



Green Ixworth

News

June 2022 No. 13

greenixworth.org.uk

Hedgerow Survey

As part of her work as Green ixworth's Tree Officer, Jenny Chantler is to conduct a survey of hedges within the area. Hedges are a crucial part of our local environment both linking areas of wildlife habitat and themselves providing food and shelter for many creatures. After decades of encouragement to destroy hedges many farmers and others are now restoring them. We can learn important lessons from existing hedges to help new ones flourish and help replenish them.

The task Jenny is undertaking is to identify what we have, record it and recommend any changes to improve them. She is looking for helpers so she can build a small team of people with an interest and knowledge in hedgerows, their plants and the creatures which live within. If you would like to help Jenny with her work she would be very grateful. No prior knowledge is needed, all will be explained. What better opportunity of exploring our locality with leisurely activity and increasing your knowledge of our local environment.

Advance notice - Water Vole News

On Saturday 17th September we shall be holding an information and raft building day at the Cyder House Yard next to Ixworth Bridge. We are inviting all residents in the Ixworth area and readers of the GI Newsletter but especially residents of Stow Road and others with access to the river to make themselves a raft to record water vole activity. An expert from Suffolk Wildlife Trust will lead the raft making and provide advice on what to look for. We also hope to show film of water voles to help identify them from their spraint (poo), foot prints and how they cut and chew their food plants.

Green Ixworth will provide the materials and tools required. There will be no charge but if makers, or others wish to make a donation our treasurer would gratefully receive them. The rafts (approx half a metre square) may have a surface which leaves an imprint of any animal using it. With the rafts we can start to identify and count the threatened water vole and help to identify the presence of otters and the threat to both and river fish, the mink. Detailed plans for the day are still under consideration but all residents are most welcome. We hope that residents with river frontage may wish to tether a raft to their bank and inspect it regularly to identify what creatures have been on it.

We shall also have information on how best to treat your river banks to minimise pollution of the river and how to encourage water vole population growth.

All this information can then be entered on the multilayer map we are creating with help from the Suffolk Wildlife Trust and the Brecks Fen Edge River Group. It will also help to identify what environment best suits the creatures.

There will be some informal quiet and local music to make this a social as well as practical event.

What's happening to our Swifts?

Ixworth has seen a large reduction in Swifts this year which unfortunately reflects the loss in the past 20 years of over half the Swifts breeding in Great Britain – and this is true in Suffolk too. Recent research now makes Swift - one of the iconic birds of summer - 'Endangered' as a breeding bird.

The reasons for these losses are mainly likely to be caused by two things:

Nesting sites are becoming rarer as they need sheltered holes in which to nest. With new building providing no or few sites, swifts rely on older and unmaintained structures. So if you are renovating such buildings please take care not to block historic nest sites and create new opportunities for swifts. Green Ixworth are seeking all new property developments in the area to have a proportion of houses fitted with nest boxes for swifts, swallows, house martins all migrants, and sparrows, all declining in numbers often due to habitat destruction and massive reductions in insect numbers. These arguments also apply to bats.

It is unlikely that even this will suffice, so why not provide a nesting box. Special swift boxes are readily available and Pakenham Windmill recently had some for sale, too late for this year but its good to weather the boxes before swifts occupy them. Location should be beneath the eaves or on the side of the house as high as possible in shade or dappled light **not** in the sun with an open approach for the birds. Current experience in Spain is that many swifts are dying after fledging due to excessive heat which is only likely to get worse. So they need maximum assistance.

The other reason for their diminished numbers is lack of insects, something which impacts on other birds as well. The causes are earlier springs which disrupt the laying time of birds in relation to the more temperature dependent insect larvae. So plant your wild flowers and shrubs this autumn/winter to give them a boost.

