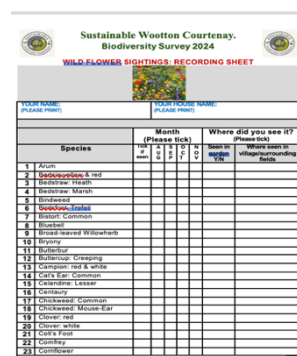
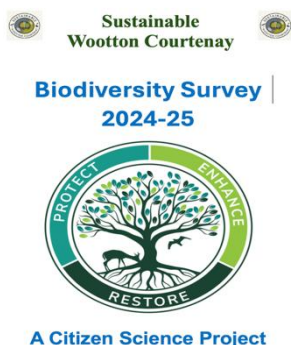




SUSTAINABLE WOOTTON COURTENAY ANNUAL REVIEW 2025



BIODIVERSITY SURVEY REPORT



The Wootton Courtenay section
of the iNaturalist App

A spotter sheet

During 2025 Sustainable Wootton Courtenay was busy analysing the Citizen Science project findings recorded on spotter sheets and photographed on the iNaturalist app.

SURVEY RESULTS 2024-25

SPECIES	Total no of species in Somerset	Total no of species Recorded in the village	Total in UK	% of UK total we recorded
BIRDS	365	69	640	11%
BUTTERFLIES	40	25	59	42%
MOTHS	1930	79	^{Abt} 2500	3%
FUNGI	Unable to find a record	91	^{Abt} 4000 (+11000 micro-fungi)	2%
<u>WILD FLOWERS</u>	Unable to find a record	196	^{Abt} 1600	12%

SOURCES: British Ornithologists Union: Butterflies and Moths; Butterfly Conservation; Fungi: British Mycological Society; Wild Flowers: Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, Avibase – The World Bird Database, Butterfly Conservation (Somerset & Bristol), Somerset Moths

Twenty villagers submitted their observations on spotter sheets and fifty one villagers and visitors recorded their findings using the phone app. We used 2 recording methods in order to bridge the digital divide, ensuring that all participants, regardless of their technological expertise, would be able to contribute. We were really pleased that we received such an outstanding response which kept us busy for many months processing and analysing the results. The success of the survey can, without doubt, be attributed to the outstanding response, enthusiasm and collective engagement of our village community.

These results have provided us with baseline data about a range of species within the Parish boundary and form a reference point against which future changes may be measured. We researched, and included in the report how we might support threatened species by providing suitable habitats and wildlife corridors.

TREE PLANTING

Sustainable Wootton Courtenay group has planted a number of trees on the Playing Field, as agreed at several village meetings, including a special Parish Council meeting and an on site meeting with Mike O'Keefe, Chair of the Playing Field Committee. The trees were obtained from the Woodland Trust and are a mix of native species to benefit birds and wildlife. They have been planted at the bottom end of the Playing Field, some forming a hedge along the archers' fence, four in a small clump nearby and a few to bulk out the existing boundary hedge near the Jubilee bench.

The trees were hawthorn, silver birch, hazel, rowan, dogwood, wild cherry, crab apple.



The Plucky Planters!

Many thanks to Phillip Griffin for strimming in preparation for the areas to be planted.

GARDENERS ALERTED TO THE USUTU VIRUS THREATENING BLACKBIRD POPULATIONS ACROSS ENGLAND



The Usutu virus has been spreading through Blackbird populations in southern England. The deadly virus, transmitted by mosquitoes, is raising alarm among wildlife experts.

First detected on British soil in 2020, the virus has since spread to areas including Dorset. In Greater London, blackbird numbers have dropped by as much as 40% since Usutu's emergence after the 2020 heatwave.

