

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



What do Chudleigh's Greater Horseshoe Bats do in winter?

Research Fellow Katie Allan tracked the winter activity of the Greater Horseshoe Bats from Chudleigh Caves during 2022-24, using an Automated Radio Telemetry System. Come and see what she discovered

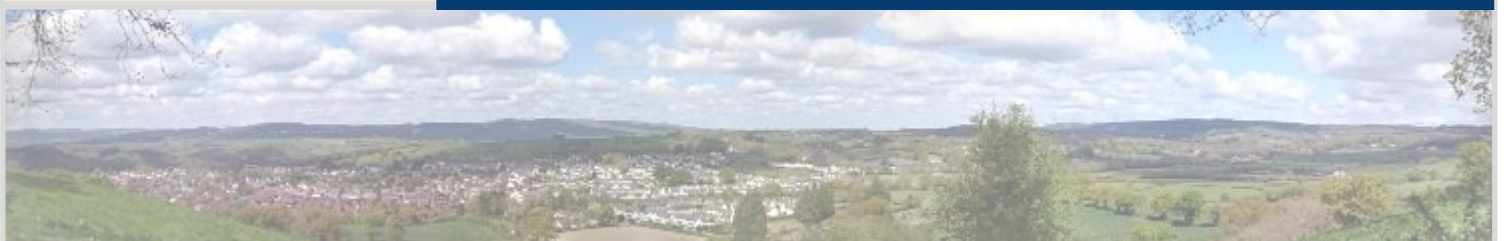
Thursday October 22nd
Chudleigh Constitutional Club
49 Fore Street, TQ13 0HS

7.30pm

Bar opens at 7pm



Free, but donations welcome



Chair's Chat



Hummingbird Hawk-moth

Phew, it was a scorcher, wasn't it? Five heatwaves between May and August made for quite an exceptional summer – in many ways. As a fan of insects, I was astonished at the unprecedented pulses of rare migrants that appeared in Britain. You may well have noticed that it's been a bumper year for Painted Lady and Clouded Yellow butterflies and Hummingbird Hawk-moth. Moth enthusiasts also found lots of unusual species in their traps.

As the County Dragonfly Recorder for Devon, I can vouch that it's been the best year in living memory for the range of dragonfly species recorded and the numbers found. Two new species for Devon have been found and several others appeared in larger numbers than ever before and laid eggs. But exciting as it's been for dragonfly watchers and other naturalists, this is really not good news at all!



Clouded Yellow

The United Nations Environment Programme recently published their 'Limiting Overshoot' report. It warns that ecosystems fundamentally disturbed in their function will not recover if the Earth's temperature rises above 1.5°C. The climate crisis and a host of related issues were explored in an event in Westminster last autumn – the '**People's Emergency Briefing**' – when world experts spoke to an audience of several hundred politicians and influencers.

This briefing was filmed and summaries of each of the nine topic areas covered have been made into a film that is being shown all around the country. Each topic summary is followed by reactions from a wide range of people, and the whole production is presented by Chris Packham. The topics covered are:

Weather extremes

Climate

Tipping points

Food security

Health

National security

Nature

Economics

Energy transition

I found that what is said about Nature is less interesting than the other topics, which are further from my comfort zone. I consider myself pretty well conversed with environmental matters, but I certainly learned things from this film. Put all together with one punch coming after another, it could be seen as shocking – but there are some really positive take-home messages. I thoroughly recommend you see it. Chudleigh recently hosted a showing at the Con. Club. If you missed it, there's another chance to see it at the Woodway Room (see next page).

Dave Smallshire





People's Emergency Briefing

On the climate and nature crisis

Chudleigh Town Hall Woodway Room

23 October 2026, film begins promptly at 7pm

This 50-minute film, presented by Chris Packham, is being widely screened in communities and workplaces across the UK to build public support for urgent action on our climate and nature crisis.



Film screening promptly at 7pm, Friday 23rd October 2026, followed by short facilitated discussion.

All welcome - free admission

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Bats in Chudleigh, 2026



If you feel that this newsletter is rather 'bat heavy', that's because our committed and growing Bat Group have been doing some amazing work this year.

