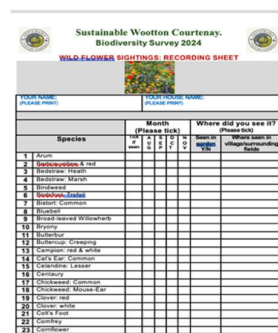




SUSTAINABLE WOOTTON COURTENAY ANNUAL REVIEW 2024



BIODIVERSITY SURVEY



The Wootton Courtenay section of the iNaturalist App
<https://www.inaturalist.org>

A spotter sheet

The village biodiversity survey took place from April until November 2024 with the intention of recording the range of flora and fauna that exist within the parish boundary. A citizen science approach involved villagers recording observations on pre-prepared spotter sheets or photographing species and recording them on the iNaturalist mobile phone app.

	No of observers	No of observations	No of species identified
Spotter sheets	41	2162	212
iNaturalist app	52	988	582
	93	3150	794

A significant number of villagers commented on how much they had learned from their involvement in the survey and how it had enhanced their knowledge and enjoyment of our resident species which goes to show that you're never too old to learn!

During 2025, Sustainable Wootton Courtenay will publish a report of the findings of the survey and review how we might support threatened species by providing suitable habitats and wildlife corridors. It's also important to remember that if we want hedgehogs, then they need to eat snails; if we want butterflies, they need to lay their eggs somewhere and if we want bees, they need places to hibernate as well as feed.

WILDLIFE BOXES

In April, we held a very successful "Boxing Day" where friends and neighbours gathered to construct various **bird, ladybird and butterfly boxes** from flat packs made by John Brady, Paul Sheldon, Ian Stewart and Terry Walker. All the boxes were made with recycled wood and information sheets were provided with advice relating to the location and maintenance of the boxes. £195 was received in donations for our projects.



NOTE THE LADIES WITH DRILLS AND A NEW SET OF SKILLS!



In the autumn, Terry Walker liaised with Heidrun Humphries, one of our village hedgehog rescue experts to design **hedgehog boxes** in time for the hibernation season. Information sheets and packs were provided with each of the 13 boxes sold and £140 was raised for Sustainable Wootton Courtenay projects. As a result, our local hedgehogs have a greater range of accommodation to choose from this autumn!



INCOME AND EXPENDITURE



Somerset Wildlife Trust generously supported our launch by paying the Village Hall fees from March until August.

Total income for 2024 = £1381.75

Total expenditure for 2024 = £796.34 which included £263 raised for the Church roof fund; £300 donated to Somerset Wildlife Trust; £100 donated to Good Vibe Veg.

Profit: £585.41 (towards hall hire, speakers' fees, event refreshments and the future cost of printing the biodiversity report)

TALKS AND VISITS

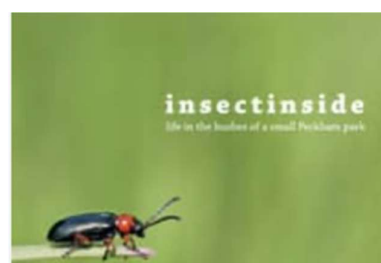
WEST SOMERSET WILDWAYS PROJECT: A TALK BY ELIZABETH ATKINSON



In May, Elizabeth Atkinson, from Somerset Wildlife Trust, gave a talk on the West Somerset Wildways initiative which assists individuals and communities to observe and record nature. She provided table top displays of nature's wonders and enthralled the audience with enthusiasm and humour as she encouraged us all to record wildlife observations on the iNaturalist app. Her talk was very well received.

INSECTS, PHOTOGRAPHY AND FUNNY LITTLE STORIES: A TALK BY PENNY METAL

As part of our village project to encourage us to open up our gardens to more wildlife, Daphne Wilbraham invited insect photographer and renowned speaker, Penny Metal, to talk about her remarkable adventures photographing and exploring the lives of insects in a small park in Peckham, London. Penny's talk was really fascinating, humorous and thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended and many copies of her book were sold at the event.



