple explanation of how lichens work.

If you wish to take this further the British Lichen Society is open to all, with free Zoom courses to learn all about them. There is also a South West Lichen Group that arranges field visits throughout Devon and beyond; everyone is very friendly and helpful. If anyone is interested in hearing about South West Lichen Group events, email swlichens@britishlichensociety.org.uk, and if interested in joining their WhatsApp group, where we share photos and lichen chat, please include your phone number in the email.

Tessa Frost





Annual Community Bat Evening



Photo: *Emma Smith*

A bumper crowd, many of them children, turned up for our annual Bat Night this year. Over 70 people were wowed by the catch, which included a Blackbird, a Blackcap, Common and Soprano Pipistrelles and a Greater Horseshoe Bat.

Each year, Mark Wills, ecologist and licenced bat and bird ringer, gives up an evening to run this exciting event. For him it's a family event, as helpers include his three children. Although still at primary school, it's noticeable that each year they are becoming more and more accomplished at helping out.

The event is held in the Devon Wildlife Trust fields, known as the Oldway

Batfields Reserve, at the lower end of Oldway. The land was given to the Trust in mitigation for the Lower Trindle Close housing estate, which encroached on a well used route to a feeding area used by the Greater Horseshoe Bats that live in Chudleigh Caves. This rare bat feeds mainly on large moths and dung beetles. The fields are grazed annually by organic cattle that are not treated with pesticides that kill the dung beetles.

It's hard for children, and some adults, to wait for the bats to arrive, so having a few birds to show is always exciting. We also try to have information and this year a quiz, as well as our famous bat biscuits, to keep them amused. The joy and excitement on their faces is wonderful as the first bats arrive in the nets, and are brought out on show. The rarer ones are ringed by Mark, as part of ongoing research, which is essential to understanding and monitoring these wonderful mammals.

Chudleigh Wild has a number of bat detectors and these are handed out so that people can hear the amazing echolocation sounds that the bats make as they fly. This is their means of negotiating obstacles in the dark and of finding their food prey.

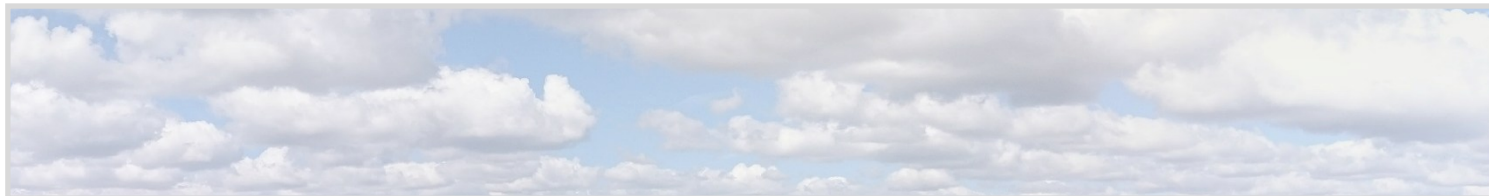


Photo: *Emma Smith*

If you haven't experienced this event yet, watch out for next year's Bat Night.

Sue Smallshire





The wonders of botanical surveys

When you volunteer to join a serious organisation, such as the Teignbridge Wildlife Wardens, you don't expect to be on your hands and knees in an overgrown cemetery! But there was a reason for it.

The Wildlife Wardens (WW) are part of the organisation **Action on Climate in Teignbridge (ACT)**. This is a voluntary organisation promoting knowledge and action on sustainable living and increasing and improving the biodiversity of wildlife in Teignbridge.



Timothy

No qualifications are necessary to be a WW. There are more than 90 of us based in Parishes working with councils and communities to improve nature everywhere. Some members are very knowledgeable, with skills in identifying birds, insects, mammals and plants, while many of us are enthusiastic amateurs, learning all the time.

Botanical surveys are quite simple: you just identify the plant species in a given area and record their relative abundance. The variety and abundance indicate how good the site is for insects and therefore birds, bats and other animals that depend on them. Then recommendations can be made to

improve the management for wildlife.

In Chudleigh and the Teign Valley we have surveyed farmlands, woodlands and orchards, some identified as maybe good habitats and some volunteered as the landowners are interested. As part of the service we have been looking at Teignbridge Council property, which is why we ended up in a large graveyard.



