

Our Vision:

A Parish and its people that are enriched by wildlife, where people enrich the natural world and help to safeguard it for the future.

Our aims are to:

Share knowledge of the wonderful wildlife in the Parish of Chudleigh.

Raise awareness through events and activities that involve and motivate the community.

Encourage positive action by local residents to attract and sustain more wildlife in the town and Parish of Chudleigh.

Conserve and enhance our existing wildlife and local habitats, features and species populations, through working together and with others.

Survey & record what we have, holding and sharing our wildlife records with others.

Advise groups and individuals on biodiversity and land management for wildlife.

Monitor development proposals that may result in damage to important wildlife.

Be environmentally and socially aware and responsible in what we do.

Interested in joining us?

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, are interested in joining the committee, or would like to volunteer, please contact

info.chudleighwild@gmail.com

Chair's Chat

After the wettest 18 months on record, spring has come early - if the arrival times of summer migrant birds is anything to go by. A fairly persistent southerly airflow has raised temperatures and literally pushed birds north. Insects have appeared and plants have flowered early as well. Even the first grasses have started to flower, like the Sweet Vernal Grass in my lawn.

Lots of Dandelions and Cuckooflowers in my lawn have added to the early pollinator favourites in the flower beds:

Lungwort (*Pulmonaria*) has been attracting bees for several weeks, including Hairy-footed

Flower Bees. This species is hard to get to grips with, as it flies quickly between very brief visits to nectar. Like many bees, the males and females are quite different in colour - which makes identification quite a challenge. I've been trying to photograph them, but unfortunately the images are often poor. Insect ID isn't quite as simple as 'showing' the image to apps like Obsidentify and Seek and waiting for an answer! Even using one of the fantastic modern field guides isn't easy once the critter has buzzed off. The old-fashioned technique of catching, killing and mounting specimens is a sure-fire way of identifying and preserving records, but not very popular these days.

In the last week, Red Mason Bees have been emerging from their overwintering pupal cases. Those in bee houses with bamboo canes have to push out the plugs of soil before they can fly out. The males seem to emerge first and hang around the still-plugged bamboos: they grab anything that emerges and try to mate with it! At least female moths have the decency to give off pheromones as they emerge, so the males don't waste time chasing the wrong sex!



Hairy-footed Flower Bee



Red Mason Bee

Dave Smallshire



Tiny victims of roadside litterbugs

Three million mice and voles die trapped in bottles and cans thrown from cars

- Some 3.2 million voles, shrews and mice die as they crawl in and cannot escape
- One RSPB member found a dead animal in one in ten bottles in south Norfolk



Chudleigh Wild volunteers were horrified to experience this for themselves, whilst clearing litter from the Beggars Bush area on the outskirts of the Parish. Ten bags full of litter were picked up recently. Several bottles contained dead mammals.

Reptiles and amphibians, as well as mice, voles and shrews, will seek shelter in discarded cans and bottles and, unable to escape, die slowly of starvation.

Small mammals are integral to the food chain – eating insects and plants and providing food for larger animals and rare birds such as owls and Kestrels.

The statistics above come from an 18-month study led by RSPB volunteer Graham Moates, who had help from the charity 'Keep Britain Tidy'.

Litter, especially bottles and cans, has become an increasing problem in Chudleigh, especially near building sites, where there is a constant flow of delivery drivers. Both Chudleigh Wild and members of the Town Council are appealing for volunteers to keep the worst areas litter free.



If you feel as strongly as we do about this growing problem in our town and could offer few hours now and then, please contact us:

info.chudleighwild@gmail.com



Keep your garden birds healthy



Greenfinch - Dave Smallshire

Greenfinches are in serious trouble, but together we can help by keeping feeding stations clean to stop disease spreading. This beautiful little bird was a common sight in gardens, but has seen a dramatic decline of 63% since 1993. It has now been moved from the Birds of Conservation Concern's green list to the red list.

One of the reasons for the decline is because of a severe outbreak of the disease Trichomoniasis, which can be spread by contaminated food and drinking water.

