

Climate and Sustainability Group Newsletter for Hennock Parish

March 2024

Spring is meant to be here – honest!

We are planning some more walks and activities for when the weather improves and will let you know about them once they have been arranged. In the meantime nature is now waking up with more flowers in bloom and birds arriving from the winter. A recent report highlighted that a Robin was even sitting on eggs on the village.

Things to watch out for at this time of the year include frog and toad spawn in ponds, Brimstone, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell and Peacock butterflies and spring migrant birds, including Sand Martins, Willow Warblers and Wheatears, all of which have already been reported locally.



Parish Biodiversity Database

An updated version of the Parish Biodiversity database has just been uploaded under the Climate and Sustainability tag on the Parish webpage. This has a number of new species added to it, thanks to reports Parishioners have been sending in, including species of bats and fungi, that had previously not been recorded in the area, plus sightings that are enabling us to track the ongoing health of the environment. If you are out for a walk, or just in your garden do let us know what you find using the form on the opening page <https://www.hennockpc.org.uk/parish-flora-and-fauna> We are particularly keen to hear about what has been seen in the Hennock end of the Parish.

News

We are all aware of the problems and issues that Climate change is causing and Hennock Parish Council has recently approved its biodiversity policy and action plan, which you can view under the Climate and Sustainability tag on the Council website https://www.hennockpc.org.uk/_files/ugd/2e7afb_586662d5099d4b708c59377638e2b7a8.pdf

We have also been notified that dogs on Dartmoor should now be kept on short leads until July 31st to protect vulnerable ground nesting birds. There is a reintroduction programme taking place for Lapwings at the moment.

Forthcoming Events

Litter Pick



We will be doing a litter pick in Chudleigh Knighton on March 24th between 14.00hrs and 16.00hrs, starting from the Garden room in the Village all. If you would like to take part do come along. Unfortunately we are unable to arrange this in Hennock or Teign Village at the moment as we are awaiting confirmation that our insurers will cover areas without pavements. We are working on this though for the future!

No Mow May

So what is No Mow May and why is it important?

Traditionally lawns and verges have been cut closely to give a neat, albeit sterile appearance, but as an increasing area of land is being built on, we have to look for ways to replace the lost habitat for our flora and fauna - or risk losing them. This can be done both at Council level and in your own garden.

The Climate and Sustainability Group are currently developing a 3 yr plan for areas where the Council has responsibility for cutting the grass and this year one or two areas will be left uncut during May and will then have any cuttings removed for the rest of the year. This first stage will allow existing wildflowers to grow, creating a habitat for butterflies, moths and other wildlife, and in future we shall look to see if we can supplement what already exists with wildflower seeds. Good example of what can be achieved and how attractive it looks, can be seen in Bovey Tracey in the grass strip approaching the GP surgery in early summer.

In your garden you could leave some grass uncut and watch as natural flowers emerge and spot the wildlife that uses them for feeding and as a nursery. The longer this can be left undisturbed, the more variety you might see.



This is one aspect of creating a wildlife friendly garden however more conventional planting can also be used when doing this as is covered below.

Wildlife friendly gardening

Easter is approaching, and this is a traditional time for planting things in the garden. This year why not consider adding some plants that will not only be attractive to look at but also attract colourful butterflies, dragonflies and other wildlife to your garden?

You will find lots of ideas on the web including the suggestions below provided by the Wildlife Trusts.

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-start-wildlife-garden-scratch>

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-grow-wildlife-friendly-vegetable-garden>

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-create-container-garden-wildlife>

Bees

Bees are an important pollinator and without pollination, we would not have the flowers, fruit or veg that we enjoy so much – imagine life without these! Unfortunately, their numbers have greatly reduced and like so many things in the natural world, they need our help wherever we can provide it. There is an article you might find interesting on the Woodland Trusts webpage

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2023/04/why-are-bees-important/> explaining the current threats they face and offering suggestions and ideas of how to help. It also helps you identify some common species you might see.

The life cycle of a bee and a bee colony is a fascinating thing in itself and an important part of it is when they swarm, to move home. You might occasionally see a group of thousands of bees perched in a tree or on an object and whilst it is a spectacular sight, some people could find it unnerving, although if left alone the bees will pose no greater threat than when they are collecting pollen from the flowers in your garden.

Unfortunately some people react in inappropriate ways and recently I saw a post on facebook describing how some local children had started to throw buckets of water at a swarm. Apart from increasing the risk of being stung their actions meant hundreds of the bees died through hypothermia before the swarm could be rescued. If you do see a swarm resting, there is always someone locally available who will recapture it and move it away for you and you can find their details on the beekeepers association website :

<https://www.bbka.org.uk/find-a-local-swarm-collector> .

Sightings reported in the Parish this month

Flowers in Bloom:

Common Dog Violet
Cyclamen

Daisy
Dandelion

Gorse
Primrose

Birds:

Blackbird
Blue Tit

Bullfinch
Buzzard

Canadian Geese
Carrion Crow

Chaffinch
Chiff Chaff
Coal Tit
Collared Dove
Dunnock
Goldcrest
Goldfinch
Great Spotted
Woodpecker
Great Tit
Greenfinch
Herring Gull
Long tailed Tit

Fungi:

Scarlet Elf cap

Magpie
Mallard
Pheasant
Pied Wagtail
Raven
Redwing
Robin
Rook
Skylark
Song Thrush
Sparrowhawk
Stock Dove
Stonechat

Tawny Owl
Woodpigeon
Wren



Yellow Brain Fungus