

Community Biodiversity Awards 2006

1) Site Award:

Winner: Frenze Beck

This site has been developed into a wildlife area after being acquired by South Norfolk Council under a planning deal. Many different habitat and visitor features have been constructed, including two large reed-beds, a pond with dipping platform, a wheelchair accessible boardwalk and viewing screens. Much of the work has been undertaken by volunteers from the South Norfolk Voluntary Rangers, Bungay High School, South Norfolk Conservation Volunteers and Easton College.

Honourable Mention: Sandwade Mere (Ian and Rosemary McIntosh)

Sandwade Mere, a County Wildlife Site, has played an important part in the village's history. The owners, Ian and Rosemary McIntosh, have opened the site to the public by constructing a wheelchair usable route with the help of local volunteers, which includes a boardwalk allowing access to the open water. The owners themselves provided much of the funding for the project, with help from Stow Bedon Parish Council and Norfolk County Council.

2) Education Award:

Winner: Sutton First School

This school has developed a large wildlife area in their grounds using sustainable principles and involving the children in the design. The wildlife area is still not finished, but already there is a woodland area, hedges, a pond, marsh and osier bed; a hide, bird feeding stations and a composting facility have also been incorporated and money has been raised for wheelchair accessible paths. The area is used for lessons and an after school club, and it is hoped to encourage more use of the site by the wider community.

Honourable Mention: Old Buckenham Community Primary School

A large wildlife area complete with pond has already been developed at this school, and there are plans to further enhance the wildlife area. The school is an active participant in both the RSPB Bird Friendly Schools Campaign and the Eco-Schools Programmes; it won the Waste Category in the Norfolk Schools Environment Awards in 2006 for reducing waste, and a Bronze Eco School Award for improving the school environment. The school's various waste reduction and re-cycling initiatives have also attracted widespread press coverage.

3) Local Group Award:

Winner: Compo

Compo is a community re-cycling scheme which provides training and work experience to young adults with learning difficulties. It was set up in June 2005 as a partnership between Forward + Futures, Involve and Narborough Parish Council. The project offers a weekly kerbside garden waste and glass collection, with the garden waste being composted and sold back to gardeners; to date, over 55 tonnes of garden waste and 35 tonnes of glass have been re-cycled from Narborough alone. Compo has attracted widespread interest and support, and a second scheme has recently been started in North Lynn.

Honourable Mention: River Glaven Conservation Group

This group focuses on the River Glaven in North Norfolk, and is made up of local residents and landowners, conservationists and scientists. A major aim of the group is the conservation and restoration of wildlife habitats along the river corridor. This has included putting back natural features such as meanders, gravel beds and riffles for fish spawning, large woody debris and re-connecting the river channel with the floodplain. A recent project involved the restoration of a one kilometre stretch of the river through Glaven Farm Meadows County Wildlife Site.

4) Individual Award:

Winner: Steve Cook – Norwich Environmental Weekenders

Steve Cook has been running Norwich Environmental Weekenders for over 13 years. The group carries out practical conservation work on a wide range of nature reserves and other sites in the county, not only benefiting local biodiversity but also giving city residents an opportunity to carry out rewarding, enjoyable work in the countryside and make new friends. Steve also organises the group's monthly social event and arranges volunteer training.

Honourable Mention: Dick Hamond

Dick Hamond, a qualified marine biologist and past President of the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society, is the marine recorder for Norfolk. He has studied the marine fauna of the North Norfolk Coast for many years, during which time he has produced 13 scientific papers and added at least 664 species of marine invertebrates to the Norfolk list. He also helps a diving group with identifications, thereby passing his knowledge on to others to the benefit of local marine conservation.