

Greenprint Forum newsletter summer 2023



Summer has finally arrived bringing with it the colours and smells of June blooms, and the sounds of bees and fledglings.

However you may well be aware that the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in Europe according to the Biodiversity Intactness Index of the Natural History Museum: [Biodiversity Intactness Index data | Natural History Museum \(nhm.ac.uk\)](https://www.nhm.ac.uk/biodiversity-intactness-index)

The good news though is that many local groups and organisations have been taking steps to welcome nature back into areas under their control, such as Felixstowe Town Council who have adopted a policy of reduced mowing along Langley Avenue forming a vital wildlife corridor, and have also commenced the planting of a new hedgerow along the boundary of the lane with the playing field, and provided bat boxes within the cemetery.

Even a small garden can be a haven for wildlife. I have been inspired by the wonderful group [Felixstowe's Community Nature Reserve | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/felixstowecommunitynaturereserve/) whose call to action is to gardeners and allotment growers to allocate three square yards (about 2.5m²) to nature. Our little pond regularly attracts breeding frogs, and in mid June as I write this passage, it is now bustling with miniature froglets, like the one pictured below, in abundance.



There are plenty of other groups on social media who share their ideas for attracting wildlife to gardens, including [Wildlife Gardening Forum | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/wildlifegardeningforum/) and, more locally, [Bredfield Wildlife Friendly Village - Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/bredfieldwildlifefriendlyvillage/) and [Risby Wildlife Friendly Village - Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/risbywildlifefriendlyvillage/). Please let me know if you are aware of others in Suffolk so we can raise their profiles through our network too.



News from the Steering Group

Following the elections on 4 May we welcome the new Portfolio Holder for the Environment at East Suffolk Council, Rachel Smith-Lyte, to our Steering Group.

Rachel has the following to tell us about her background:

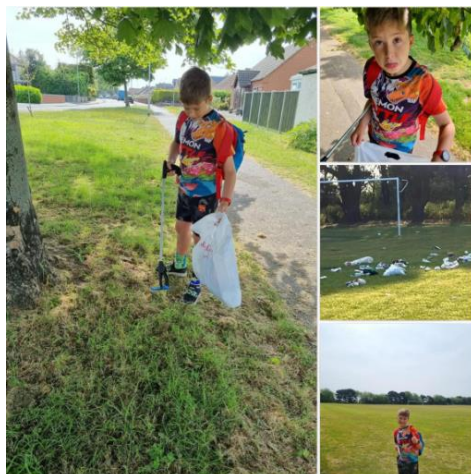
“An East Suffolk native, I attended Farlingaye High school and have worked as a Project Manager for an environmental conservation charity in Norwich and as a field teacher at RSPB Minsmere as well as teaching in Indonesia including street kids for free. I have previously worked for Bristol City Council in Benefits and later Childrens Services amongst other occupations.

“As a long-time activist with Greenpeace and later Extinction Rebellion, I realised that with the looming climate and linked biodiversity crisis, I needed to get involved politically. The obvious choice being the Green Party, I joined in 2011 and stood three times in local elections and in the 2015 and 2019 General Elections gaining 6% of the vote share thus retaining the Party’s deposit for the first time in the Suffolk Coastal area. In May 2019 I secured my first seat - on East Suffolk Council – the first Green to be elected in the former Suffolk Coastal district.

“I am passionate about protecting the area’s natural environment from inappropriate development and the links between sustainable including public transport and improved air quality and health through social contact as well as lower emissions. There can be no climate justice without social justice and whilst some things are not within my power as an East Suffolk Councillor and with only so much time and energy, I am nonetheless keen to ensure as much inclusivity as possible within our environmental meetings with community ambassadors and pushing for better protection of nature and green spaces for our communities health and recreation and an overall reduction in motorised traffic.

“My other interests include local resilience and 'Passivhaus' well insulated affordable housing as part of a post-growth society.

“I have been a member of the Greenprint Forum for many years and look forward to supporting you through my new membership of the Steering Group.”



Well done Zac! A true champion

Having seen pictures on the Facebook group [Friends of Dip Farm](#) of rubbish littering the football field in Gunton, Zac decided to take positive direct action to tackle the mess, as part of his actions towards the challenge [30 Days Wild](#). So Zac and his mum geared up and set off to clear it all up. The picture taken of the mess did not do it justice – they ended up filling eight bags and a sack!

