

NEWSLETTER

UTTLESFORD LOCAL GROUP

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NEWS

A new door opens

A new door has opened with the arrival of Ruth Angrave to work as the Wildlife Trust's Assistant Landscape Conservation Officer for our area, and we welcome her to our patch. The Uttlesford Reserves are in the North-West Area Team, which also includes reserves stretching across Braintree District and some nearly as far as Colchester. Ruth's job is a three day each week post, and involves supporting the work of the Local Group volunteers, and beginning the process of making contact with other landowners to improve nature conservation at landscape scale. We look forward to working with her.

And another door closes

Another door closes with the departure of Graham Foxall, the Landscape Conservation Officer, for his well-deserved "retirement". Over the last two decades Graham has worked tirelessly on a huge range of tasks, from tree work, fencing, meadow mowing, deer surveys and management, and too many more to list, and he achieved more for wildlife in our district than anyone else in the Trust, tackling an enormous range of tasks with professionalism and competence. He will be a very hard act to follow, and we wish him well. We understand that his post is being advertised and will hopefully be filled soon.

CONSERVATION WORK PARTIES ON OUR NATURE RESERVES

Our Nature Reserve work parties are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 9.30 a.m. to about noon, moving around the reserves as the seasons and the work demands to keep them in good condition. New volunteers are always welcome. The details of the locations for the weekday events are shown on the website at :

uttlesford-wildlife.org.uk

and follow the links to the Essex Wildlife Trust Work Party page.

Wild Thaxted

Wild Thaxted is a group of local, likeminded people who are dedicated to protecting and promoting the wild and natural spaces around our town. We work in partnership with our Parish Council and other local groups to be a focal point for all those contributing to this objective.

This year we have produced a booklet of nature walks all starting from the free car park in Margaret Street. We have produced a series of nature notes to accompany the walking instructions and illustrated it with locally taken photos. The booklet will be launched on Easter Monday the 22nd April following one of the featured walks over to the EWT reserve at Westwood, meet at 10:15 for a 10:30 start at Margaret Street car park (there will be the option to return by minibus).

Other projects include plans to install a series of swift nest boxes to replace the traditional nesting sites which have been lost to the re-roofing of older traditionally built houses. We also have plans for a moth trapping event, a repeat of a bioblitz that has previously been carried out on a County Council owned piece of land that has been left to rewild itself for over 40 years, and, subject to funding, we aim to install some information boards at some of the sites giving details of the birds, butterflies and plants to be found on and around these areas.

For more information visit our Facebook page 'wild thaxter'

Out and About

Spring is the best time of the year get out into the nature reserves and to look along the roadside verges for our local wildflower specialities. The woodland reserves at Shadwell, and West Woods already have their Oxlips and Anemones in flower, and Early Purple Orchid will soon follow. By late May look for the Common Spotted Orchids too. The best free show in the district do not Miss it.

"Spring is Sprung" at Noakes Grove Nature Reserve

Sunday May 12th 10:00am – 4:00pm – Redgates Lane, Seward End

Family day : bring your (grand)kids and let them "go wild" (or just come on your own)

Free entry & parking – donations welcome, we suggest £5 per car or family group

- Meet the lambs and sheep, enjoy nature discovery activities and campfire cooking
- Puppet shows
- Join in the bug hunts, pond-dipping, wildlife watching
- Enjoy the springtime wild-flowers
- Den-making, treasure-hunts, puppet-shows
- Let your kids relax at a woodland mindfulness session
- Tools and country crafts display
- Light refreshments available (hot or cold drinks & cakes) or try a campfire-cooked sausage and nettle lunch.

UTTLESFORD LOCAL GROUP CONTACTS

Group Chair: For Trust and Local Group issues.

Tony Morton: tonymorton.net@google.com
01799 523489

Vice Chair: Sarah Kenyon c/o Saffron Walden Museum 01799 510333
skenyon@uttlesford.gov.uk

Treasurer: Paul Salvidge, 20 New Road, Elsenham CM22 6HA 01279 814153 salvidge@uwclub.net

Secretary and Work Parties; Michael Rowley, 'Cobblers' High St., Clavering, 01799 550378

Committee Members

Will Cockerell 01371 830476
w.g.cockerell@btinternet.com

Amanda Thomas

Take Away the Walls Saffron Walden Museum

Summer Exhibition 25th May – 3rd November

At this summer's temporary exhibition, called Take Away the Walls. the displays and exhibits will discuss the wildlife and countryside of north-west Essex, and how wildlife populations have changed in recent decades due to human intervention – for better or worse. But it's not all about the wildlife. Getting outdoors can bring all sorts of personal benefits, from improved fitness to better mental health and personal relationships. In the exhibition you'll be able to find out about a whole range of free activities to feel confident getting out and about in Uttlesford: explore your local public rights of way, get involved in a nature reserve work party, or help out with animal surveys near you.

The first event takes place on **Friday 17th May**, a week before the exhibition opens, when the Museum hosts a Wildlife Extravaganza for Museums at Night, with activities and information at the Museum and across Saffron Walden. The evening will be run in conjunction with Essex Field Club, Essex Bat Group, and Essex Amphibian & Reptile Group whose surveyors will lead visitors on wildlife survey walks between the Museum, Bridge End Garden and Swan Meadow. This ambitious evening requires an equally ambitious team of marshals and advice-givers to make it all run smoothly. If EWT members wish to volunteer your local knowledge will be invaluable in getting the groups safely to each location, and back to the Museum for moth trapping, craft activities and garden wildlife advice.

Help plant our wildlife gardens

On Friday 31st May we hope to create more areas dedicated to welcoming wildlife in the Museum grounds, starting with planting up new nature tubs. This free event will provide new habitats for a range of insect species as well as food for our local birds. Pending permission from Historic England we also hope to create new planted borders and a small wildflower meadow area to help locally important butterfly species, as well as birds, mammals and reptiles. I ask for your help to prepare and carry out this exciting project, which will enrich the wildlife and learning experience of Saffron Walden Museum.

To volunteer please contact James Lumbard, Natural Sciences Officer, at the Museum or by email; jlumbard@uttlesford.gov.uk