



Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership

Community Biodiversity Awards

2017



www.norfolkbiodiversity.org

A voice for Norfolk's nature



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Community Biodiversity Awards 2017

Norfolk has a wealth of wildlife and natural environments that support and enrich our lives. Each year, the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership organises the Community Biodiversity Awards to celebrate groups and individuals whose voluntary efforts lead to improvements for biodiversity and to greater community engagement with local nature sites. The Awards are managed by the Communities and Nature Topic Group of the Partnership which meets frequently to share news and ideas and to stimulate community action for biodiversity.

Our Values

We seek to encourage: a greater appreciation of nature at a local level; care for the natural environment; long-term gains for local nature sites e.g. through the development of management plans. We are a not-for-profit organisation.

Our work

The Communities and Nature Topic group has an active membership drawn from many organisations including: Norfolk Wildlife Trust; Natural England; Norwich City Council; RSPB; The Conservation Volunteers; local district councils; local conservation businesses and Norfolk County Council.

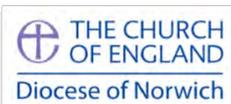
The Community Biodiversity Awards

The Community Biodiversity Awards celebrate groups and individuals whose voluntary efforts lead to improvements for biodiversity and to greater community engagement with local nature sites. The nomination period is between February and May and our award winners are presented with framed certificates at our summer awards evening. Winning an award is a recognised accolade for effort to improve the local environment. We have run the Awards for the past 14 years. Our Awards are the only ones in Norfolk that focus on voluntary efforts for biodiversity.

Impact

Feedback shows that winning or being nominated for an Award means a great deal. We believe this positive vibe carries back into the heart of local communities, encouraging people to continue their great work for the environment and inspiring others to become involved.

The 2017 Community Biodiversity Awards have been generously sponsored by :



Award Categories and Sponsors 2017

Inspiring Children and Young People sponsored by Kelling Heath Holiday Park

This Award recognises those who are working to inspire the next generation to appreciate and conserve local wildlife, such as schools which go the 'extra mile' to inspire children to appreciate nature; a business or group that develops a nature activity to inspire and educate youngsters about local biodiversity; an individual who mentors young people, encouraging them to take an interest in nature.

Churchyard & Cemeteries Award Category sponsored by The Church of England, Norwich Diocese

This Award recognises action to care for churchyards and cemeteries so that they provide opportunities for nature to thrive as well as being a welcoming and tranquil oasis for people. In many churchyards, grassland is an important habitat, harbouring wildflowers and insects, now largely lost from the farmed countryside. Careful management regimes create living churchyards, important stepping stones for biodiversity and places of quiet contemplation for visitors.

Parish & Town Councils Award Category sponsored by The Landscape Partnership

This Award recognises councils which are directing their activities to improve local biodiversity. This could be through: exercise of their statutory functions such as those required under the National Planning Policy Framework to conserve and enhance the natural environment; supporting local biodiversity efforts; or promoting the importance of biodiversity conservation locally.

Group Award Category sponsored by the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership

This Award recognises work done by groups which are working on biodiversity projects in their local community. Local groups can inspire people to recognise and care for their local biodiversity while providing the chance to get together, work with a common purpose and get fitter.

Watery Wildlife & Habitats Award Category sponsored by Pensthorpe Natural Park

This Award recognises efforts to care for watery wildlife and habitats including coastal biodiversity, freshwater wetlands, rivers and ponds. Watery habitats are great for a whole host of wildlife but can be easily damaged through neglect, pollution or drying out. Community action can help safeguard and enhance these special places or create new watery homes for wildlife.

Special Achievement Awards

These awards are for outstanding achievements by individuals in the field of Watery Wildlife & Habitats

Nominations 2017 [in alphabetical order]

1. Aylmerton Pond Restoration Group

For over 10 years this community group has shown enormous enthusiasm, passion and commitment to improve their local pond, a striking focal point in the village. Their motivation centres around a desire to look after the wildlife and landscape assets here but also maximise enjoyment for residents and visitors alike. They have created a reed filtration bed to reduce highway flooding and improve water quality and have installed a boardwalk, pond dipping platform and information boards. Now the pond provides a peaceful and attractive space, suitable for all ages, with information about the wildlife and history of the area. The group has also led to the creation of a new conservation charity for Norfolk – the Felbeck Trust - which will undertake similar projects but on a broader scale.

2. Bacton Primary School

An underused area of school grounds has been transformed into an inspiring outdoor learning space. There are raised beds, a woodland area and orchard, a lighthouse wigwam and a stunning wooden boat with compass feature, anchor and flower bucket fenders and a “sea sanctuary”. There are plans to create a wildflower meadow. As well as the children, staff and parents, the wider community is involved through Bacton Gardening Club and Paston Heritage Society. The area provides a fun place for children to learn, explore through sensory play, or simply sit quietly.