The British Trust for Ornithology was urging those with gardens frequented by blackbirds to participate in an online survey aimed at assessing the impact of the virus and providing necessary assistance. The BTO commented: "Although largely harmless to humans, this is the first time in modern history that a mosquito-borne viral zoonosis (a disease which can be transmitted from animals to humans) has emerged in wild animal hosts in the UK but, with changing climates, more may occur in the future. conducive for both the insects and their pathogens to flourish where they once couldn't.

MINEHEAD CLIMATE FAIR



Ruth, James and Beate represented Sustainable Wootton Courtenay at the Minehead Climate Fair in October. There were displays by many local environmental groups and we all gave 5 minute presentations about the projects we were undertaking during the year. It was an excellent means of networking locally and sharing information.

GOOD NEWS: THE RIVER HANNAY WATER POLLUTION TEST RESULTS



In April, Sustainable Wootton Courtenay took part in Great UK Waterblitz 2025 which is a citizen science project involved in testing the water quality of freshwater rivers, lakes and streams. 7978 communities across the UK surveyed 4017 freshwater sites with 66 % recording poor water quality. Check out the full report on earthwatch.org.uk

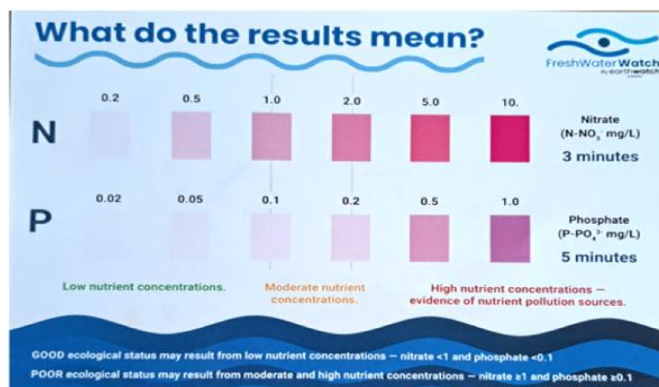


We were provided with test kits, detailed instructions and a video explaining how to carry out the survey. The River Hannay was tested for nitrates and phosphates at 5 locations in the village at :

- a) Annicombe b) Ford Farm lake c) The stream running by Crockfords. d) Mill Farm
e) The river near the Hunt Kennels

Excessive amounts of nitrates and phosphates can lead to water pollution, affecting both aquatic life and human health. Two separate water samples were taken at each location.

We are really pleased to report that the River Hannay samples recorded very low concentrations, from 0.2 – 0.5 mg/l of nitrates and 0.02 - 0.05 mg/l of phosphates. There was a marginally higher recording at Crockfords where apparently the stream displayed discolouration earlier in the day but these results were not reflected in the samples taken lower down stream.



Many thanks to James and Rose Wilmoth, Veronica Clegg, Marion and Bill Hodgson and Sheila and Andrew Colton for granting permission to carry out the water testing on their premises.

MAKING AND ERECTING SWIFT BOXES

Swift numbers have been steadily declining for the last 25 years. One of the main reasons for this decline is the loss of suitable nesting sites. We thought we might lend a helping hand by making and erecting swift boxes and a number of villagers with suitable locations responded to our village website message. The design of the boxes was based on successful designs produced by the Bristol Swifts project.



Many thanks to Terry Walker for making them and to both Terry and John Brady for erecting the boxes

We're looking forward to welcoming our first nesting pair

ENERGY EFFICIENCY GROUP

ENERGY EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE: James Macbeth (Chair), Peter Clapham, Valerie Clapham, Beate Fankhänel, Andrew Dutton, Brian Matthews

Our small working committee has continued to inform, encourage and support energy efficiency improvements in village homes.

The substantial file of energy efficiency information and useful contacts (held in the village stores and available to borrow) which Peter and Valerie Clapham created last year has been continuously improved and updated by them. It has been used and appreciated by a number of villagers.

Following the success of our first coffee morning last year, we held a second gathering in October where a further four villagers who had made efficiency improvements to their homes discussed their experiences, both good and bad. These coffee mornings give a fascinating "real world" insight and valuable information for anyone considering how they can improve the energy efficiency of their home, what it might involve, costs, benefits and return on investment.

