



WINTER 2021 NEWSLETTER

IT'S BEEN A WILDLY SUCCESSFUL YEAR

Despite the pandemic, Wildlife Friendly Otley (WFO) has had a successful year made possible by a hardworking and dedicated team. In addition to the activities featured below, we were very active in campaigning against the East of Otley planned development, acting as a voice for nature, in conjunction with Otley 2030 and the ODD group. As a result of various factors including publicity about our activities, our popular 'Seen in Otley' on-line wildlife posts, heightened awareness about the climate and wildlife emergencies and engaging with Otley residents and organisations, we have seen support increase significantly. Membership has doubled to over 150 and we have a growing number of volunteers for outdoor activities as well as attracting financial support. We also have a short film made by one of the committee. I would like to thank all the committee, volunteers and those who have supported in other ways - often just by turning up.

Andrew McKeon

WE ARE OFFICIALLY A CHARITY!

In our last newsletter we told you we had applied to be a registered charity and the good news is..... it was successful! A wonderful Christmas present for Wildlife Friendly Otley!

This change in status will give us more choices about the way we can fundraise and carry out our project work. So, over the next couple of months our team of nine trustees will be hard at work planning our administration, projects, events and fundraising.

If you would like to volunteer with us there are lots of ways you could do this, depending on your interest and skills; from helping to update the website, social media, helping at events, fundraising etc. We'd love to hear from you!

Danny Hudson





THE UK'S FIRST WILDLIFE ARTS FESTIVAL

This was a tremendous success, with both the day-time exhibition and the evening presentation by wildlife cameraman Ian McCarthy well attended. The festival achieved our aims of encouraging engagement with wildlife and promoting interest in the work of local artists.

Altogether six local creative groups were involved, plus a further 22 individuals. As well as paintings and photographs, there were representations of wildlife in a variety of different media including poetry, mosaics, etchings, and textiles. Best in Show was won by Amelia Thackray, with her immaculate embroidered image of a House Martin (pictured).

There were readings of poetry inspired by nature, plus factual wildlife talks. Off-site we had live demonstrations of chainsaw wood sculpture by Shane Green; James Hamilton's sonic nature trail; Otley Sewing Collective's trail of animals at Gallows Hill; as well as Matthew Stoppard and Richard Marsh's Woodcock poetry trail. The festival concluded with Ian's witty and informative talk about his work on wildlife programmes such as Planet Earth, liberally illustrated with superb clips.

Feedback from visitors and participants was very positive and useful connections were established with a number of groups and people. A big thank you to our sponsors Sinclairs, Otley Town Council and all those who took part and supported the event.

The festival will return in 2022 on the 14th and 15th October!



Neil Griffin



NATURE RESTORATION

WFO has had a busy year working with the Otley community to restore wildlife habitat. Many institutions and businesses have agreed to relax their mowing regime to twice a year, which rapidly restores our dwindling insect population. The Hospital, schools, churches and many others have also planted wildflower seed to augment their wildlife habitat. Relaxed mowing was particularly successful at the hospital, revealing many native meadow species, including wild orchids.



Our Wildlife Corridor Scheme depends on changing the way our grass verges are over-managed and our focus is now to persuade Leeds City Council to reduce mowing to allow the habitat to recover, and to reduce their use of chemicals on our green spaces. Our hugely successful petition demonstrates that our community is behind biodiversity restoration.

Jane Smith

BIRD BALL MAKING AT THE BUTTERCROSS

Thank you to everyone who braved the weather and came along to our stall at the Buttercross on 4 December.

Our team had fun demonstrating how you can make your own bird fat balls and wildflower seed bombs. New additions were also made to our wildlife pledge tree. There were handmade Christmas tree decorations, lots of delicious cakes and two lucky raffle winners received hampers full of wildlife themed goodies.



Danny Hudson



WE HAVE WILD INCENTIVES FOR YOU!