3. The Blakeney Conservation Duck Pond

The pond is home for some 45 pairs of captive breeds, many indigenous to UK but some from as far away as Hawaii. Fed by natural springs, it is clear and always being refreshed so is an ideal home for the many resident ducks and geese, invertebrates, amphibians as well as water voles. The birds’ eggs are removed and reared then returned to the pond. There are benches for people to just sit and watch the ducks paddling about, and local Cub and Scout Groups come to visit and learn about the ducks, their habitat and habits.

4. Boughton Fen Committee

This SSSI, which includes 9ha of reed fen, was once at serious risk of disappearing through drying out and being taken over by scrub. After years of hard work by local volunteers, young people and contractors, the water levels are now managed and a programme of rotational cutting and mowing carried out. The results are a rich variety of plant and invertebrate life, water rail, bearded tits and reed warblers, and consequently cuckoos. Marsh Harriers breed and Red Kite, Buzzards are frequently seen as well as a variety of smaller birds like Cetti's warbler, Chiff-chaff, larks and spectacular murmurations of starlings.

5. Carl Sayer

Born and raised in north Norfolk, Carl Sayer is the leader of aquatic conservation in this beautiful county. A founding member of The River Glaven Conservation Group and the driving force behind UCL's Pond Restoration Research Group Carl and his colleagues have brought together local Norfolk residents, naturalists, scientists, fishermen and landowners in concern for the well-being of Norfolk's rivers and ponds. With a host of scientific papers published, Carl is a well-established international academic but equally importantly, he has been instrumental in establishing opportunities for volunteers to make a real difference to aquatic environments here in Norfolk. His enthusiasm advice and support has made a great impression on many individuals and groups, mobilising them to concern and action.

6. Clinks Care Farm

This rural social enterprise manages 143 acres of land which they have diversified from pure arable into a mix of arable, conservation, vegetable and fruit growing and keeping livestock. The Farm combines the care of the land with the care of people as engaging and working in the outdoor environment is very therapeutic and meaningful to those who suffer from ill physical health, autism, dementia, substance misuse, brain injuries and poor mental health. They work in partnership with others on their own site and also support local communities such as schools and parish councils.



Nominations -
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7. Coltishall Community Orchard Group

Originally planted in 1996 to provide a green open space and fruit for parishioners there are some 30 Norfolk varieties of apple trees and a mixed hedge & tree perimeter. Recently volunteers have been drawn together to carry out much needed major renovation work. Trees have been pruned, hedges cut and trees under threat from disease have been inter-planted with new wildlife-friendly species. More recently wild flower planting on the site has begun. It is now a well-managed green space for local residents and visitors to enjoy and hopefully observe a wide variety of flora and fauna.

8. Countryside Restoration Trust – Mayfields Farm

At Mayfields Farm near Themelthorpe in the heart of Norfolk, the Countryside Restoration Trust has created two brand new farmland edge ponds bordering on sheep paddocks. They have been a great success with visiting school groups and families, who have been able to get close to aquatic minibeasts such as dragonflies and damselflies. The Trust has worked with volunteers from TCV to improve old claypit ponds and has inspired volunteers to come forward from the local community to help with managing and improving the ponds.

9. The Conservation Volunteers Midweek Group

This group of volunteers carries out conservation tasks on public green spaces around Norfolk three days a week. This includes woodland management, meadow conservation, heathland preservation, pond conservation, invasive species removal, scrub control and improvements to public access. Over the last year the team completed 127 tasks on 45 sites, engaged 198 volunteers, and contributed the equivalent of 1021 worker days to public spaces. The volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds, are mainly unemployed people and those with health needs. TCV works with community groups producing management plans, and apply for funding for sites where no funds are available.

10. Helen Smith

The endangered Fen Raft Spider is the focus of Helen's work and she is the driving force behind one of very few examples of a successful invertebrate translocation anywhere in the world; and it is looking set to see Fen Raft Spiders removed from the UK Red List. Working with many organisations, including the John Innes Centre, zoos and landowners, Helen inspired volunteers, the public and funders to work together for spider and wetland conservation. From just one fragile population five years ago, the Broads are now the Fen Raft Spider's UK stronghold. Helen's other roles include helping establish and run the award-winner, community-based, Little Ouse Headwaters Project. Helen is currently President of the Norfolk Naturalists' Society and takes a leading role in the British Arachnological Society, promoting the third of the UK's spiders that are of conservation concern, and wider education about spiders, helping to turn fear to fascination. She is author of a new field guide to spiders published in the WildGuides, with profits from the book helping spider conservation.