Thanks to **Wendy Brooks** for bringing Zac’s efforts to our notice.



Mast year, planting, pigeons and scarecrows work with Kinda Forest School

It was called a mast year, 2022, when we were blessed with millions of hard masts, (an Old English word *mæst*, meaning the nuts of forest trees that have accumulated on the ground). We gathered acorns by the hundreds with children and Elders at our [Kinda Forest School](#), based in a 5 acre woodland in Holton, near Halesworth. We planted them in deep thin containers supplied by [Suffolk Tree Wardens](#).



Some acorns were already fruiting, and with our Elders we cut one in half to investigate the inside of an acorn. I hadn't done this since I was at school myself.



We were growing these seedlings for the 17 acre (*roughly 7 ha*) field I'd purchased from a local farmer late in 2022, specifically to plant up with trees. Now aged 66 this would be my last project and this piece of land joined already existing woodland with Holton Pits (<https://holtonpits.uk/>) and the Blyth valley. The final vital piece of this wildlife corridor jigsaw. Although I'll never see the trees fully grown I'm looking forward to witnessing a good twenty years of their development!

The importance of trees in mitigating climate change is enormous. Like great carbon sinks, woods and forests absorb atmospheric carbon and lock it up for centuries. I knew the importance of trees, having the rich experience of owning the wood for nearly 10 years now. I knew how good woods were, for the physical body and well being of mind. It made sense.

Nature is nature, and the mice or squirrels got most of the acorns we planted despite the protection around them. About a dozen survived. We learn.



In January we began hedge planting. We'd been donated some hedgerow saplings from [The Tree Council](#) - a generous 3,000 of them - so we got planting. A group of Elders and children from our various tribes all took part: spade in, sapling in, footed in, stake in and finally the tree guard. So it was we planted the western boundary. Then an unexpected group of tree planters arrived with Bex from [TCV Conservation Volunteers](#) and we planted 250 whips this day along the eastern boundary.



I'd never taken much heed of hedges before, and now I was looking at them and seeing them as if for the first time: old boundary hedges with twisted hawthorn, yes, I became particularly fond of hawthorn, the Bride of the hedgerow, symbolising love and protection. How vital they are, the great wind protectors, a shade from the increasing heat from the sun, the diverse habitat for wildlife to nest in, take shelter within. They, which were once scrubbed up, are rich and full of wonder.

We were blessed with a wet spring. Remember last year when we had no rain in April? This year we had buckets, and the ponds filled up and the whips put their roots down.



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When the weather turned warm, we planted up the field up with wild flower and grass mix, to cover the exposed soil (after it's final plough). The land was poor, mainly sand, and it's crop that came up was - wait for it - ragwort! The bane of cattle and horse farmers. I'd taken advice from some farmer friends who suggested a crop of mixed mustard and borage which may challenge the ragwort.

Using the old fashioned manual method of seeding, the children lined up to the east side and scattered seed as they walked down, some singing blessings as they scattered. We planted a K for Kinda on one part, out of mustard seed.



Later we made some magnificent scarecrows to scare away the hundreds of pigeons. It worked. For where there were no scarecrows, the pigeons 'had a field day', and with the lack of rain for 20 days, and that part of the field grew thistle and ragwort and little else. However the Phacelia was a success, doing well in drought, with scarecrows the testament to their usefulness.

This autumn we will plant up our saplings - being tended and watered in our tree nursery in the wood. If you'd like to be involved in this project, give us a shout! You are most welcome.

We are all so grateful for the Greenprint Forum, and for the Nature First grant, which enabled our various tribes to take part in this new project: a field which for years had grown wheat (with difficulty) to become a field of trees, joining up a wildlife corridor.



Rachel Kellett,

Kinda Forest School

rachelkellett@gmail.com



<https://kindaforestschool.com/nature-first-planting-the-land/>

<https://kindaforestschool.com/>

<https://kaliwood.wordpress.com/land/>



Enterprise Badingham

Enterprise Badingham is a small group whose aim is to undertake sustainable projects within the village which will improve and enhance the local environment and foster good relations amongst our residents. We have a committee of three, but we ask for help and support within the village when required.

