



Report for the Annual General Meeting of the WWG 13 October 2018

The group has had another successful year and has acquired several new members bringing the total to 73 members and we have enjoyed many interesting talks and events. We contribute to the Greener Waldringfield website, including great photographs from Chris Moreton and contributed articles to the Parish Magazine. The group activities are advertised on the GW website, Focus, the Parish Magazine and events are included in the Green Print Forum Newsletter. Our thanks to Peter Maddison who continues to produce the much appreciated 'What's About' bulletin. Photographic and written contributions from members are welcomed especially those that document the groups talks, field trips and initiatives. Thanks to Libby Ruffle who administers the GW website, Christine Fisher Kay and Betsy Reid for their written contributions to the Parish magazine.

Our proud achievement this year has been the publication of The Wildlife Group Booklet which has been distributed throughout the three parishes of Waldringfield, Hemley and Newbourne. We hope that this booklet will inform residents of the three parishes, welcome new members to the group and bring attention to wildlife conservation. My thanks to the sub group that contributed to the design and content of the booklet – Sally Redfern, Bunny King, Anthony Mason, Linda Wilkins and especially to Christine Fisher Kay who miraculously brought it all together with a final helpful edit from Ian Kay.

Two new initiatives this year were the Garden Bird Watch and the very popular group wholesale Bird Seed order both coordinated by group secretary Jill Winter. The bulk order of wild bird food came from Vine House Farm, which is a conservation award winning provider, who also donate a percentage of their sales to Suffolk Wildlife Trust and RSPB. This has proven to be very popular amongst members. The quality of the food is excellent .

The results of the group's Garden Bird Watch were compared with the national results and were very similar. Nationally house sparrow topped the list but blackbirds and blue tits topped ours. Goldfinches, blue tits, long tail tits and coal tits numbers were all up nationally on previous years.

Thanks to Betsy Reid who kept the group updated on the use of Pesticides and why we should be concerned about their use. Our business meetings also focused on the impact of plastic on the environment and how we as individuals could make personal changes in the way that we make use of plastic in our day to day lives.

Update on Projects:

Verges and Pollinators Project

The Parish Council has awarded the group a grant of £100 for 2018/19 to continue planting this autumn. Christine Fisher Kay is in overall charge of the verge planting but works closely with other group members significantly Betsy Reid, Sally Redfern and Linda Wilkins. Christine keeps members updated at the group business meetings. Last autumn the following bulbs were added to the verges: Gladiolus Byzantine, Allium Sphaerocephalon, Leucojum Aestivum, Camissis Esculenta and Muscari – about 1000 bulbs in total. Splodges of the blue Muscari could not be missed this Spring. Snowdrop bulbs were split and spread around rather than buying in more. Draft proposals from Christine this year include wood anemone and a taller form of Star of Bethlehem, Ornithogalum Nutans which is good in shade. Christine has produced a detailed planting proposal for this autumn.

Many members and residents have again planted square metre patches of flowers for pollinators in parts of their gardens which aim to be wildlife friendly with seeds purchased from Flower Scapes and Emorsgate in bulk to reduce cost and are pesticide free!

Barn Owl Project:

Sally Redfern and Peter Maddison continue to monitor our barn owl boxes on behalf of Suffolk Community Barn Owl Project . Sally Redfern reports the following:

‘The Suffolk Barn Owl Project has been going since 2005 and has attracted more enthusiasm from community groups in Suffolk than it ever imagined. The WWG’s involvement started in 2009 with a talk by Steve Piotrowski, from Suffolk Wildlife Trust , and a box installing garden party. The population of new barn owl broods in Suffolk has risen and fallen over the years, coinciding with an increase and decrease of the vole population, the owls favourite food. 2017 was an excellent vole year in Suffolk (Piotrowski & Dean 2018) and 2018 was expected to be not so good, with a similar less good outcome in barn owl broods.

In Waldringfield, seven barn owl nest boxes were monitored regularly this year (2018) by Sally Redfern and Peter Maddison who hold a monitors’ license . In past years, only one of our boxes contained a barn owl brood but this year, two boxes were occupied. In May, one of them had three eggs and the other, four. In June, there were two downy chicks in the first box and three in the second, the remaining eggs failing to hatch. All five chicks were ringed on the 17th July by Steve Abbott who has been ringing ‘our’ chicks since the project started. As far as we know, four of the five chicks fledged successfully. Sadly, one carcass was found at the foot of the tree holding its nest box.

The other five nest boxes in the area were occupied by jackdaws and stock doves or were empty this year.’

Reference: Piotrowski S & Dean, 2018 Suffolk Community barn owl Project Spring Newsletter .

Swift Project:

Swift sightings have been mainly at the lower end of the village frequently seen flying high late afternoon, early evening reported by John Ogden and Linda Wilkins. Sally Redfern did see a couple flying to and landing at the end of the roof eave of one of the cement cottages. A swift inserted half of

its body into a hole under the eave and reversed out. It was as though they were feeding young and is the first time Sally has seen a swift land.

WWG via Linda Wilkins and Sally Redfern link with the RSPB Woodbridge Survey. Please contact the RSPB Woodbridge Survey with report of any swift sightings copied to Sally Redfern (sally.redfern@zen.co.uk) 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. Swift nestboxes are installed in Waldringfield – contact Linda Wilkins if you would like to view boxes which were installed last spring at Driftwood with the automated call sound system.

We look forward to a talk in our 2019 programme by Edward Mayer founder of Swift Conservation in the UK and who later widened his scope to cover Europe too.

Spotted Flycatcher:

No sightings from Alexis Smith this year of Spotted Flycatchers in her garden. We wait to hear from Christine Fisher Kay for this years update

Hedgehog Project:

Several hedgehogs have been seen around the village, seemingly more than last year. This is encouraging as a nationwide decline has been known about for some years. They have been seen so far in Mill Rd, Deben Lane and Church Meadows including a family with hoglets. In other years they have also been seen visiting gardens on Cliff Rd and Village Way. A video recording and photographs have been sent to Peter Maddison.

A dead hedgehog was found on the footpath from the church to the river and another sighted at night crossing Cliff Rd.

Thanks to Christine Fisher Kay for her article in the parish magazine to let others know of the sightings and offering a few tips on how to help conserve our hedgehogs. Hedgehogs spotted can be recorded on www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/hedgehog-action and information about hedgehogs on www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/hedgehogfatcfile

The groups' recorder is Pam Crawley on 736636. So if you see any let us know. Peter Maddison also logs sightings on 'What's About.'

Summer Garden Party :

A very nice time was enjoyed at Anthea's splendid garden in Newbourne on the 24th July where the annual 2018 summer picnic was held. Anthea's garden proved to be perfect setting. A big thank you to Anthea for hosting this event.

Data Protection Act:

Jill Winter, group Secretary made arrangements to ensure our compliance with The Data Protection Act. All new membership forms are to contain data protection notices. Members have been informed that we hold no sensitive personal information and no information is shared for marketing or commercial purposes. The group list is only available to the Secretary, Treasurer and Coordinator.

Information is held on password protected computers and Anthony is responsible for keeping it accurate and up to date. If anyone wishes to opt out they can email the secretary and ask to have names removed from the membership email list.

Thank you: to everyone specifically those members who take responsibility for the groups projects – Christine Fisher Kay, Betsy Reid, Sally Redfern, Peter Maddison and others who volunteer their time in a hands on way. This includes everyone who has helped with refreshments and setting up the talks/field trips. A thank you to Alexis Smith who helps with the production of the posters and to Jill and Anthony for their support in their role as Secretary and Treasurer.

Linda Wilkins – Coordinator WWG October 2018.