There is a great deal more detailed information on the SWT site including how to attract them to your boxes: https://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/sites/default/files/2018-07/sos_swifts_information_sheet_9.pdf

LOHP - Festival on the Fens

The Little Ouse Headwaters Project is holding a 20th Anniversary celebratory event on 3rd July. Green Ixworth will be helping them celebrate. Do come and see the amazing work they and SWT have achieved between Redgrave and Garboldisham and visit our stall.

The festival is being held in Parkers Piece, a field opposite the Thelnetham Wind Mill.

If you could spare an hour to join us on our stall we should be grateful. Do let us know in advance if you are able to do so.



**Festival on
the Fens**
Sun 3rd July 2022
11am-4pm
Parkers Piece, Thelnetham

Join us to celebrate 20 years of LOHP

Rural crafts, stalls, special guest Simon Barnes, music, refreshments, art, sheep dog demos, LOHP guided fen walks, Thelnetham Windmill (charge for tour), vintage tractors, children's activities and much, much more...

All Welcome!

Supported by Suffolk County Council and West Suffolk Council

FREE Entry & Parking Info: www.lohp.org.uk
Location: LOHP, Mill Road, Thelnetham, Diss, Suffolk, IP22 1JS
LOHP is a registered Charity (number 1098232) and Company (number 4684054) Printed on 100% recycled paper

Sucking Carbon from the air – not an answer to our prayers.

Government is relying on Negative Emissions Technologies (NETs), which aim to directly remove green-house gases from the atmosphere, to achieve its target of net zero by 2050. MPs and experts believe that this could jeopardise its climate targets and may allow heavy industry to avoid cutting emissions as fast as they should. Most of this technology is untested and unproven relying on a belief that science will come to rescue the big polluters. The prospect of future NETs could prove to have unintended consequences and perhaps even be counterproductive. For more on this and other information on energy and climate visit our web page greenixworth.org.uk.

Fire in the Sky

Sky lanterns are a serious danger to animals, the countryside and housing.

A small hot air balloon made of paper, with an opening at the bottom where a candle is suspended, sky lanterns, can float for miles then fall to the ground, littering our beautiful countryside.

Every year up to 200,000 sky lanterns are released in the UK. These “floating flames” are highly dangerous. They can:

- Start wildfires
- Kill animals by mistakenly eating the remnants
- Destroy food growing in fields
- Set homes and buildings alight

With periods of drought becoming more common because of Global Heating and East Angia being one of the driest areas in Northern Europe we have particular problems over wild fires to say nothing of thatched properties. That’s why action is needed now. West Suffolk already seeks to prohibit their use on council controlled land. Perhaps a by-law could outlaw their use completely.

Those living in rural areas have long been concerned over the problems caused by these lanterns and are campaigning for them to be banned. As government is unresponsive it is possible for local authorities to introduce a ban. If you go onto this site backbritishfarming@nfu.org.uk and look for petitions/Sky lanterns you can have it sent to your district councillor automatically.

Composting.

Suffolk County Council is offering a deal on compost makers. To participate, see details and purchase discounted composters available to Suffolk householders, please visit: <http://www.getcomposting.com/> or call **0844 571 4444**.

West Suffolk Council Plan

Exhibition and consultation - Friday 24 June 2022, 3pm-6.45pm Ixworth Village Hall.

The next stage of the WSC Plan for future development is now upon us. This plan will determine the development needs of West Suffolk until 2040. It incorporates all the existing and some anticipated Neighbourhood Plans such as Ixworth's and will make important statements about environmental considerations in planning. This is your opportunity to have a direct say in what you think about your future Ixworth and West Suffolk. Green Ixworth currently supports the WSC view that development should primarily take place in the Key Service Centres like Ixworth and Stanton with lesser levels of development in villages with Primary Schools and some services. The smaller communities with very limited or no services are classified as rural areas and should only permit development in exceptional and necessary circumstances. **We should be grateful if you could let us know your thoughts so we can make a better informed collective response.**The “Preferred Options consultation documents” are most important. To view the plans visit the WSC consultation site on; <https://westsuffolk.exhibition.app/>