

Who cares for our Future?



WildCookham is delighted to be playing a prominent role in the development of the Cookham Neighbourhood Plan. As one of the non-Parish Council members of the Plan's working party, alongside the Cookham Society and Save Cookham, we are pushing hard to ensure that our local environment is protected and that the Plan encourages the increase in our biodiversity in line with the Royal Borough's Environment and Climate Strategy. The second round of public consultation will be starting soon and we encourage all those concerned about our diminishing wildlife and natural habitats to make your views heard. You can read more about the Plan, and how you can take action, [here](#).

Planning for Biodiversity

We're also closely involved in the development of the Borough's Biodiversity Action Plan. This is one of the commitments made by the Borough last December with a draft BAP called for by the end of June



this year. We are joined with the other Wild groups in the Borough (there are seven of us now) as members of the BAP working party and have been working on a comprehensive programme of projects and specific activities, as well as the policy that will underlie future programmes. Building on the Biodiversity Action Plan developed by Wild Maidenhead five years ago this is really cutting edge activity which will be at the heart of the Borough's Environment and Climate strategy and it's good to know that the commitment, expertise and depth and breadth of our following is now putting us in such a good

position to impact environmental policy. You can read the RBWM Environment and Climate Strategy, approved unanimously last December, [here](#).

*Can you help in some of WildCookham's work?
See the item at the end for details.*

Swallow Hard

It's getting tougher for our Swallows, Martins and Swifts. Blame a whole range of misfortunes – lack of insects, the human desire to improve our dwellings, climate change bringing forward the Spring and confusing the insects. Already there is a local programme of nest-creation for Swifts. Now we are



looking at the plight of the similar but very distinct species under the 'hirundine' heading – Swallows, sometimes now referred to as Barn Swallows, and Martins (notably House Martins but also Sand Martins). A team of 15+ Swallow Spotters has been deployed across Cookham, each taking an area to check presence of Swallows and Martins and then to monitor (safely, for the birds that is!) any nests. We hope this

will tell us where we can expect Swallows and what steps we can to encourage more to return each year to Cookham and to nest here. Find out more here and contact wildcookham@gmail.com with your information about Swallow and Martin nest sites.

Glowing in the dark

Another survey we are carrying out is into Glow worms. The females of these fascinating insects (not worms!) emit a strong light visible after dusk, to attract males. They can be seen in June and July and we have a team of volunteers scouring the local areas of grassland to build up a picture of local presence, building on a more limited survey in 2019. They may be in the grass in field edges near hedges, roadside and track verges, the railway embankment, and could even be in your garden. Venture out and have a look and let us know at

wildcookham@gmail.com if you find anyway. Or join us for an evening walk with Robin Scagell, the lead on the

UK's Glow worm Survey on [Friday 16th July](#). Plus there's more on these fascinating creatures on the [UK Glow worm Survey website](#). (Photo courtesy of Cindy Barnes.)



We're Wild About Gardens

We now have more than 100 gardens in our wild gardens campaign and we are keen to see that increase further. Our [Let's Get Started](#) promotion encourages anyone with a garden or window box to get involved even if they are not yet ready to enter for an award. And it's linked to our new Green Ribbon gardens to make a difference for wildlife. See more details on [our website](#). Closing date for entries for this year's Awards is 31st July: all details from cookhamwaga@gmail.com.

Walkabout Cookham's wildlife



Look out for WildCookham walks through the summer. We are hoping to run quite a few of these and to keep the numbers of attendees low – partly to ensure we comply with any regulations but also so that everyone attending can be fully engaged. If you are not registered on our [Meetup site](#), it's easy to do – and then you get automatic updates about any upcoming walks and talks.

Events coming up soon are:

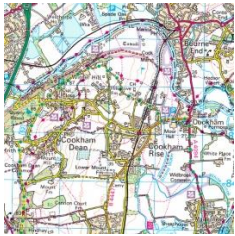
Thursday 1st and Tuesday 20th July. 10am. Wildlife tours of the Odney estate, Cookham

Sunday 4th July. 10.30am. The Butterflies of Maidenhead Thicket.