In 2012 we established community gardens within the extensive churchyard, with the full support of the PCC. Around twenty plots are managed by an enthusiastic group of gardeners, and a wide variety of fruit, vegetables and flowers are grown for personal consumption. The gardens are a wonderful place to relax and socialise as well as work, and they were a great asset during the Covid lockdowns. Members pay a small annual fee, and working parties are held to mow, weed and prune as necessary. We also support the church by making a significant contribution to the cost of mowing the graveyard.

Part of the boundary hedge in the gardens is made up of raspberry canes and blackcurrant bushes, the fruits of which can be shared by all.



One of our plots has recently been vacated and this year we are going to work together to grow vegetables that can be sold in the village café.

We were very pleased to receive a grant of £600 from GreenPrint Forum in 2022. This has enabled us to make much needed repairs to the growing plots for our members.

Enterprise Badingham isn't limited to the community gardens however. There is also an oil syndicate in the village whose annual rebate helps to fund village projects, such as a bird and bat box making day organised in 2022 with Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

We are trialling a wildflower area within the churchyard and are currently installing an 'insect hotel' and herb border within the community gardens.

We have supported the recognition of a verge in the village as a conservation site, due to its many orchids, and two years ago we purchased 12 heritage fruit trees, which have been planted in the village's Pocket Park.



Plans for the future include Autumn tree planting on village verges, the development of a garden area behind the village hall, the publication of a village recipe book, and participation in a lottery funding bid for repairs to the church and its establishment as more of a community hub.

Although Badingham is a small village it is forward thinking and proactive. Groups within the village, of which Enterprise Badingham is one, work cooperatively to make it a green and environmentally friendly place to live.

Karen Bowe

Janet Barwell

Annie Clark

Enterprise Badingham



Going wild for nature at Deben View

To mark World Re-wilding Day 2023, Orwell Housing Association's Deben View in Woodbridge were re-wilding their communal outside space with support from [Suffolk Wildlife Trust](#), [Transition Woodbridge](#), a local school, Orwell's own gardening team and of course, the residents themselves.

Some of the work to date includes planting fruit trees, sowing wildflower seed, planting a hedgerow, and building Swift and hedgehog boxes. Hedgehog Highways and a Bug Hotel have also been built to support wildlife. The project aims to show that re-wilding is not limited to large open spaces and can be a great way to involve everyone across the local community to make a difference to nature - and to wellbeing.

The communal garden was originally laid to lawn with scattered trees and staff and residents at Deben View decided they wanted to change the way the grounds were managed, encourage more wildlife into the garden and provide an interesting habitat that is attractive to not only the residents but also to bugs and beasties.

The Orwell gardening team will use their mowing time to support the re-wilding project and provide related activities for the residents at the scheme.

Supporting nature recovery enhances biodiversity and encourages a range of different species that rely upon the plants you supply for survival. Re-wilding also helps nature to deliver a range of other essential benefits such as clean air, fertile soil, good health, wellbeing, and resilience to disease.

Michelle Harrison, Director of People and Culture for Orwell, said, "It is fantastic to be undertaking this re-wilding project with our residents at Deben view and with support from partners and volunteers. The project will be ongoing and develop over time, and the commitment is to do this using recycled, donated, and reusable items. This project is a testament to the commitment of our colleagues at Deben View to provide a safe and comfortable home where residents can feel connected to the natural world and enjoy interacting with nature.

"We are very grateful to have the support of the local community who have offered their time and resources to help make this project a reality. We hope this project will continue to be a success and that the garden will become a popular spot for both wildlife and people alike.

"We look forward to seeing the garden blossom and are excited to be part of this effort to make Deben View a more vibrant and natural space."