BUG HUNT AND NATURE TRAIL WITH PENNY METAL, SALLY LISTER AND TARA WRIGHT



Penny Metal was invited from Peckham by Daphne Wilbraham to lead our "Bug Hunt Weekend" in July when we arranged for Tara Wright to bring along her moth trap. A few hornets were also attracted by the light, meant for the moths, which resulted in quite a few specimens being eaten! However, there was a good selection for us all to see in Kate McKenzie's garden. Following the great reveal (of moths) on the Saturday, we did a slow perigrenation of Kate's garden identifying various insects in her wild garden, followed by a walk around the more cultivated garden at The Old Rectory. Sally Lister was also there as a plant and bug expert so we had two very interesting women to tell us about the creatures and plants we found. Following the success of Saturday, some of us took part in a walk on the moor where different insects were discovered. It was a lovely sunny weekend and enjoyed by all who attended.

THE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY: A TALK BY DIETER HELM



Professor Sir Dieter Helm gave an engaging and thought provoking talk in the village hall on the 8th November. He spoke about sustainability and the legacy we leave for the next generation, warning that we must all pay for the maintenance of core natural assets, instead of living well off their destruction. Furthermore, that in order to avoid disaster we must transform how we live our lives, individually and collectively. The talk was well attended and raised over £300 for Somerset Wildlife Trust.

NEWSLETTERS AND "JUST TWO THINGS"



There have been 10 newsletters this year highlighting a range of topics. They have been published on the Village website and paper copies have been provided in the Village Shop.

Every month a short 'eco tip' is posted on the website and village email by Ro Hoyte, Jane Barbieri and Margaret Lovatt under the title, "Just Two Things". These provide suggestions of small ways in which we can help protect our environment. They can be indoor or outdoor garden tips. It was good to get some feedback from a few neighbours that they have taken up some of the ideas, such as sowing marigold seeds to fill bare soil. That's a few more happy insects.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

ENERGY EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE: Peter Clapham, Valerie Clapham, James Macbeth, Beate Frankel, Alan Dutton, Brian Matthews



It was decided to set up a small working committee to inform, encourage and support energy efficiency improvements in village homes. Following informal benchmark surveys using open access information, it was decided to develop an up-to-date file of helpful information and useful contacts which is available to, and being used by villagers. People who have already made efficiency improvements to their homes, have been invited to discuss their experiences at a successful coffee morning and to invite people to visit their homes to show and discuss their improvements. Electricity tariffs are being researched and it is planned to present any helpful information on the village email system. We plan to hire a thermal camera and this has been booked for late winter 2025, we hope to further develop the information file and contacts list, launch both on our village website, produce a list of small measures which can easily help to save energy, offer help to understand the growing number of electricity tariffs and arrange the occasional meeting with a knowledgeable speaker.

CLOTHING EXCHANGE



The 'Not a Jumble Sale' of good quality 'pre-loved' clothing was well supported by the village, making £263 for the church roof fund and £128.45 for Sustainable Wootton Courtenay. Sadly despite good publicity on local and social media there was little interest from outside the village.

TREE PLANTING ON THE PLAYING FIELD



During 2024 the public were invited to an open forum, before a Parish Council Meeting, to discuss the possibility of planting trees on the Playing Field. The Archery Club were very pleased to hear there were no plans to plant trees across the centre of the playing field, thereby encroaching on their area of use for Archery. It was agreed the subject would be discussed again at the Playing Field AGM. In the meantime, members of SWC walked around the playing field making a tally of dead trees (over 30) and observing how many Ash trees there are which may well suffer from Ash dieback.

At the Playing Field AGM, which was well attended by SWC members, the approach made and accepted was to look at the possibility of replacing the dead trees around the boundary where possible without taking away any far-reaching views. To this end a small subcommittee of Mike O'Keefe, Kate McKenzie and Jane Barbieri has been formed to look further into this in the spring. The aim is still to use the Woodland Trust to secure bundles of different types of trees offered free for community projects.

WATER CONSERVATION

BEACH CLEAN AT DUNSTER BEACH: JULY 7th 2024

Volunteers: Kate McKenzie, Margaret Lovell, Pip Poynter, Beate Fankhanel, Terry Walker, Ruth Walker

ITEMS COLLECTED					
PLASTIC		RUBBER		METAL	
Bag - small	1	Balloons	1	Foil wrappers	3
Bag - large	2	Fragments of red rubber	4		
Caps & lids	4			POTTERY	
Cigarette stubs	4	CLOTH		Fragments of ceramics	2
Cups - plastic	3	Clothing	3		
Fishing line	3			MEDICAL & SANITARY	
Insulation fibre	1	PAPER/CARDBOARD		Face mask	1
Packets:crisps/sweets	3	Tissue	1	Panty liner	1
Plastic fragments 0-2.5cm	38	Serviette	1		
Plastic fragments 2.5- 50cm	64				
Shotgun cartridge	1	WOOD			
String & filaments from dolly ropes	3	Lolly sticks/cutlery	2		
TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS COLLECTED: 146 TOTAL NUMBER OF PLASTIC ITEMS COLLECTED: 127					