We want to know what you are already doing for wildlife, tell us about the pledges you've already achieved to win a Hedgehog House or Bird House in time for nesting season! They've been made by the wonderful team at Wharfedale Men's Shed and will be given at random to 11 Otley-based pledgers at the end of January. To be in with a chance of receiving one, all you need to do is:

- * Tell us which pledge you've completed
- * Take a photo of your pledge
- * Let us know about it on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter using #mywildlifepledge or by email to wildlifefriendlyotley@gmail.com

Happy pledging!



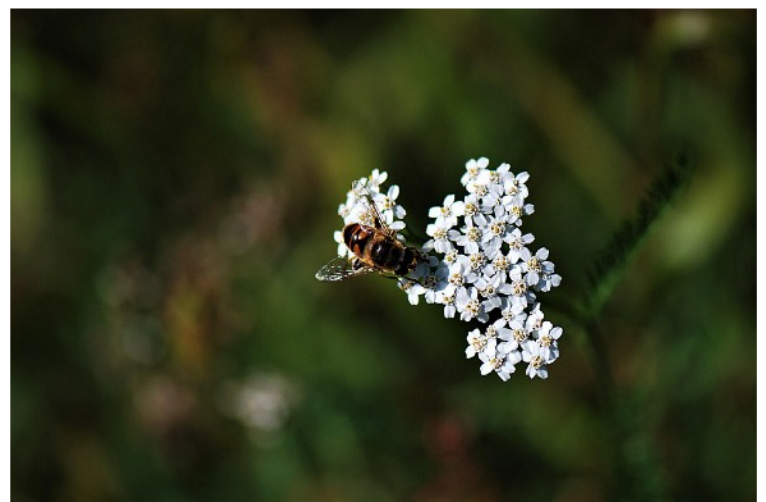
Danny Hudson

FILL IN OUR SURVEY AND CLAIM FREE SEEDS

Together with our friends and partners at Otley 2030, we are aiming to get a source of food, shelter and water into 90% of Otley's gardens by 2030. By using the campaign as a leaping off point, we are offering free advice and guidance for the people of Otley to open up their gardens to wildlife.

Help us help our wildlife by telling us about your garden, simply click [here](#) to fill out our questionnaire.

You will receive a FREE packet of nectar rich seeds in time for Spring.



River Six



CONNECTING OTLEY'S CHILDREN WITH NATURE

Otley schools have faced continued disruption due to Covid and other illnesses, but have still helped us by continuing to make Otley a more wildlife-friendly town.

A great example is Westgate, where we had a successful wildlife make-over day with the children in July. In October we put the swift boxes up (once again with the help of Lush and Men's Shed), and the wildlife garden project has been considerably boosted by the support of Courtyard Planters.



Another make-over day was held at St Joseph's, and their Year One class adopted WFO as their local good cause and raised us £145 by selling their artwork. Together with our contacts at all Otley schools, we are absolutely bursting with ideas for future work with school communities, particularly at Prince Henry's, where we have some very ambitious plans.

Our work with children and young people has not just been confined to school projects. At the Otley Nature Network's Chevin Discovery Day WFO helped run minibeast hunts, pond-dipping etc; and at Otley2030's Kindness Festival we ran a "Connecting Children with Nature" workshop on the Chevin.

Neil Griffin

PAUL BRISCOE AND KITTY MACFARLANE

Environmentalist, musician and brewer Paul Briscoe, who among other things organised Otley Music Festival online in 2021, booked the award winning folk singer songwriter Kitty McFarlane for a concert at the Courthouse in aid of Wildlife Friendly Otley the week after our festival. Kitty, known as 'ambassador for the wild' enchanted and inspired the audience with her songs about nature, rewilding and climate change. We are very grateful to Paul who donated £150 from concert proceeds to our Wildlife Fund for Schools.



OTHER WILD NEWS



Our friends over at Otley2030 are running a survey for the people of Otley to find out your vision of what Otley should look like in 2030. When you have a few minutes why not add your voice?

