



## e-Newsletter

February 2022, Issue 6



### What a difference a year makes!

Welcome to the first issue of 2022. It's also our first anniversary! And what a phenomenally successful and exciting year it's been.

We owe a lot of thanks:

We joined forces with several local wildlife groups, as well as Social Farms & Gardens, and became the proud 100th member of Oxfordshire CAG (Community Action Group).

- Martin Bullock, Guy Hildred and Peter Wilson for granting us land access to carry out surveys, providing historical data and, in the case of Martin, a joint project to re-vitalise a boundary hedge
- Maggie Filipova-Rivers for getting on board and awarding generous grant monies
- Simon Booker for allowing us to feature his incredible photography (and for his all-round energy and enthusiasm)
- South Stoke Primary School for wholeheartedly getting involved in the wildflower survey
- The team of 'volunteers', led by the indefatigable David Kennedy, who grew thousands of wildflower plugs from seed
- The army of helpers who got stuck into planting wildflowers and hedge whips
- Everybody who helped with our flora and fauna survey
- The wonderful Dickie Duckett who somehow got roped into writing a very memorable article for our e-Newsletter
- All the parishioners who've signed up and joined in!

In terms of highlights from 2021; we surveyed and plotted out the beginnings of a hedgehog highway and purchased cameras for parishioners to film the hogs' comings and goings! Bee and bug hotels have been built and placed in situ. We've mowed the grass, collected the cuttings, laid some of the hedge, and planted

Inspired by the amazing and best practice community gardens visited, we submitted a proposal for a South Stoke garden on the site of The Park. An overwhelming majority of the responses to the Parish Council's request for feedback were encouraging and supportive of the plan.

This year promises to be even more exciting:

We'll build on last year's results and continue collecting data for the national flora and fauna surveys SSWCG are now participants in (we're adding two new ones in 2022). To put that into context; we've input nearly 2,000 records relating to 699 species and submitted 838 photos including the rare Yellow Loosestrife Bee and several unusual dragonflies!

We'll be re-running the most popular events from last year (including the 'Dawn Chorus' and 'Private Gardens & Riverbank' walks) but have also added in a whole roster of new ones in the hope that they will encourage more people, of all ages, to get involved.

Finally, as a thank you to our 70 plus e-Newsletter subscribers, we're giving you a sneak preview of our plans. ***The website will be updated in due course with full***

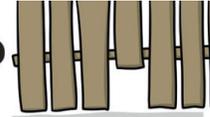
additional hedges at White Hill Quarry.  
And, of course, dotted village verges and  
banks with thousands of wildflower plugs.

***information, and a sign-up form, and  
we'll also put alerts on our Facebook  
page.***

With thanks for your continued support.



# WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR HEDGEHOGS?



**HEDGEHOG HIGHWAYS –  
MAKE HOLES IN YOUR GARDEN  
FENCE SO HEDGEHOGS CAN  
GET IN AND OUT.**

@DOOLEBETH  
@GRETILWILSON\_2017



**FRESH WATER IN  
A SHALLOW DISH**



**MEATY FOOD  
(CAT, DOG OR HEDGEHOG FOOD)**

THE BRITISH HEDGEHOG PRESERVATION SOCIETY, HEDGEHOG HOUSE, HAUSTONE, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 3PL. TEL: 01584 890801  
EMAIL: INFO@BRITISHHEDGEHOGS.ORG.UK WWW.BRITISHHEDGEHOGS.ORG.UK. REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 184543 (FORMERLY 124885)





## Events & Surveys 2022:

### Events

#### **Nature trail through private gardens:**

Led by our resident wildflower, dragonfly, butterfly and invertebrate experts we'll explore a few secret wildlife havens. Lots of commentary, anecdotes and photo opportunities promise to make this a memorable session. We might even spot a Yellow Loosestrife Bee!

#### **Dawn chorus walk:**

We're planning to repeat one of the most popular events of 2021. Led by Simon Booker and his birding colleague, we'll spend a couple of hours exploring the riverbank listening to and seeking out the plethora of birdlife. The session promises lots of photo opportunities (and tips!) and fascinating commentary. Oh, and this year we thought we'd round it off with breakfast in the Perch & Pike!

#### **Simon Booker 'Wildlife Photography Techniques':**

#### **May fair:**

SSWCG is planning a stall at the South Stoke May Fair. Please visit us to catch up on what we've done to date and our exciting plans for 2022. We'll have bee and bug houses and instructions on how to build them plus fun and interactive things to do for the whole family. It promises to be wild! 🐛

#### **Curry and quiz night:**

Keep your eyes posted for upcoming details of a curry and quiz night at the Perch and Pike. Date to be confirmed but hope to see you there. No expert knowledge required, just a taste for curry and a fun night out!

