

2022/23 Report from Stowupland Biodiversity and Wildflower Group

The Green and the Retreat Pond are important resources for biodiversity. Both are the responsibility of the Parish Council; however, members of the Group have been leading on a number of projects to improve the value of The Green for birds, insects and small mammals as well as encouraging wildflowers. Whilst many local people value our Green as an open, green space, it is also home for much wildlife; its wider bio-significance needs to be recognised.

Last year, the Parish Council agreed that an area of The Green could be set aside to allow our Group to provide a wildflower meadow. Unfortunately, mowing continued for the whole of last year's mowing season, but mowing of that area has now ceased and we look forward to seeing wildflowers spring up. We will be carrying out some planting of local wildflowers, including bluebells and snowdrops. We had asked that the mowing schedule be adapted so that all The Green could be left uncut for No Mow May, but the Parish Council declined that suggestion. We hope that the Council can be persuaded to change the mowing regime to allow the buttercups and clovers to flourish in 2024 to provide much-needed pollen for bees. We have also requested another area of The Green for a second wildflower meadow; we hope that suggestion will find favour in due course.

We also cleared out the pond ready for an excavator to remove silt down to a hard bottom, but the pond filled up first. Some of the wood removed from the pond was used to build a log pile for winter shelter for insects and mammals. We have two owl boxes to fix to trees, one on The Green and, hopefully, one in Thradstones Meadow.

The Group organised a free workshop – 'What Can I Do?' to encourage residents to find out what they can do to make Stowupland more biodiverse. As part of this, pupils from Freeman School designed posters, some of which are on display. One of our Group, who is a beekeeper, explained about bees and how honey is made. Some who came along were sowing wildflower seeds, building bird boxes and bug hotels. Others came for advice; our aim was to encourage young and old, green and non-green fingered to share or learn more about biodiversity within our village.



In March, we spent a morning with an advisor from the Suffolk Wildlife Trust to help us develop long term plans and proposals to suggest to the Parish Council. We also hope to be able to assist the Freeman School and the preschool with biodiversity projects.

Our Green may be at the heart of our community, but the smaller green spaces of gardens and verges are also vital corridors linking the fields within which our village sits. Whilst, over the past century, we may have lost many fields, we can each do our part to ensure valuable wildlife habitats are maintained.

We would welcome new members to join the Group, either as members of the planning group or as practical volunteers.