Friday 16th July. 9pm. Glow worm walk with **UK's** leading expert Robin Scagell

[All details on Meetup.](#)

The bigger landscape



One potentially exciting development for us is the start of conversations with some of the larger landowners in the area. It's important that individuals and businesses with more than a few acres play their part in protecting and enhancing our natural environments so we are hoping that these discussions can be helpful. Watch this space!

Strength in the Community

We're delighted that we now have 720+ supporters on our [Facebook page](#). It's a great place to see some of the wildlife in our community and to share your discoveries as well as your questions. We have experts on hand to answer queries and a highly appreciate audience. It's also good to know that, together with the other local Wild groups, we can now call on more than 3000 supporters representing, we suspect, a much larger group of people concerned about environmental issues across the Borough.



Granted

We're delighted that the Borough's young wildlifers, WildSL6, have gained a grant to work with local young people on a programme aimed at raising the profile of our hedgerows. WildCookham is the supporting group for this grant from the Grow Wild charity. WildSL6, led by local biology graduate Rosie Street, will be putting on talks and trips with local schools and other groups.

Battlemead – still battling

During the late winter/spring we started work on the Ecological Management Plan agreed for Battlemead, the 110-acre area of previously private land between Cookham and Maidenhead. This has included planting around 250 whips (baby trees/bushes) to create a belt of scrub in the West Field as



well as the first stages in some natural screening in the wetland area in the East Field. We have also provided new homes for 30+ Tits, Kestrels and Tawny Owls. We continue to press the case for the East Field to be kept out of bounds to the public for a few years to allow the ecology plan to do its work and prevent early human intrusion limiting the plan's impact. With the evidence of ecological damage piling up the case is ever stronger for putting the

needs of wildlife and our natural assets ahead of calls for another bit of footpath. See more about [Battlemead on our website](#).

A BeeLine for Harwood House

The collaboration with Morag Forsyth, matron at Harwood House Nursing Home, began 18 months ago when three new tubs were planted by WildCookham. The plan was to provide a year-round supply of nectar and pollen for bumblebees by planting a succession of species,



replacing those that faded with fresh ones that were coming into bloom. This has been achieved by using Daphne, Pulmonaria, Wallflower, Dahlia, Anemone, Nemesis, Cosmos and Scabious. Bumblebees have been seen foraging every month, bringing benefit to them and pleasure to the residents. Thanks to the team that has made this happen.

Donations made easy

WildCookham now has a JustGiving account, making it easy for anyone to contribute to the group's work. We mainly focus our fund-raising on specific projects but money is needed for the general running costs so any 'non-specific' donations are always welcome. During lockdown we have not received income from donations at our various events: JustGiving addresses this problem. Just go to <https://www.justgiving.com/wildcookham>.

All hands to the Pumps

The increasing efforts of WildCookham, and other local wildlife groups, to arrest the dramatic decline in our wild habitats and species places real pressure on the people and resources currently involved. We could do more but we need more help to do this. Please contact us at wildcookham@gmail.com if you can help us, even if with just a bit of your time and energy. There's work for everyone. And if you have some background in communications/marketing, in planning or project management, IT or have specialist environmental expertise so much the better. Just get in touch for a chat – wildcookham@gmail.com.

If you care, can you help?
Contact wildcookham@gmail.com

WildCookham is a community group focused on discovering, celebrating and supporting biodiversity in Cookham, Berkshire, UK. We care about our local wildlife, sharing our passion and knowledge in a practical and engaging way.

Find us at:

Website: www.wildcookham.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook/groups/wildcookham

Meetup: www.meetup.com/WildCookham

JustGiving:

<https://www.justgiving.com/wildcookham>

Email: wildcookham@gmail.com