#### **Jubilee tree:**

The [Queen's Green Canopy](https://shoutout.wix.com/so/2fNqAljFX/c?w=4oIBkIYBt98SxE2Biwe4IS_eu6pHJwQnA9_-NV49k4.eyJ1ljoiaHR0cHM6Ly9xdWVlbnNncmVlbnNhbm9weS5vcmcvliwicil6ljBkMW)  
([https://shoutout.wix.com/so/2fNqAljFX/c?w=4oIBkIYBt98SxE2Biwe4IS\\_eu6pHJwQnA9\\_-NV49k4.eyJ1ljoiaHR0cHM6Ly9xdWVlbnNncmVlbnNhbm9weS5vcmcvliwicil6ljBkMW](https://shoutout.wix.com/so/2fNqAljFX/c?w=4oIBkIYBt98SxE2Biwe4IS_eu6pHJwQnA9_-NV49k4.eyJ1ljoiaHR0cHM6Ly9xdWVlbnNncmVlbnNhbm9weS5vcmcvliwicil6ljBkMW))

Following a hugely popular talk Simon gave to Goring Camera Club he's offered to do one for SSWCG too! But, it'll be in person in the Village Hall rather than Zoom and it's going to include exciting new content. This promises to be a very special evening

**Visit to Brightwell cum Sotwell  
Community Orchard:**

We are privileged to have the opportunity to be shown around this amazing community project by Paul Chilton, the renowned local apple expert. The project includes a new brook, wildflowers and orchard of apples and pears. We will probably have lunch in the Red Lion afterward...Date is likely to be 28th May, to be confirmed.

Y0NzA2LTdIOTAtNDA0NS1jMzdiLTFkZTImZGMzZjFmOCIsIm0iOiJscCJ9) (QGC) is a unique tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 which invites people across the UK to "Plant a Tree for the Jubilee". The idea of planting trees is to create a legacy in honour of The Queen's leadership of the Nation, which will benefit future generations. The South Stoke Wildlife & Conservation Group want to join in and is currently planning where to plant a "Jubilee tree" in our Parish. We will share our plans once they are confirmed, however, planting will either be before March or in October. Once planted a photograph will be uploaded to the [QGC map](https://shoutout.wix.com/so/2fNqAljFX/c?w=WwCPfaS7DJmfmf0-8ZHx0IIVU_N6lpeeJxPi0XyCxzo.eyJ1ljoiaHR0cHM6Ly9xdWVlbnNcmVlbnNhbm9weS5vcmcvbWFwLWVkdWNhdGlvbi1odWlvYxZjgiLCJtIjoibHAifQ) ([https://shoutout.wix.com/so/2fNqAljFX/c?w=WwCPfaS7DJmfmf0-8ZHx0IIVU\\_N6lpeeJxPi0XyCxzo.eyJ1ljoiaHR0cHM6Ly9xdWVlbnNcmVlbnNhbm9weS5vcmcvbWFwLWVkdWNhdGlvbi1odWlvYxZjgiLCJtIjoibHAifQ](https://shoutout.wix.com/so/2fNqAljFX/c?w=WwCPfaS7DJmfmf0-8ZHx0IIVU_N6lpeeJxPi0XyCxzo.eyJ1ljoiaHR0cHM6Ly9xdWVlbnNcmVlbnNhbm9weS5vcmcvbWFwLWVkdWNhdGlvbi1odWlvYxZjgiLCJtIjoibHAifQ)) for everyone to see!

**South Stoke apple day:**

We hope to have a celebration of our own apples in October, and to give an opportunity for naming your trees and making your own apple juice. Depends on how the orchard does this year- date to be advised and fingers crossed for no late frosts!



# Surveys

## **Wildflower Surveys:**

We are going to continue the successful surveys of last year, in which we spotted 158 different species! We will be visiting some interesting sites around the village by kind permission of some generous landowners. This year's programme of surveys is on Thursday evenings, 18.00-20.00 and usually in the Pike & Perch afterwards! Please sign up on the website and come and join us on: 12th May; 2nd June; 23rd June; 14th July; 4th August; 25th August and 15th September. No skills needed!

## **Glow-worms:**

On a balmy summer evening last year, we conducted our first village glow-worm survey, which gave us a good idea of where they can be seen in the village, and how common they are. We aim to repeat the survey later this year. The aim is to cover the same areas, at the same time of year, so that we can start to build up a picture of population trends (are numbers increasing or declining? Are they colonising new areas or vanishing from sites where they were found before?). We'll publish more details nearer the time.

