



## **Report for the Annual Parish Meeting April 10<sup>th</sup> 2018**

The Wildlife Group was formed as a result of the original Parish Plan. Angela Mace, the group's Secretary until 2017, took the initiative to start up the group in 2005 as so many people expressed an interest in wildlife and the local environment. The aims of the group remain upheld to this day. From these early meetings, ideas for projects were generated of which several have been acted on and we hope make a positive difference to our local wildlife.

This year WWG designed a booklet to welcome new members to the group and to inform everyone about its activities and wildlife conservation projects. It describes the five group projects: The Verges and Pollinators Project; The Barn Owl Project; The Swift Project; The Spotted Flycatcher Project and The Hedgehog Project. It also describes what we do to keep records of what we see and where to report wildlife sightings. The booklets have been distributed to all households in Waldringfield and the neighbouring villages of Hemley and Newbourne. We hope that members and residents will find the booklet informative and interesting to read.

This has been a big project for our small but active group. It has been entirely the work of a group of members including several of the photographic illustrations designed and formatted by Christine Fisher Kay with a final edit by Ian Fisher Kay. Special thanks to Sally Redfern, Bunny King, Christine Fisher Kay for their written contributions and to Chris Moreton, Peter Maddison, Alexis Smith and Christine Fisher Kay for their photographic records and to Swift Conservation and RSPB Ben Andrews for providing the wonderful photos of Swifts in Flight and Swift Chicks.

The group's membership has remained steady and there is good attendance at our business meetings and the group's bi-monthly talks are well attended. The group is coordinated by Linda Wilkins supported by Anthony Mason as Treasurer and Jill Winter as Secretary. Sadly, we said farewell and thank you to Angela Mace who stepped down at the 2017 AGM from her position as Secretary which she held for twelve years. The good news was that Jill Winter stepped up and has taken on the role which means that the group can continue.

### **Illustrated Talks by Wildlife Experts 2017/2018**

In June 2017 Peter Ross Countryside Officer for Norse gave a passionate talk on veteran tree management followed by a walk to look at our veteran trees around the village. He highlighted the wildlife value of our veteran trees and the need to look to the future and for native tree planting. RSPB Site Manager Aaron Howe's illustrated talk described the management plans for the expanding

reserves at Hollesley and Boyton Marshes. The talk was followed up with a site visit later in the winter to see birds of prey, marsh and hen harriers and feral geese. We sighted the first of the year's Spoonbill on the marshes and a flock of snow bunting were seen flying down the coast towards Shingle Street.

Tim Gardener, Bio Diversity Officer for the Environment Agency, Wildlife Poet and Author reminded us of glow worms that we used to see around Waldringfield but are now disappearing fast. They can be found at Dunwich, Westleton, Minsmere and Blaxhall Common. Because the female doesn't fly it is hard for the glow worms to colonize new sites if their habitat is changed or destroyed. Habitat management is very important and when shrub land or bushes are cleared it helps to leave piles of branches nearby and cutting bays in thickets is good. Railway embankments provide a great environment and a corridor for glow worms to spread along.

The 2018 programme began with a talk about House Martins, Swallows and Swifts by Ian Woodward Research Officer for the British Trust for Ornithology. More info [www.bto.org/house-martins/bird-trends/](http://www.bto.org/house-martins/bird-trends/) [www.birdtrack.net](http://www.birdtrack.net) The forthcoming April talk is on Dragonflies by Adrian Parr, The Suffolk Dragonfly Recorder and the British Migrant Dragonfly Officer. Full details of the 2018 programme can be found on [www.greenerwaldringfield.org](http://www.greenerwaldringfield.org) website.

### **Wildlife Guided Trips and Outings 2017/2018**

The wildlife field trips have all made the most of the Suffolk wildlife. They have been varied and well attended. The local annual 2018 Nightingale Walk on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May involves an early start but is always worth it to listen to the Nightingales and to enjoy a fun alfresco breakfast at the end. An evening walk at Hollesley Common and Heath during the summer of 2017 with Nick Mason to listen to the Night Jars and sightings of Stone Chats and Dartford Warblers was much enjoyed by members as was a day trip to RSPB Havergate Island in the Autumn. The 2018 programme includes a summer guided tour of Orford Ness, a guided Butterfly Walk at Landseer Park and a Fungi Foray at Bradfield Woods in the Autumn. The group's interest in environmentally friendly farming has resulted in a plan to visit Wakelyns Agro Forestry with Professor Martin Wolfe in September. Full details of the programme can be found on the [www.greenerwaldringfield.org](http://www.greenerwaldringfield.org) website.