RUTH REPRESENTS SUSTAINABLE WOOTTON COURTENAY AT THE MARCH FOR CLEAN WATER IN LONDON



River Action organised a March for Clean Water in London on Sunday, November 3rd 2024 to petition the Government to take action to clean up our waterways. We asked them to resolve this current health emergency by enforcing existing laws, delivering new legislation to end all pollution and to restore all our rivers, lakes, reservoirs, seas and waterways. Thousands of community groups and charities from across the UK marched from the Albert Embankment to Parliament Square and enthusiastic speeches were made by Chris Packham and Liz Bonnin.



Take a look at all the wonderful photographs of Wootton Courtenay species on iNaturalist. Here's how:

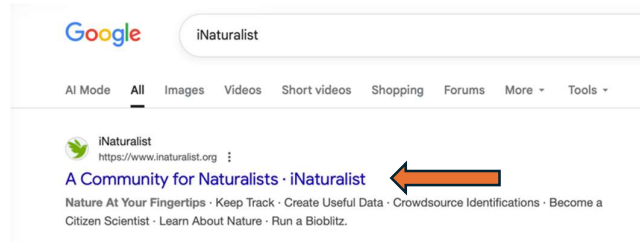
STEP 1:

Type iNaturalist into the search box on your computer and tap e.g.



STEP 2:

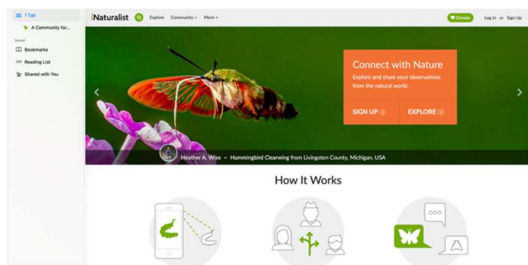
Which takes you to this page:



Click on this (see red arrow)

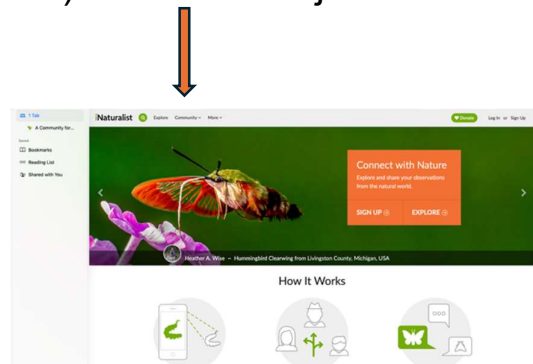
STEP 3:

This takes you to the iNaturalist Website:



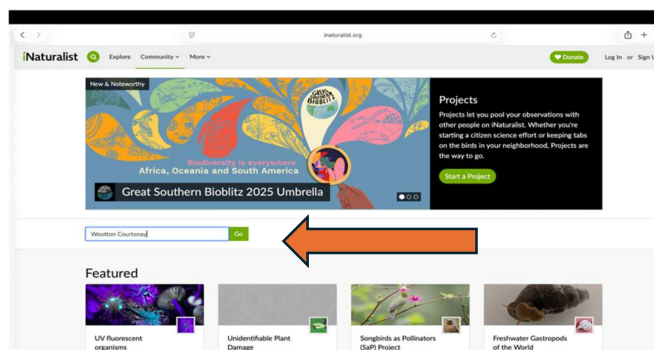
STEP 4:

Click on the word Community (see below) and then Projects.

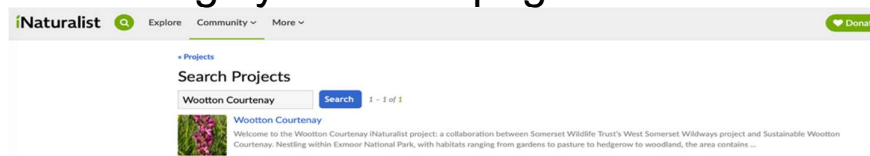


STEP 5:

Which takes you to this page. Type **Wootton Courtenay** in the box (see below) and press return.



STEP 6: Which brings you to this page:



Tap search and you'll arrive at Wootton Courtenay's photograph pages.