Our Site Visit Scheme, whereby six participating village households invite people to visit their homes to show and discuss their improvements has proved very helpful to those who have made use of this generous opportunity. Across the participating households we include Air and Ground Source Heat Pumps, Biomass Heating, Solar PV, Inverters, Battery Storage, Thermal Storage, Solar Hot Water, Under-floor Heating, and Insulation (roof and wall, internal and external).

We are always interested to hear from any villagers who have made energy efficiency improvements and would be open to joining the site visit scheme and/or participating in a future coffee morning. Approximately 20% of parish properties already use low and zero carbon energy sources for their main heating so there is a wealth of experience within our locality.

We also research and share information on "small measures" such as thermal blinds, draught stoppers, rechargeable batteries and LED lightbulbs, and have recently created a "Choosing a future electricity tariff" document.

Behind the scenes we have been reviewing the Centre for Sustainable Energy Carbon Footprint Report for Wootton Courtenay to see what conclusions can be drawn which might help guide our future activities.

We are a small team and would welcome anyone with an interest in energy efficiency to join us.

LIGHT BULBS



Modern light bulbs are more energy efficient than the traditional incandescent bulbs. There are three types, CFL (compact fluorescent lamps), Halogen, and LEDs (light emitting diodes).

For domestic use, the most efficient and long lasting are the LEDs. These are up to 90% more efficient and are safer because they use smaller amounts of power and produce very little heat. They come in bayonet, screw and pin fittings, so check your fittings before buying. They are usually sold in two colours, daylight (cool) or warm, although they can be purchased in other colours.

Modern LEDs use less electricity than traditional bulbs and to give you some idea of the light output of LEDs we have printed below a table which compares the wattages of traditional incandescent bulbs with modern LEDs.

If you are planning external lighting around your house Exmoor National Park recommends low wattage bulbs up to 5 watts in a warm white colour. This will help to protect Exmoor Dark Skies and minimise harm to nocturnal creatures.

Traditional Watts	25	40	60	100
Modern LED Watts	4	6	10	18

INFORMATION ABOUT BATTERIES

Which battery should I choose?

This will depend on the equipment it is going to power (e.g. radio, camera, etc) and the size of the battery that fits it. Often this is AA (small) or AAA (very small).

Dosposable (alkaline) batteries are the ones most easily found in supermarkets. They are initially cheaper but need replacing when they run down and are more damaging to the environment.

Rechargeable batteries can be used many times over. Although more expensive initially, in the long run they are cheaper and also less harmful to the environment. You would need to buy a separate charger (easily available online) to recharge a battery. The same charger can generally be used for both AA and AAA size batteries.

RECOMMENDATIONS (From the consumer magazine 'Which')

For clock radios, smoke alarms and similar low-drain items

Disposable (alkaline) batteries are recommended

	Best budget	Best overall
AA	ALDI AA ACTIV ENERGY £2.59 for 10	ENERGIZER ULTIMATE LITHIUM AA £10.49 for 4
AAA	ALDI ACTIV ENERGY SUPER ALKALINE AAA £2.49 for 4	ENERGIZER ULTIMATE LITHIUM AAA £9.14 for 4

For cameras, powerful torches and similar equipment that requires high power for a shorter time

Rechargeable batteries are best

	Best budget	Best overall
AA	VARTA RECHARGE ACCU POWER AA 2100MAH £6.69 for 4	GP LITHIUM AA £14.99 for 4
AAA	ANSMANN MAX E 800 MAH £6.95 for 4	PHILIPS READY TO USE 1000MAH AAA £7.83 for 4

These are all rechargeable so you will also need to buy a charger.

If you choose to buy a disposable battery for one of these items ENERGIZER ULTIMATE LITHIUM appears best for both AA and AAA SIZES.