Common Cat's-ear



Common Bird's-foot-trefoil

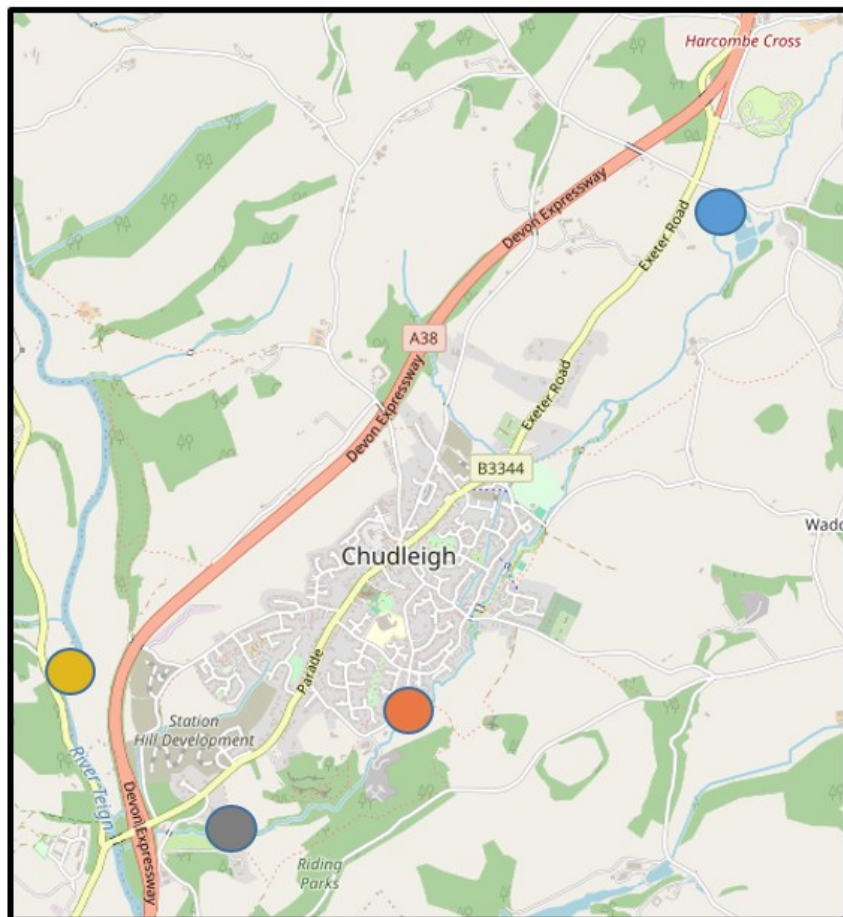
It was a very hot day with dried out and dead leaves all over the place, but we could see eight grass species, with lovely names like Cock's-foot, False Oat-grass, Timothy and Yorkshire-fog. There were also at least 30 other species, mostly common species like Cat's-ear, Common Bird's-foot-trefoil, Mouse-ear and Ox-eye Daisy, but oddities as well like Wild Madder.

However, most fun was had looking at a small, creeping yellow-flowered plant around some of the graves: Creeping Cinquefoil or Trailing Tormentil? Four petals or five, sprays of three leaves or five?

Tessa Frost



Riverflies sampling



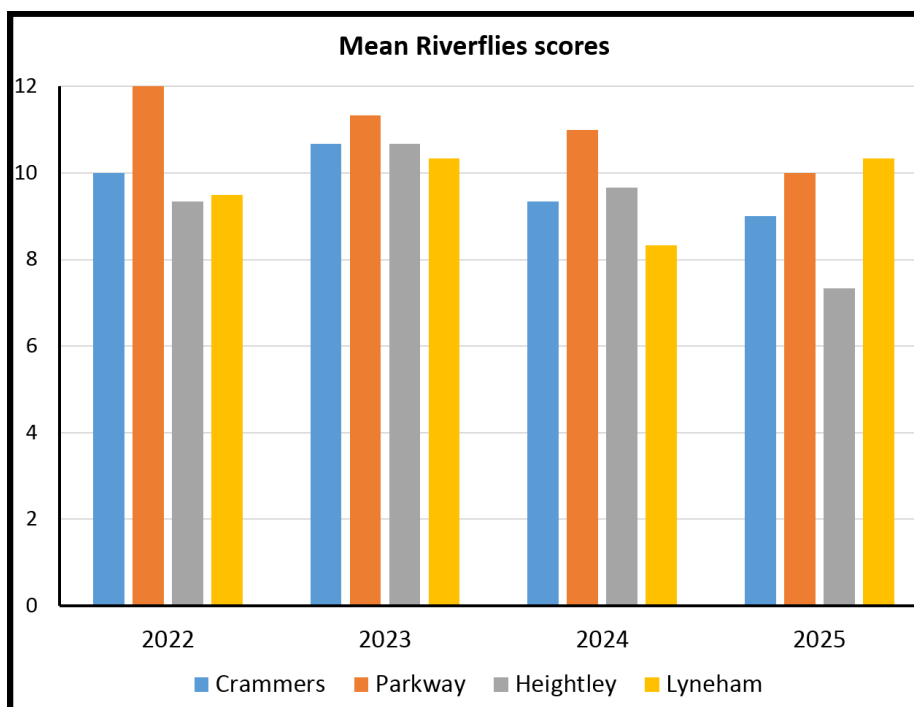
For the last four years a small group of volunteers from Chudleigh Wild has sampled the waters of Kate Brook and the River Teign in the Parish for 'Riverflies'. These are specific groups of aquatic invertebrates that indicate the health of a watercourse.

