

## SPRING 2021 NEWSLETTER

### EAST OF OTLEY DEVELOPMENT

Publication of the Hybrid Planning Application (HPA) for the huge housing and new link road development east of Otley is expected any day now. Wildlife Friendly Otley and many other others have already expressed their concerns about the inevitable devastation for local wildlife. We strongly urge members to look at the application, in particular the Environmental Impact Assessment, and make their views known – the sooner the better. The public consultation period is likely to be only 21 days.

The HPA will be published on the official website [otleyeast.co.uk](http://otleyeast.co.uk) with instruction about how to submit comments and objections. The more submissions from individuals the better. Please make any objections specific.

We will post information and advice on our website as will the East of Otley Action Group – [eastofotleyaction.co.uk](http://eastofotleyaction.co.uk). Social media is also important too to raise awareness about how this development will not just damage wildlife but how it will make a huge impact on the town.

### VISIT OUR BIGGER AND BETTER WEBSITE

We have launched a brand new look website with far more features including a new Kids Area with challenges and quizzes. Popular items such as Seen in Otley, Species of the Month and My Pledge for Wildlife campaign have been redesigned plus the addition of a new information section about the proposed East of Otley development which threatens local wildlife.



We are delighted with the site's new look and the creative input from Otley-based design and communications agency The Yorkshire Wordwright, who re-designed the site and made it more attractive and easier to navigate. Thanks also to our secretary River Six who managed the project.

It's still the same web address [www.wildlifefriendlyotley.org.uk](http://www.wildlifefriendlyotley.org.uk)

Help us to promote it by telling your friends.

### STREET LIGHTS GO OUT TO HELP WILDLIFE

Following representation from committee member, Jane Smith, Leeds City Council Highways department has agreed to reintroduce the practice of switching off street lights between midnight and 5am on Rotary Way, Harrogate Rd and Leeds Rd. The lights were changed to LED recently and were on all night. Jane said: "I am delighted that LCC has recognised the importance for wildlife as well as saving electricity. The wildlife ecosystem functions less well under artificial light - including LED - and there is now considerable evidence that natural darkness aids the recovery in biodiversity."



## HOW TO ATTRACT WILDLIFE TO YOUR GARDEN

Together with Otley2030 we hosted a webinar on Wednesday 31 March, to help everyone attract more wildlife to their gardens. Our wildlife is in danger and with their habitats in our surrounding countryside being degraded or completely disappearing altogether our gardens can provide important refuges. The talk focussed on simple tips that everyone can follow to make their own outside space more suitable for native wildlife such as bees, butterflies, hedgehogs, birds and bats. If you missed it, the webinar is available to view, [here](#).



## WE CELEBRATE NATIONAL NEST BOX WEEK



**Rob Tindall's stunning wildflower bed last summer.**

We decided to revisit our Pledge champions and recognise their efforts for wildlife by awarding them a robin nest box, handcrafted by our friends at Wharfedale Mens Shed. Our education officer, Neil Griffin presented the boxes to our family pledge champions the Barrowclough family and business pledge champion Rob Tindall, funeral director of Otley Funeralcare. They undertook several of the pledge challenges in our *#mywildlifepledge* campaign, including setting up bird feeders, providing ponds and turning over some of their green space to wildflower beds and rewilding.

Full details of how to do a pledge are on the website.

## REWILDING VERGES

While we continue to have no success in persuading Leeds City Council to implement any meaningful relaxed mowing or rewilding of grass verges and green spaces around Otley, we have had very positive responses from Wharfedale Hospital, Otley Police Station, Westgate Surgery and All Saints Parish Church who are all wanting to have some wild flower or tree planting. Meanwhile the wildflower garden outside the BT Exchange on Charles Street is showing very encouraging growth following all the seed planting we did with Otley in Bloom last autumn.



## SCHOOL PROJECTS BENEFIT FROM LUSH WILDLIFE GRANT



**Children at Wharton's school with their new wildlife kit presented by Neil Griffin (left) with teacher Dominic Fisk.**

As part of our plan to work on wildlife and nature schemes with local schools we donated various items of such as a bird table, nest boxes and bee house, handcrafted by Wharfedale Mens Shed. All made possible by the grant we obtained from cosmetics retailer Lush to support various wildlife projects.