This is the seventh year that the Chudleigh Wild Bat Group has been monitoring bat movements around the Parish. Chudleigh is of particular interest in the bat world because Chudleigh Rock Caves are home to maternal and winter roosts of the rare Greater Horseshoe Bat. Also notable is that 13 of the UK's 18 species of bats have been found in the Parish.

In spring we were out on eight evenings, from half an hour before sunset to one hour after. We use Magenta 5 bat detectors that can tune in to the echolocation calls, inaudible to us but made audible by the machine. We can identify two pipistrelle species at 45 and 55kHz, Noctules at 25kHz, Greater Horseshoes at 80kHz and Lesser Horseshoes at 110kHz.

On the first few evenings it was chilly and very few bats were seen, but on a warmer night in the Ugbrooke Stream valley we detected nine Greater Horseshoe Bats, some Noctules and plenty of Common and Soprano Pipistrelles on the hillside near Riding Parks wood.

We had to wait for warmer weather in April before we detected Greater Horseshoes crossing Station Hill. These bats follow a traditional route across the top of Station Hill, Oldway Batfields and through the tunnel under the A38. From there, they can find large moths and beetles in the pasture land up the Teign Valley.

Millstream Meadow Park was very busy in late April, with a number of Greater Horseshoe passes, Noctules and both pipistrelles, as well as a Daubenton's Bat over Kate Brook. It's very reassuring that bats are still passing through and around the town. This may have something to do with the reduced brightness of the street lighting, and in particular the lighting at the entrance to The Oaks housing development, which was changed from bright blue/white to warmer yellow/white lights. Devon Highways also agreed to lower the intensity of all the LED lights by 40% after commuter hours.

Greater Horseshoe Bats, in particular, avoid lit-up areas and there is no doubt that recent housing developments and new street lighting have impacted on the traditional routes to their feeding grounds. We now plan to monitor their movement around the new development land behind the Cemetery and the Skate Park, to determine the impacts from loss of potential feeding areas there.

Detecting and identifying bats has become much easier in recent years. With the help of the sophisticated equipment we have now acquired and the use of the 'Acoustic Pipeline', one of the packages developed and used by professionals, we can get an accurate identification of the species and, together with the tracking results from Katie Allan's study, a clearer picture of where our Chudleigh bats are flying.

As well as enjoying tracking the bats, our Bat Group sends its findings to the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre, and in turn they are used to inform the planning authorities.

If you interested in learning more and taking part in the surveys and analysis, contact:

Tessa Frost ratfrost@gmail.com



More Bat Events!

Over the summer, undergraduate Reuben Evans has been carrying out bat surveys as part of his university course. We decided that a repeat of the surveys carried out prior to the building of Lower Trindle Close and The Oaks would be an interesting project for him and would inform us of any changes in numbers and behaviour following construction. He has now completed his surveys and will report back and give us a talk in due course.

On 22 August Mark Wills and fellow bat catchers came to run a training course for our Bat Group. We had a very successful and exciting evening, learning more about bat biology and ecology and helping to erect the mist nets and harp trap used to catch them. An added bonus was watching Mark, a licenced bird ringer, ring, sex and age several birds that entered the nets early in the evening. The ringing of both bats and birds has produced invaluable information on their numbers, movements and age over many years of data.



Mark with a Greater Horseshoe Bat

Bat night on 5 September drew about 100 people to the Batfields to see tiny Common Pipistrelles and our local speciality, Greater Horseshoe Bat. This regular event seems to bring in more people each year. The children are always wowed by seeing a bat in the hand, as are the adults of course. The popularity of this event just shows how many people care about our bats, which are so vulnerable to changes in their surroundings.

Sue Smallshire



Riverflies - a desperate plea for help!



A mayfly nymph

As part of the 'Teign Restoration Project', a number of us were trained to carry out surveys of Kate Brook and our local stretch of the River Teign. A few years on, some of the stalwarts now find the kick-sampling and stone-washing physically difficult and appeal for some younger and/or fitter, enthusiastic helpers. Do you fancy getting involved with some valuable and rewarding 'citizen science'?