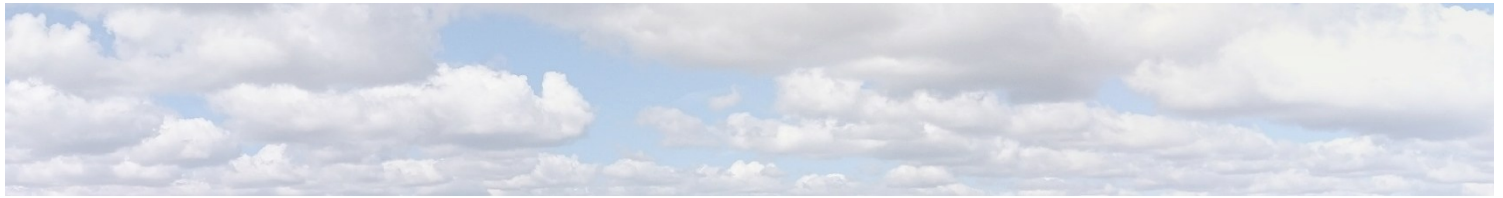
Training and equipment was given by the three-year River Teign Restoration Project, which finished earlier this year. We have vowed to continue this work, along with monthly water quality monitoring.

Riverflies are sampled in late May, late July and late September using a standard protocol, so the results can be compared over time and against local and national data. Eight groups are identified (including caddis-flies, mayflies, stoneflies and freshwater shrimps) and their numbers estimated, giving a combined score. Looking back over four years of scores gives us an indication of possible trends in the health of our watercourses.

The map above shows the sampling sites (the colours relate to those on the graph). All three sites along Kate Brook show declines in average scores, but surprisingly not the site on the Teign just downstream of our sewage treatment plant. I say surprisingly, because the river bed is coated in sewage fungus and we have yet to find a freshwater shrimp there. That said, none of our scores has yet fallen below an alert level that would trigger resampling and contact with the Environment Agency.

With potential threats including sediment discharge from building sites and leakage from septic tanks, we will continue our efforts, but would always welcome additional help – some of us find it increasingly difficult to walk along a slippery, stony watercourse!





Chair's Chat

Love, hate or tolerate?

The world seems to be increasingly full of division and hatred, and not just between human factions. What about here in our gardens? How do you feel about slugs, aphids, wasps, rats or Magpies? Do you hate them, or tolerate them? Could you even learn to love them?



Our love of gardening and exotic plants in particular has encouraged the translocation of many species (and inevitably their associated pests and diseases) around the world, via plant breeders and garden centres. The former have bred out natural plant defences in order to make some edible to humans. This has rendered many cultivars at increased risk of attack by pests and diseases. You only have to look at the vast array of biocides in garden centres!



Many species of plants have escaped the confines of gardens and become established in the wild. These invasive alien species are one of the biggest drivers of global biodiversity loss, along with climate change and habitat fragmentation. If allowed to colonise unchecked, such species can have irreversible negative impacts on the integrity of the natural environment and associated ecosystem services. In spite of widespread efforts, there has been an almost exponential increase in new introductions to Britain in the last 20 years.

The BSBI Plant Atlas 2020 (plantatlas2020.org) records 3,495 plant species in Britain, of which 49% are native and a shocking 51% are non-natives that have been deliberately or accidentally introduced into the wild by humans. So, there are now more introduced plants growing in the wild in Britain than natives, with many originating from gardens and then spreading to establish self-sustaining populations. Some of these, like Japanese Knotweed, are feared and despised, while others, such as Buddleia, are tolerated (if not loved).



Judging for the Wildlife Garden Award recently emphasised how wildlife-friendly gardening can really help our native wildlife and avoid the worries that aliens species can bring. Have a think about your garden. Maybe 'rewilding' it would help you to think differently about those pests and diseases ... and stop you reaching for the sprayer? It would be great if humanity could learn to be more tolerant and accepting.

Dave Smallshire