A video of the team carrying out the rewilding work and planting of the orchard can be seen here: [Planting an orchard & new hedgerow | Rewilding at Deben View, Woodbridge | Orwell Housing - YouTube](#)

Jenny Dewey, Orwell Housing Association



Halesworth Repair Cafe

The Halesworth Repair Cafe started 18 months ago and meets once a month for a 2-hour repair session. With the owners present (and ideally participating, with the idea that they can learn a new skill) we can tackle a range of repairs: electrical; sewing; darning; necklace restringing; general gluing/fixing; knife sharpening and sewing machines and we hold a list of professional repairers for bigger jobs or those we're not equipped for (zips, soldering etc). We've now seen 275 items of which 215 have been successfully repaired. Even when our repairers can't fix something, we'll try to research alternatives - faced with a doll we couldn't fix, one of the repairers looked online and found a "doll hospital" in Norwich, which resulted in a happy outcome! We've found that, even if, ultimately, we can't fix something the owners are happy to know that they've tried their best and can now wave a fond farewell.

The Repair Cafe has a wonderful "feel good" factor about it - the repairers are pleased to be saving items from landfill and helping people save money on replacement items (as well as precious resources) and - just like the BBC's Repair Shop programme - many of the items have sentimental value; a treasured gift from a grandchild; a bequeathed walking stick; a child's favourite dress, and all the volunteers enjoy hearing the stories behind the items.



The Repair Cafe also helps to bring communities of people together - our collaboration with the Halesworth Men's Shed is a good example of this. We support each other and cross-refer, as well as collaborating on the recycling - via various charities - of tools, old sewing machines, rehabilitation equipment that's no longer needed, and more. There's also an opportunity to talk whilst the repair is being collaboratively undertaken - our wonderful danner is great at engaging with range of people and providing a safe space for worries to be shared.

A network of expertise - and an understanding that things *can* be fixed rather than thrown - is being built across our patch of North Suffolk, indeed, across the whole county, courtesy of an appearance on BBC Suffolk's Takeover Tuesday programme when our team joined presenter Jon Wright for 2 hours to talk about the Repair Cafe movement! Our team of volunteers numbers 20+, with about a dozen needed to run each monthly cafe; we have all found it very rewarding , fun, sociable and fascinating and have introduced a "Repair Cafe Stories" notebook for users to record the tales behind the items, and have, on occasion, been moved to tears!

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It's great to know, too, that we're part of the wider international Repair Cafe movement, which started in Amsterdam in 2009 and now boasts 2,753 Repair Cafes across the world, with 49,554 repairs per month and 41,295 volunteers. There's an opportunity through this international collaboration to collect data in order to apply pressure on manufacturers to build things with a longer life-span and an ability to easily repair - something that has become increasingly important as we wake up to the need to live more lightly on this planet.

Interested in setting up your own Repair Cafe? We always welcome visitors, and you'll find plenty of helpful info, as well as access to the Repair Cafe Handbook, on the UK website <https://www.repaircafe.org/en/>. You'll find it very easy, as well as surprisingly rewarding!

Halesworth Repair Cafe is held at The Cut Arts Centre, New Cut, Halesworth IP19 8BY: Tuesday 27 June, 2-4pm; Tuesday 25 July, 2-4pm; Tuesday 26 September, 2-4pm; Saturday 21 October 10-midday; Tuesday 28 November, 2-4pm

You can read more about Halesworth Repair Cafe <https://halesworthrepaircafe.wordpress.com>

Kim Hoare



Editor's note – we are also aware of regular repair cafes in Martlesham, Woodbridge, Stowmarket, and Holbrook, whilst there is also the occasional one in Waldringfield as well. If you are aware of any others, please let me know so we can add it to this directory and help raise their profiles: [Repair Cafes - Suffolk Recycling](#)



New Information Board at Castle Brooks

Castle Brooks now has a brand new notice board on the green. We are calling it Oak Tree Corner in recognition, and a big thank you, to local residents for saving the two large oak trees just nearby.

Thank you is also due to Framlingham Town Council and the Unitarian Trust for grant funding towards the costs of the noticeboard - some of which is made from recycled plastic.

The idea for this arose through our WhatsApp group, which started as a result of setting up Covid support and is still going strong. We decided to become more involved in maintaining our green in a way which encourages biodiversity.

The noticeboard will be a great way to let people know about the wildlife found in the park (birds, insects, plants & trees) and we hope to keep an updated species list. It will also be used post news on events happening in Castle Brooks, and local art activities.

We have met with East Suffolk Council and Norse Waveney to set up a mutually agreed management plan, one that will foster both the re-wilding and biodiversity of the park, and make it a great place for people to play and picnic. Better health and wellbeing all round.

