

ChudleighWild Newsletter February 2021

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

With Spring fast approaching, we see Snowdrops, Primroses and Daffodils coming into flower and our thoughts are turning to gardening plans for 2021.

We are all becoming increasingly aware of how important insects are to the survival of humanity, through legendary presenters like Sir David Attenborough, but also through popular programmes such as Countryfile and Winterwatch.

Presenters are desperate to explain to us how the loss of insects, and particularly pollinators, is putting our planet at risk of catastrophe during our lifetime. With our minds focussed on the Covid 19 crisis, that we are all coping with at present, it's hard to see beyond the next few months, but one message is clear: we must take action.

There are many positive things we can do to encourage insects back into our towns cities and countryside. If we can all do just a few things in our own gardens this spring, the impact across the whole of Chudleigh will be huge, and the enjoyment we will get from watching bees, hoverflies, butterflies and other beautiful insect will be our reward.

With this in mind, Chudleigh Wild is launching ...





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The *Gardening for Wildlife* project not only hopes to encourage us all to welcome insects and other wildlife into our gardens, but to understand which plants and flowers, many of which are very beautiful, easy to grow and resilient, are the most important for pollen and nectar.

- We have prepared a leaflet to help people to understand what we are trying to achieve across Chudleigh, and will be delivering one to every house in the parish.
- We will be there to answer questions and advise on the planting you can do to encourage insects.
- We will let you know how to share your garden with other wildlife.
- We hope to provide a source of free plants and information pamphlets.

We will post suggestions and further information, including ideas for making your own nest boxes, bug hotels, etc. on our Chudleigh Wild web page: www.chudleigh-tc.gov.uk/chudleigh-wild/

- We will post fun things to encourage your children to take part.
- We will ask if you can do just one thing from each column below to encourage insects and other wildlife into your garden.

Food	Water	Shelter	Management
Bird feeders Food for Hedgehogs	Wildlife pond (without fish)	Climbing plants for nesting and feeding	Leave perennials standing until spring
Nectar rich flowers	Bog garden or permanent wet area	Mature trees	Compost garden and kitchen waste
Flowers, fruits, seeds available all year	Bird bath	Native shrubs or hedge	NO pesticides, including slug pellets
Shrubs and trees with nuts and berries	Water left out for hedgehogs and insects	Log piles or tree stumps	Long grass area or nettle patch
Wildflower meadow or nectar rich lawn	Save water and use rainwater butt	Bird, bat, hedgehog or bee/insect box	Allow hedgehog access into your garden

We will also give you a free sign to help promote your garden as wildlife friendly.



Have you seen frogspawn in the parish in 2021?



We asked you to report your sightings of frogspawn and to let us know where and when you find it. The first report, which was accompanied by the photo (left), came from Max and Archie Cornish. They win first prize - well done boys!

Please keep your records coming in, as all of this information is very valuable in monitoring the declining numbers of frogs in Devon and across Britain.



Toads will be spawning soon as well. Their spawn is more difficult to see, as it is under the water. It forms these beautiful necklaces (below) and is attached to plants below the surface. Toads are reported to have declined by 68% in the UK over the last 30 years. We would particularly welcome records of toad spawn.

What is a record?

For biological record purposes, a record should have:

- The species (what)
- The date (when)
- The location (where)
- The name of the person sending the record (who)

Remember: **what, when, where, who!**

Send your records to: info.chudleighwild@gmail.com



For children, students, educators and parents!

While writing some information for our webpage, to help and encourage us all to make our gardens more wildlife friendly, I came across the Wildlife Groups website and was blown away by the wonderful things they have posted for both young and older children to explore and to make. **This really is an outstanding resource.**



The Wildlife Trusts is an organisation made up of 46 local Wildlife Trusts, including our own Devon Wildlife Trust. Their website is full of interesting information for both adults, students and children of all ages.



You will find loads of ideas in the *Wildlife Watch* section, which features things for kids to make, including bird boxes, binoculars, bug hotels, bird feeders and much more. There are also colouring sheets to download and hundreds of facts about wildlife that will inspire them.

Below is just one of the sheets showing how to build an insect hotel. You will find this and so much more at:

<https://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk/activities>



Other posters include:

How to make a bird box

Make your own binoculars

Make a bird feeder

How to rock pool

And loads more!

There are amazing 'spotter' charts to help you identify species including:

Moth Spotter, Shoreline Spotter, Birds of Prey Spotter, Spring Flower Spotter and so on.

For those looking for teaching materials go to:

<https://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk/activities>

Sue Smallshire



Did you know that we have a page on the Town Council website?

www.chudleigh-tc.gov.uk/chudleigh-wild/

Chat from the new Chair

At the AGM in January, Tessa Frost completed five years as Chair and handed over the reins to me. Tess has done us proud during her term of office, steering us ably through the establishment and development of Chudleigh Wild. For this we are very grateful. The Committee now looks like this:

Officers: Dave Smallshire (Chair), Sue Smallshire (Secretary), Rod Blackshaw (Treasurer)

Wildlife Wardens: Vicci Camm, Tessa Frost, Sue Smallshire

Other Committee members:

Vicci Camm, Audrey Compton, Jenny Davies, Tessa Frost, Kelly Gayler, Bobby Hughes, Greg MacQueen, Alison Philips, Mary Rush, Carole Smart, John Whetman.



After the AGM, Audrey Compton outlined the Wildlife Wardens scheme developed by the Ecology Group of Action on Climate in Teignbridge (ACT). Then I gave an illustrated talk on last year's wildlife highlights; for those of you who missed it, you can watch a video of it on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZA-fjnJ898E>,

as well as my 'Chudleigh's Amazing Wildlife':

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L4kRm5IA_fU.

Thanks go to Karen Castle for updating our webpage recently; do take a look - there are new things that

might interest you. Among these is a series of 'checklists' of Chudleigh's wildlife that detail the species of animals and plants found in our Parish. Our thanks go to the local experts who compiled the checklists. As well as being historic documents, they are designed to raise awareness of all the wonderful things that can be seen on our doorstep and I hope they will encourage you to tell us about your observations. ACT is working with the Devon Biodiversity Record Centre to produce an online recording system for us all to submit our wildlife sightings centrally. Yes, we can all be citizen scientists!

The RSPB's *Big Garden Birdwatch* took place at the end of January. It's been running for over 40 years, is the world's largest wildlife survey and one of the biggest citizen science projects. The final results aren't out yet, but perhaps Chudleigh contributed the only garden Dipper? Remarkably, one was feeding in Glen Cottage garden pond, which is alongside Kate Brook; this is very unusual behaviour for this classic bird of fast-flowing rivers and streams. Kate Brook also has a few Brown Trout that come to the surface to take bread thrown into the water, but another piece of remarkable behaviour was videoed further upstream last year, by Millstream Meadow: an Eel poking its head out of the water to take bread from the bank!

Dave Smallshire