<https://www.otley2030.com/get-involved>



The nationally popular parkrun has arrived on the Chevin. Each Saturday, including Christmas Day, from 9.00am. The Chevin Forest parkrun is a free, fun, and friendly weekly 5k community event.

Walk, jog, run, volunteer or spectate – it's up to you!

<https://www.chevinforest.co.uk/events/chevin-forest-parkrun/>



For those of you who don't yet know, we have a fantastic hedgehog sanctuary here in Otley. Diane Cook and her family are our very own hedgehog angels.

To find out more and how you support them, please visit their website

<https://www.pricklypigs.co.uk/>



Generously our friends at Wharfedale Nats have invited all our members to join in their webinars this winter, if you missed any you can find links on their website (link below). The last one 'The Return of the White-tailed Eagle,' was fascinating.

<https://www.wharfedale-nats.org.uk/>

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 you would like to get involved in any way, please contact us through our website or by email

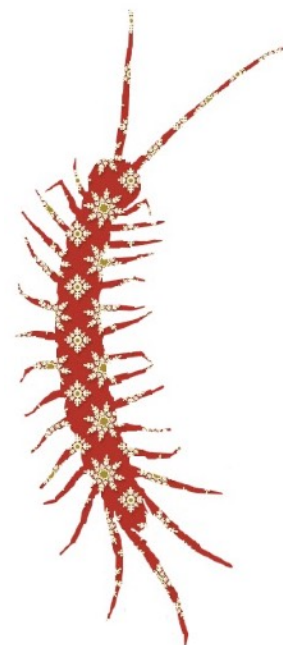
wildlifefriendlyotley@gmail.com.



SPECIES OF THE MONTH

COMMON CENTIPEDE

Merry Christmas from Wildlife Friendly Otley and the Common centipedes! Did you know, they leave the egg with just seven pairs of legs. Each time they moult, they develop additional body segments with a new pair of legs on each, until they reach a maximum of 15 pairs of legs. Each leg is slightly longer than the one in front so that it doesn't trip. Their body is flat, perfect for fitting beneath cool stones to avoid being eaten by birds or toads. They may live for as long as five to six years, seeing six Christmases! That's a long time for invertebrates!



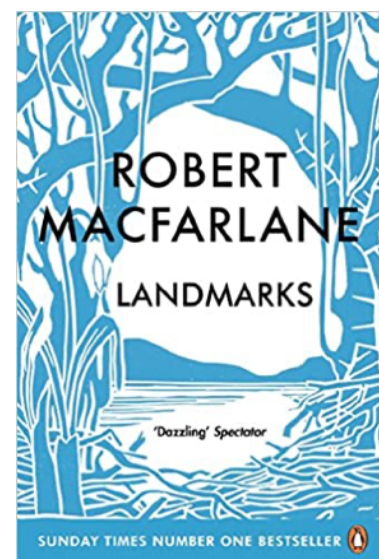
BOOK REVIEW

LANDMARKS by Robert Macfarlane

In this book celebrated lyricist of the natural world Robert MacFarlane takes you on a journey through the different realms of the British countryside; from mountains to underlands, woodlands to coasts, for which you will discover a glorious glossary compiled from dialects, scientific terminology and poetry.

Who knew there was a word for the tunnels made by wild animals through hedgerows, or an area of the night sky where few stars can be seen? MacFarlane's passion for words and the sounds of words is infectious, and adding this to your reading list this winter will certainly enhance those crisp or damp New Year walks as you find yourself noticing (and naming) things you may never even have known existed.

The book is punctuated by a series of heart-felt tributes to various other literary works, and one of the best things about Landmarks is the other books it will unlock for you.



Robyn Guppy

WATCH OUR VIDEO

A short video has been made by one of our group about our aims and activities.

Please pass on news about it to anyone you think might be interested.

It's on You Tube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CLUejJYwkPc>

Our thanks to Rebecca Mason for a superb job.