By keeping our feeders, bird tables and bird baths clean, we can help bring this colourful little character back to our gardens, as well as helping to keep our other garden birds fit, healthy and disease free.

What you will need:

- Rubber gloves
- Bottle brush
- Sponge
- A scraper (if you have a bird table)
- A bucket of warm, soapy water
- An animal-safe disinfectant spray

The RSPB recommends using an animal safe disinfectant, but a weak solution of domestic bleach can be used as an alternative.

You should also clean you bird bath.

Cleaning any space where birds congregate will help them stay healthy. Ideally, clean water should be provided every day.

Cleaning your bird feeders:

Put your rubber gloves on and remove any old food, by hand and with your scraper, and throw it away – do not reuse or compost.

Fill your bucket with warm, soapy water and use the sponge to **clean away any small bits of food and droppings**.

Rinse thoroughly with cold water; a hose pipe works well.

Let it dry completely, before spraying it with the disinfectant, following the instructions.

Rinse again and then let it dry completely before refilling.

For more information visit:

www.rspb.org.uk/whats-happening/news/keep-your-garden-birds-healthy



Posted on X recently was this interesting, but alarming, discovery!



Hedgehog Cabin

Based in Hampshire, Hedgehog Cabin runs a small hospital for sick, injured and orphaned wild Hedgehogs.

Their founder and ambassador posted:

“Two dear little Hedgehogs, who were brought into a rescue I mentor, and who were expertly nursed back to health and released, were found dead yesterday. **Poisoned. The devastated finder had no idea that compost bins are dangerous to animals (and can be to humans too) and should always be kept closed to prevent animals having access.** Decomposing organic matter in a compost bin can contain fungi which produce neurotoxins called *tremorgenic mycotoxins*. **These naturally occurring substances are highly toxic to both humans and animals.** Although the contents are deadly, the invertebrates the compost attracts make it very inviting to the insectivore Hedgehog, who trusts it as a source of food and shelter. **The compost bin will be particularly attractive during the winter as it can provide a warm dry place to nest.** Very few people realise that consuming even a small amount of compost containing these mycotoxins can be deadly, and **there is no cure for this poisoning.** Often people who find unexplained dead Hedgehogs in their garden have no idea it was their open compost bin which was to blame. **If you or your neighbours have a compost bin, please ensure it is safe and inaccessible to wildlife and your pets.** <https://riverroadveterinary.com/compost-toxicity-in-dogs/>.”

This is an excellent and informative website, well worth visiting: [Hedgehog Cabin](#)



CHUDLEIGH CHARITY OPEN GARDENS 2024

Saturday June 29th and Sunday June 30th



Once we are again organising Open Gardens, as part of Chudfest. We have 13 beautiful gardens opening on one or both days. Gardens will be open from 10am to 4pm, unless otherwise stated.

Some gardens will be offering refreshments, including hot and cold drinks, cream teas, cakes etc. There will also be plants and homemade items for sale as well as activities for children. Full details will be printed on the tickets.

Gardens confirmed as taking part at the time of printing:

Hams Barton Farm

Woodlands, Millstone Cross

Greenfields, Highland Park

Home Lodge, 2 Old Exeter Street

Old Chapel, Old Exeter Street

6 Old Exeter Street

1 The Square, Town Centre

16 Clifford Street

Hurst House, Parkway Road

Overhills, The Parade

Applemede, The Parade

Biddlecombe House, Ugbrooke

Smoothways, Ugbrooke

Charities and good causes supported will include:

Guide Dogs for the Blind, Alzheimer's Society, UNICEF, Rowcroft, Devon Air Ambulance and others.

Parking is limited at all venues. Please avoid driving wherever possible. **If you have limited mobility** and would like to know more about accessibility, please email e.smith33@sky.com **Please note these are private gardens.** It is the responsibility of all visitors to look after their own safety and that of any children in their care. **No dogs** are permitted, except assistance dogs. Please adhere to all signs in the gardens for your own safety.

Tickets £6

available in advance from Dandelion, Chudleigh DIY and Gills, online from www.chudfest.co.uk, or from the first garden you visit.

www.chudleighwild.org