Deputy Town Clerk, Framlingham Town Council



Early morning ringing of Blue Tit chicks in Castle Brooks Park, Framlingham



My “Covid” whatsapp group pinged on a Monday evening in May (the group is still operational!): “Hi this is Tim, one of our nest boxes has blue tit chicks that are fledging and they need to be ringed (he is trained and licenced to do this). If you want to come along to watch, please be in the park at 7:45 (AM 😞) tomorrow morning.”

To my great surprise at 7:45am sharp, on a lovely fresh sunny morning, I found him in the park, surrounded by a group of excited and enthusiastic schoolchildren (plus mums and dads). The look on the children's faces was indescribable as Tim expertly put rings on their tiny little legs.

Tim is an expert at handling and ringing fledging chicks (all the rings are numbered) and he logs this information into a national RSPB database. This can help scientists to track and make estimates about the health and wellbeing of our precious wild bird populations.

During the course of the past three years our small group of enthusiasts at Castle Brooks Park have successfully helped Blue Tits raise 70 fledglings (most are ringed)!

East Suffolk Council have agreed to work collaboratively with Castle Brooks residents to continue to manage the park and make it into a lovely place for people and wildlife to enjoy.



CLlr Vince Langdon-Morris,
Ward Member for Framlingham
East Suffolk Council

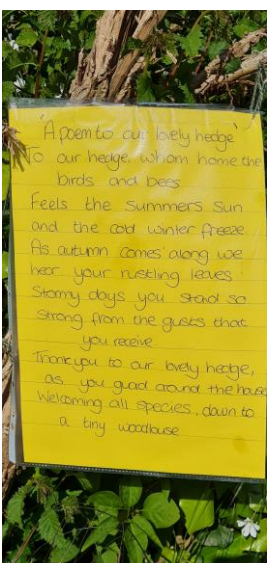


Waldringfield Open Gardens Weekend

Waldringfield Gardeners Association has taken part in the St Elizabeth Great Garden Trail Open Gardens since it began - and ran our own smaller event for some years before that. This year was a bumper year both for visitors and for income (not to mention roses) - we are able to donate £1610 to the Hospice while retaining £535 for our own allotment fund - for when we find a site!



This year's scarecrow theme was Garden Friend or Foe - no prizes for knowing which is which!



We have also for the past couple of years encouraged poems of love to your hedge, as another way of gently nudging the culture towards the many benefits and delights of hedges.



Betsy Reid, Waldringfield Gardeners Association and Greener Waldringfield



Nature and Biodiversity Update from Martlesham Parish Council

Five years ago, the UK government's [Environmental Improvement Plan](#) (25YEP) set out a vision to help the natural world retain and regain good health. The apex goal is to improve nature, including the target to restore or create more than 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitats outside the protected site network. To make further progress it will implement the Environment Act 2021, including rolling out Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

Martlesham Council is delighted to be participating in an inter-parish Green Infrastructure Workshop alongside the parishes of Brightwell, Foxhall and Purdis Farm, Hemley, Kesgrave, Newbourne, Rushmere St Andrew and Waldringfield. This will be facilitated by Professor Peter Hobson, Biodiversity, Conservation and Sustainability Co-director, Writtle University College. Professor Hobson has run workshops of this kind for Essex County Council and has recently been giving a series of talks for the Woodbridge Climate Action Centre. The date has been confirmed for 30th August and it is hoped that forty stakeholders will attend. The project has received a grant from East Suffolk Council's Greenprint Forum and it will also be supported by participating Parish and Town Councils. We hope the outcome will be a comprehensive and co-ordinated plan to embody this area's Nature Recovery Strategy. Representatives for Martlesham Council will be Cllrs Jane Hall and Paul Whitby who chair the Council's Development, Environment and Transport Committee and Climate Action Group.