Paper copies of this item are available from Sarah and Mark and in the energy file in the village shop.

INFORMATION ON GREEN CAR TYRES

A green or eco tyre is typically made from natural rubber, organic cotton, and other eco-friendly materials. These materials reduce the amount of energy needed to manufacture the tyre, as well as reduce the amount of waste produced.

Benefits of eco tyres according to the RAC

Not only are green tyres better for the environment, but they can also save you money in the long run.

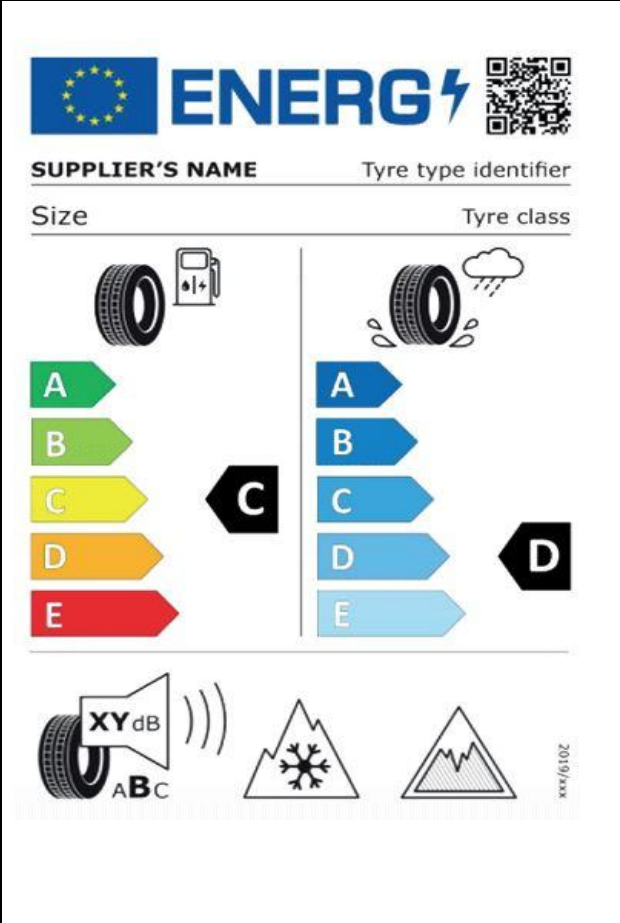
Some of the key benefits of green tyres:

1. **Reduced fuel consumption:** Green tyres are designed to reduce rolling resistance and improve fuel economy. This means that your car will use less fuel, resulting in lower emissions and lower running costs.
2. **Improved safety:** Green tyres provide better grip and handling than some conventional tyres.
3. **Reduced noise pollution:** Eco tyres are designed to reduce noise pollution and provide a quieter ride.
4. **Longer lasting:** Green tyres are designed to last longer than some conventional tyres, meaning you **don't have to replace them as often**.
5. **Better for the environment:** As eco tyres are made from a range of natural or recycled materials, they are more biodegradable than most conventional tyres.

PROTECTING OURSELVES, THE ENVIRONMENT AND SAVING MONEY

Since November 2012, a tyre label must be shown when buying a tyre.

TYRE LABELS EXPLAINED

	1. FUEL EFFICIENCY/ROLLING RESISTANCE Tyres are rated A-E; A being the most fuel efficient, E the least. The difference between each category means a reduction or increase in fuel consumption of 3-4%. 2. WETGRIP/BRAKING PERFORMANCE Tyres are rated A – E; A being the shortest braking distances in the wet, E being the longest braking distance in the wet. The difference in each category can mean an extra one to two car lengths (3-6 metres) on the stopping distance. 3. NOISE EMISSION/EXTERIOR NOISE This relates to the external noise made by a tyre and is measured in decibels (dB). There are 3 ratings for noise: A, B and C with A producing the least external noise.
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