## **Invertebrates:**

## **Bats (continued):**

We now have a Bat Detector, which will enable us to conduct proper surveys of the village and surrounding footpaths, with the aim of identifying and recording as many local species as possible. Once we have figured out how to use the detector (we need to test it in Spring, when the first bats are flying), we will organise some detecting sessions over the warmer months, probably meeting at the pub before heading out along planned routes. We'll publish more details, including dates and routes, in the Spring.

## **Dragonflies:**

Our first "Dragonfly walk" of 2022 will be held in late Spring. Last year the cold Spring weather meant that the event was delayed, but when we were finally able to get out, we had a well attended event and we spotted 9 different species. We hope to add a couple of extra species this year, including the Common Clubtail (a misleading name - it's actually a nationally rare species, but one that is found along our stretch of the river). We'll publish more details in April.

## **Hedgerows:**

Following the successful event in December, when a number of children from the village built a "Bug Hotel" on the rec, we plan to hold a Spring event for children to spot minibeasts in the Hotel and on the neighbouring wildflower patch. A couple of group members also plan to conduct a more "scientific" survey of the wildflower area, and (depending upon what we find) we hope to put on an event in late Spring/early Summer, probably focusing on the different Bumble Bee and Solitary Bee species that we have locally.

#### **Hedgehogs:**

From March we expect South Stoke's hedgehogs to be emerging from their winter hibernation. Once again, we'd like you to let us know if you see a hedgehog in our Parish. You can do this via our website (using the species recording form <https://www.southstokewildlife.org/species-recording> (

We are midway through our grand plan to conduct surveys of all the accessible hedgerows in the Parish, which we think total about 15km, with the objective of completing the remainder by the summer. About 20 people showed up to help plant 60m of new hedging up around Postman's Path on a bright, crisp day in early January, together with roughly 30m of infill planting on White Hill Quarry (see pics); more community planting events are planned throughout the year and will be announced on the Facebook page. We also purchased a survey wheel to make more detailed evaluations of high priority hedges with a view to seeking funding for contractors to plant some of the longer sections, and will be building on the initial trial hedge laying exercise conducted at White Hill Quarry, hopefully with some instruction sessions followed by practical activities.

Much of this would not have been possible without permission from the landowners and we'd especially like to thank Martin Bullock for his understanding and cooperation, plus our District Councillor, Maggie Filipova-Rivers, whose help in securing funding from the Councillor Community Grant scheme helped pay for the materials.

help us identify opportunities to connect up disparate hedgehog friendly habitats to support these vulnerable mammals.

**Bats:**

We are lucky to live in a village where it's easy to see bats at dusk on suitable evenings in the warmer months of the year. We THINK that we have at least two species (Pipistrelle and Long Eared), but we don't know for sure, and we suspect that we might have several others (at least six species have been identified just over the river in Cholsey).



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## And a couple of fun and useful Apps to finish!



### Hedgehog Street App

(<https://shoutout.wix.com/so/2fNqAljFX/c?w=t5dNS8oh3Xqp1zaD3cZwPF4QUHhiRUHjQhqSg60jatU.eyJ1ljoiaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaGVkZ2Vob2dzdHJlZXQub3JnL2hlZGdl aG9nc3RyZWV0YXBwLyIsInliOiJmYmY3Y mFIZi01M2YwLTQ0Y2UtOTI3MC05NTVIO TAzN2YwOTEiLCJtIjoibHAifQ>)

With the new Hedgehog Street app, helping hedgehogs is easier than ever, with monthly tips and advice straight to your phone or tablet. You can also log hedgehog sightings on the go using the Big Hedgehog Map.

The app is available to both Apple and Android users, and is downloadable for free from the App Store or Google Play via the above buttons, or by searching 'Hedgehog Street' in your app store.

### **iRecord Butterflies**

(<https://shoutout.wix.com/so/2fNqAljFX/c?w=xTt5RO4Tn9SHYgd5RaKfcf2CnjU1CJOJtEdJ2iHxQps.eyJ1ljoiaHR0cHM6Ly9idXR0ZXJmbHktY29uc2VydMFOaW9uLm9yZy9vdXltd29yay9yZWNVcmRpbmctYW5kLW1vbml0b3JpbmVvaXJlY29yZC1idXR0ZXJmbGllcyIsInliOiJmNDFjNmE3Yy1lYzdLTQ1MDQtMDE3NS1jZDUxNjI4N2Q5YTMiLCJtIjoibHAifQ>)

iRecord Butterflies is a free app that will guide you through the identification of any butterfly that you see in the UK and allow you to add your sighting to millions of other valuable records that inform the work of Butterfly Conservation.





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