Children in Year 5 at the Whartons Primary School were excited to receive their equipment (pictured).

In other school news St Joseph's Year 5 have been busy planting trees in their grounds (trees provided by TCV's "I Dig Trees").

Ashfield Primary School on Weston Lane, where we carried out a wildlife makeover day in 2019, is hoping to plant their verge with wildflowers.

Wildlife Friendly Otley's education officer Neil Griffin said: "We hope that these things help students in their studies, and also to connect them with the natural world around them. It's a great age to experience the awe and wonder that wildlife inspires, and here in Otley we're so lucky in that regard."

## FESTIVAL NEWS

Planning is well in hand for our **Wildlife Arts Festival** on October 2 based at Otley Courthouse, featuring local artists and writers and a presentation by the award winning wildlife film maker Ian McCarthy. Look out for the full programme which will be published and circulated later in the summer. In the meantime, if anyone has any video footage of local wildlife, we'd love to see it as we are making a short film about Wildlife Friendly Otley for the festival.

At the time of going to print we are told that the **Otley Walking Festival** is going ahead and one of our committee, botanist Steve Heaton will be leading a walk focusing on local wild flowers and plants.



**Otley Courthouse**

**2 October 2021**

## EXCITING PROJECT CAPTURES WILDLIFE SOUNDS

Along with several local wildlife groups and Otley 2030, Wildlife Friendly Otley is supporting an innovative and exciting new project in which the artist and composer James Hamilton will guide listeners around a sonic nature trail in Otley.



Distinctive calls and noises of creatures including roe deer, swifts and reed warblers will be recorded this summer and then combined with newly composed music which, when played back on headphones, will give the illusion of a virtual 3D space. Wooden plaques featuring QR codes will be placed in five locations around Otley, each linking those who scan them to their own unique soundscape.

Eavesdrop will begin as part of Otley Walking Festival in June and run through until the Otley Wildlife Arts Festival in October.

## WFO JOINS PEAT-FREE CAMPAIGN

Together with Otley 2030 we have joined other local groups in support of a Peat Free Campaign, first launched By Climate Action Ilkley. The campaign is asking retailers and gardeners to stop selling/ buying peat based compost. There are good peat-free alternatives.

For more information and ways to help go to <https://climateactionilkley.org.uk/peat-free/>.

If you are interested in helping with the campaign, email us.



## CHARITABLE STATUS

We have decided to apply for charitable status as we have become a larger group with an increasing number of projects, an expanding membership and a committee of ten people.

Whilst we have had several successful fundraising events, we believe that being a registered charity will help with grant and sponsorship applications for future funding. The committee has produced a new constitution and our treasurer, Danny Hudson has done a huge amount of work in preparing the application. Neil Griffin, our education officer, has also produced safeguarding policies.

In due course if we are successful in our application, there will be some changes to our membership structure and we will write to all our members.



## BOOK REVIEW

### BRINGING BACK THE BEAVER by Derek Gows

The hugely entertaining story of a man with a mission, a sense of humour and a healthy disregard for officialdom; conservationist Derek Gow's struggle to return the beaver to Britain is a passionate account of this keystone transformative species.

Derek's good-natured, fearless and utterly determined refusal to be cowed by absurd, irrational and sometimes farcical bureaucracy is hugely inspiring as well as extremely funny.

This is a gem of a book, which uplifts the spirits and brings hope for the future. Britain needs more beavers. And more Derek Gows!



## SPECIES OF THE MONTH

### HOUSE MARTIN

The House Martin is a small bird with glossy blue-black upper parts and pure white under parts. It has a distinctive white rump with a forked tail and, on close inspection, white feathers covering its legs and toes. They spend most of their time on the wing collecting insect prey, especially flies and aphids. House martins typically feed at a higher altitude than swallows, so the two species do not compete with each other, on a good summers day you may see both feeding in the same patch of sky.



House Martin, RSPB

## OUR WILDLIFE NEEDS YOU!

We are always on the look out for volunteers to help with a variety of projects as well as items like preparing content for the website, publicity, social media and newsletters. If anyone can help in any of these areas or would like to get involved in any way, please contact us at [wildlifefriendlyotley@gmail.com](mailto:wildlifefriendlyotley@gmail.com)