### **Projects Updates:**

#### **Verges and Pollinator Project**

The verges and pollinator patch projects are doing what we wanted in that they are supplying feeding and foraging for insects birds and small mammals such as hedgehogs. The benefits of these activities have been endorsed in TV programmes such as Springwatch and Monty Don's gardening programme where there has been enthusiasm for the benefits of long grass in our gardens for wildlife.. The verges seem to look more wonderful every year and are ever changing. Our thanks to Christine Fisher Kay for her expert lead on this project and to the Parish Council for the support they give to the WWG . Planting this year aimed to extend the flowering season. The Sullivan Place verge was also given an extra interim cut in June to prevent the grasses becoming too long and similar arrangements are in place for summer 2018. Our thanks to the Harbour Master, Tony Lyons who volunteered to cut around the edge of the verge to create a crisp contrast to the longer grasses.

The children of Waldringfield School scattered wild flower seeds in the village triangle and planted out wild daffodil bulbs on the edges of the playing field which are currently in bloom as I write.

The triangle has again been reseeded this April 2018 and we look forward to another long flowering display to benefit our pollinators and for our enjoyment from June through to October.

### **Barn Owl Project:**

Sally Redfern and Peter Maddison continue to monitor our barn owl boxes on behalf of Suffolk Community Barn Owl Project. In summary, in 2017 of the seven Waldringfield nest boxes a barn owl family was raised in one the same as in previous years. By the end of May three barn owl chicks had hatched and were fitted with leg rings in early July and as far as we know all three fledged successfully. The other nest boxes were occupied by a tawny owl, stock dove (also on the Amber list) or jackdaw or were inaccessible due to cows with calves in the field. The SCBOP is an example of targeted conservation which despite the fluctuating success it has overall had a positive effect on the Suffolk's barn owl population.

### **The Swift Project :**

The general impression is that there have been even fewer swift sightings in the Waldringfield area last summer compared to 2016 but there were sightings at the lower end of Cliff Rd . Screaming parties of swifts indicate existence of a nest nearby . RSPB Woodbridge are keen to hear of swift sightings in Waldringfield. Please email RSPB Woodbridge Swift Survey with reports of any swift sightings – [woodbridge.swifts@gmail.com](mailto:woodbridge.swifts@gmail.com) copied to Sally Redfern. Anyone interested in installing swift boxes is encouraged to visit the RSPB Woodbridge website for information – several leaflets are available [WWW.rspb.org.uk/groups/woodbridge](http://WWW.rspb.org.uk/groups/woodbridge).

Two additional households have Swift nestboxes installed in Waldringfield with the swift call sound installed. Contact Linda Wilkins if you would like to view boxes which were installed in May 2017

### **Spotted Flycatcher:**

2 Spotted Flycatchers were reported to be carrying food into the creeper on the wall of a Waldringfield house this year and at least one fledgling at a water dish last Spring/Summer. Sightings are usually on creeper covered walls. It is likely that there are more spotted flycatchers locally than we know . WWG would be grateful for any sightings reported to Peter Maddison.

### **Hedgehog project:**

Hedgehog sightings have been monitored in the village for several years now and it is apparent that hedgehog numbers are still decreasing but those that have been sighted are found in the same locality.

Two hedgehog tunnels are available for use in local gardens from spring to help locate where hedgehogs travel through. Hedgehogs foraging for food can be supported by helping their access into garden, fields and hedges by ensuring 5" gaps are left in fences for hedgehogs to move through and by leaving areas of long grass where hedgehogs can find insects, slugs and snails.

If hedgehogs are seen whether dead or alive or signs of them residents are encouraged to email Pam Crawley and record on the SWT website <http://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/> following their links through Helping Hedgehogs.

**Deben Tranquility Survey:**

Several of WWG members volunteered to assist in the AONB Deben Tranquility Survey initially attending training sessions in Waldringfield organised by the AONB in June 2017. This came about following attendance by the Estuary Officer Matt Jones who explained that the mapping of tranquility around the Estuary was to produce a tool that helps to understand the value of the landscape and the impact upon it of different activities and developments such as the impact of the National Coastal Path if it is routed around the Deben .

**RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch.**

The group's Secretary Jill Winter coordinated members' involvement in the Big Garden Bird Watch this winter. Our results tallied with the National results with the house sparrow at the top spot, which though still abundant have suffered enormous declines. To see the results go to <https://www.rspb.org.uk>

This information is vital as it shows which species need support and which ones are thriving.

**Recording local wildlife is another of the group's initiatives.**

Thank you to Peter Maddison to whom members and residents report their sightings and who then produces an informative quarterly seasonable report titled What's About? These reports are available on [www.greenerwaldringfield.org](http://www.greenerwaldringfield.org)

Linda Wilkins

WWG Coordinator.

April 2018