We catch and identify eight different groups of aquatic invertebrates that together indicate the water quality. Surveys are carried out three times a year, late in May, July and September. Our results are collated, along with others from the Teign catchment, and fed into a national dataset. If necessary, warnings can be sent to the Environment Agency for possible action. It's really important that we continue this valuable monitoring and keep a close eye on our local watercourses.

Training will be provided in how to do the sampling and identification. If you would like to know more or are interested in joining us, please contact Dave Smallshire (davesmall@btinternet.com, 07853 216239).



Gardening for Wildlife

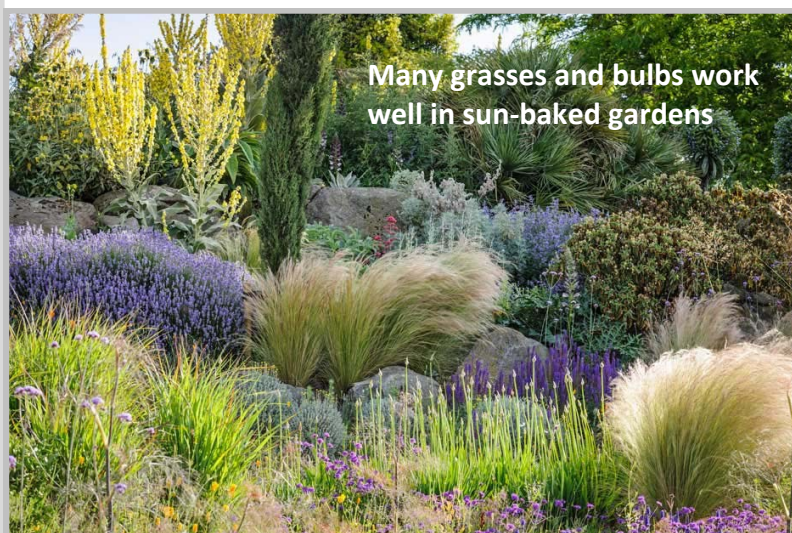
There is a growing enthusiasm for gardening in ways that are beneficial to our local wildlife. Recent events, like the Chudleigh Garden Show, have been a great success and brought together gardeners who can share ideas, discuss the avoidance of harmful pesticides and share the joys of what they have been seeing in their gardens.

During the Covid 'lockdown', we spent more time in our gardens and began to appreciate how relaxing and satisfying this was. We could focus on exactly what was going on in our own little haven and work towards enhancing it, both for the wildlife and our own enjoyment.

Let's not step back now that life is busy again. There are so many things we can do to protect the little things that are essential for the survival of our planet and to benefit our mental health.

There are many newbuilds in Chudleigh now and this could be a chance to make your new garden something really special. If you have a new garden or you are not satisfied with the one you have, there's a host of websites that can help you to re-think your space. One I found particularly useful was the RSPB website:

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/helping-nature/what-you-can-do/activities/planting-plan-for-wildlife-gardens>



With the fast change in our climate, we will have to think about what best to plant to survive heatwaves and hosepipe bans. Many of our native wildflower plants are much more resilient to these conditions and much less attractive to slugs and snails. Worth thinking about.

Among the non-natives with great nectar resources are Lavender, Salvia, Rosemary, Sedum and Buddleia. These have been the great survivors in my garden this year and have all attracted bees, hoverflies and butterflies in large numbers.

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/garden-inspiration/conditions/full-sun>

Chudleigh Wild member Mary Rush has been making new 'Gardening for Wildlife' signs.

Many of you already have these in your gardens, but may need a replacement, as they don't last for ever. Let us know and we will provide a new one.

If you don't have one, would like to display one and feel that you meet the criteria:

Providing shelter for wildlife - bird boxes, log piles, hedgehog houses etc.

Planting pollinator-friendly plants - to attract bees, butterflies and other insects

Providing food and water - for birds and hedgehogs

Creating habitats - ponds, unmown areas, log piles etc.

contact us at: info.chudleighwild@gmail.com