Residents may recall that four swift boxes funded by the AONB were successfully installed under the eaves of the Parish Rooms in April 2021. Swifts start to arrive back from their long tour of central Africa in May. We think that breeding adults return first and go straight back to where they bred last year. Younger, non-breeding swifts follow later searching for future nesting sites. Seeing swifts flying past or circling at box height is good news; swifts flying past and calling is better and swifts flying at boxes then peeling away at the last moment is great. Do keep an eye out if you happen to be walking past. Over 200 nest boxes were used by swifts last year in Suffolk which is an increase from 2021. House sparrows and starlings were also reported using the boxes and in 2022, one of our own boxes provided a nesting site for a family of blue tits. Swift conservation helps other species too!

Cllr Jane Hall, Martlesham Parish Council



Introducing Claire Ling

Claire is the Community Support Officer (Renewable Energy) for the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership (SCCP).

She started in October 2022 and is supporting communities and community groups in their efforts to tackle climate change, helping them in reaching the county's aspirations of reaching Net Zero by 2030.

Claire has already been in contact with many groups already throughout the county establishing relationships and knowledge of all the schemes and initiatives that are happening or being put in place. She can visit you to discuss strategies and stimulation conversation, offering particular support and grant and funding ideas to take schemes forward.



Examples of involvement:

- Attendance to a Climate Action Day showcasing Suffolk Warm Homes scheme.
- Participant in community Energy efficiency evening for local homeowners.
- Presenting Community Support Officer role SCCP to green group AGM.
- Visiting and supporting sustainability groups in energy efficiency of community buildings such as village halls.
- Supporting submissions for the Suffolk Climate Action Match Funder.
- Support around project planning and community engagement.
- Thermal imaging project for communities

Keeping in touch is vital, so as well as being part of the Greenprint Forum, we'd love you to join us in our Greenest County Community Network.

We send out bi-monthly newsletters, and other communications – usually about funds and grant opportunities or upcoming events of interest. To join us please go to the Greenest County Community Network: <https://forms.office.com/r/gh315GyqBT>

By completing the form, we hope to be able to communicate better with you, know what is happening throughout our county, discover where we can support you and target our correspondence according to projects that are being established.

Our hope is that newsletters and other communications can help build communities, enable networking, be a platform for sharing ideas and initiatives as well as grant and funding opportunities.

We also have a new Facebook group especially intended for Suffolk community groups who are working towards carbon reduction/ environmental work/ tackling climate change/sustainability etc. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/greenestcountycommunitynetwork/>

It is planned that this is also a safe and interesting space for networking, sharing events and ideas, provide encouragement, supporting one another in what is happening county wide.

Please stay in contact, feel free to offer contributions to both the Facebook page and articles for the newsletter as we need to hear from you. 2030 is not far away and we can all be part of the climate change solution; everything we do makes an impact, let them be positive ones for our communities, both now and in the future.

The SCCP team is just completing a pilot project to loan Thermal Imaging Cameras to community groups to survey heat loss in houses. This has been a great success and we plan to not only roll it out again this autumn but to extend our reach.

If your community or community group would like more information do not hesitate to contact me through email claire.ling@suffolk.gov.uk

For more information about the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership please visit [here](#)



Contributors

Thanks are due to all our stellar contributors to this issue: Annie Clark, Betsy Reid, Claire Ling, Jane Hall, Janet Barwell, Jenny Dewey, Karen Bowes, Kim Hoare, Rachel Kellett, Vince Langdon-Morris, Wendy Brooks, and Framlingham Town Council.

Of course, whilst there is as always plenty in this issue, there will be lots more that I have not captured; the environmental world is always an active one especially in eastern Suffolk where we are so lucky to have so many active groups and individuals taking the initiative.

This newsletter is of most value when content is informed by its members. If you have a story about action you are taking that contributes to our shared vision that you would like to share, or would like your project highlighted in our newsletter, please drop me a line on greenissues@east Suffolk.gov.uk

GREENPRINT FORUM VISION



New members welcome!

If you are already a member please share this newsletter with and encourage others in your network to join, and if you have received or found this newsletter and are not yet a member why not join us, **membership is free and open to all.**

The easiest way is to go online and register via: [Greenprint Forum membership form - My East Suffolk.](#)

You are very welcome to share this newsletter. The editor makes no claims or promises about the accuracy, completeness, or adequacy of the contents of this newsletter and expressly disclaims liability for errors and/or omissions. Editor – Daniel Wareing, Environmental Sustainability East Suffolk Council; Secretary of Greenprint Forum