11. Holt Town Council

The Town Council took the brave decision at the end of last year to employ a maintenance team so that better management, enhancement and protection of biodiversity could be developed in the cemetery. This has been a great success making the cemetery a place of living and renewal, a place of memories and an oasis of calm where lost ones can be remembered within a diverse environment of living wildlife. Work has included bat and bird boxes, bird feeders, a green watering system, bug and bee hotels, compost bins, log piles and planting butterfly-friendly plants.

12. Mid Norfolk Workout Group

Started in February 2016, after training in wildlife surveying, the group of volunteers have already recorded dragonflies, bees, wildflowers, fungi, birds, butterflies and bats. They also work to maintain and improve habitats on various sites which provide stepping stones of habitats across the heart of Norfolk. This has included pond restoration, coppicing, meadow & wetland management, wildlife garden construction, path maintenance and controlling invasive plants. The Group also give public talks and school outreach activities on the historic, landscape and natural heritage of the area. Around a dozen volunteers turn up every week and new faces are always welcome..

13. Saham Toney Parish Council

With the support of the Wayland Partnership's 'Growing Together Project' and the Peoples Post Code Lottery, local wildlife enthusiasts are transforming land at the Wells Cole Community Centre to attract more wildlife and make it more visually attractive. They have planted a wildlife attractive hedgerow, thinned self-set trees and used the logs for a habitat pile. Wildflower seeds are being grown in modules to enhance some of the grass area that borders the newly planted hedgerow and nesting boxes, bug hotels and feeders installed. The Project has given the villagers something really tangible and positive to contribute to village life, in times of great change and uncertainty.

14. Scarning Conservation Volunteers

The volunteers work on this sensitive County Wildlife Site. The highlight of 2016 was a Bio Blitz event organised with support from the Norfolk Wildlife Trust. Over 200 people participated in pond dipping, bird box making, guided walks to observe and record wildlife. 300 species of flora and fauna were recorded and a further 70 people participated in identifying bat species on two walks. The volunteers have been joined by TCV groups and scouts in conservation work including controlling invasive species, creating scrapes, and clearing ditches. An easy access path has been created and two new interpretation boards are ready to be installed.

15. South Yare Wildlife Group

The Group's Wild Patch project aims to encourage householders and landowners to manage their gardens or other spaces to encourage wildlife. An eye catching and engaging brand and signage has helped the group to success in engaging with a large number of people. The signage lets people know that the seemingly wild and potentially unkempt area is actually a wildlife haven. A fantastic set of online resources help people get involved easily and stay up to date with activities. A fantastic animation demonstrates the effectiveness of wild patches will be used online and in schools. [This animation is available to view at this event].

16. Sprowston Town Council

The Town Council takes conservation seriously and has adopted the Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services. The 27 ha Harrison's Wood will be acquired by the Council through a Section 106 Agreement with developers and be managed by working in partnership with Broadland DC and Norwich Fringe Project. The Woodland forms an integral part of the green infrastructure and open space for the nearby housing development. A 5 year management plan will see trees maintained, both standing and fallen deadwood retained, some areas restored to heathland, signage and interpretation, pedestrian and cycle access maintained and developed and volunteers involved in the management.

17. Trinity Broads Volunteer Group

Sharing a love of the wetland environment of the Trinity Broads, the 30 or so volunteers contribute 3.5 - 4 thousand hours to the site a year, tackling varied tasks that often take place in very challenging terrain. This includes clearing scrub, mowing reed beds, cleaning tern rafts, controlling invasive species hedge planting and laying. They also monitor wetland birdlife, aquatic plants and bats and help with events, patrols, water sampling, litter collecting and data inputting. Their efforts have resulted in increases in abundance and diversity of wildlife. As a result of local involvement in volunteering with the Group, contacts and community engagement have increased, opening up opportunities for biodiversity enhancements on village land.

18. Wymondham Abbey Churchyard Group

Last year's winners in this category, they have continued in their efforts with articles in the Parish magazine, the creation of a mediaeval herb garden with medicinal, culinary, aromatic and industrial plants and explanatory signage. The plant species count has gone up from 65 to 147 and species listed in surveys 30 years ago are now re-appearing. The churchyard also hosts events including a Green Hallowe'en with surveys and bat detecting and the re-enactment of Kett's Rebellion. This year's Living History week will focus on the Black Death and there will be a picnic to celebrate 50 years of bell-ringing at the Abbey.

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celebrating Norfolk's biodiversity volunteers



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