



*Spring 2022*

## **Springing into summer**

At the end of January there had been little in the way of frost and, in general, the weather had been clement. So much so, in fact, that many people have remarked on the early appearance of buds on the trees; research published in February by the University of Cambridge concluded that plants are now flowering on average a month earlier than before 1986.

At my local farm I have had the delight throughout winter of a female stonechat and rooks have congregated a little earlier at their nest sites, some of them even adding sticks. Mallard ducks were seen in courtship activity before Christmas, which makes me recall another warm winter when a blackbird was discovered sitting on eggs in a nest built in a tree in Solihull high street on Boxing Day!

In Chaddesley Woods we have had a very different littering problem compared to the usual garden cuttings, takeaway boxes and tyres. It began at the start of lockdown when we noticed piles of vegetable peelings along with dozens of half oranges dumped in the laybys. Sometimes there is an immense amount and over the Christmas break we discovered a large turkey frame along with all the waste trimmings. It really looks a mess and is slow to decompose so I can only hope we catch the culprit soon. It has become an issue more widely, which I hope will encourage more people to keep a look out.

At our meeting in January Gary Farmer entertained, amused and taught us about weevils, which I highly recommend if you get another chance to hear it. I didn't realise there were so many species of weevil to be found. We stayed with insects for our February meeting when Mike Averill came to give us a talk on dragonflies. Mike is a member of the Wyre Forest Study Group, as is Gary Farmer, and a well known recorder of dragonflies in Worcestershire and, as we learned on the night, also throughout the world.

Each time I see a dragonfly I am reminded of my childhood days fishing along the canal with friends, which was a time of crystal clear overflow pools teeming with aquatic life and, on every bank, an abundance of water voles. At that time we believed that dragonflies could sting and that getting stung would be a serious business. This, of course, put us on the run on many occasions. If only we had taken the trouble to learn that dragonflies did not sting, we might have more enjoyed their company and the fascination of them.

It was lovely to see more people at our last meeting; I hope to see many more of you at the next two, which I hope will initiate the coming of a fantastic, carefree summer.

*Best wishes  
Gordon*

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## Indoor meetings

**April 6 – Job of a wildlife ranger**

with Phil Rudlin

Bournheath Village Hall can be found on Claypit Lane B61 9LA. We meet at 7.30pm and admission is £2.50. Refreshments will be available.

## Online talks

**March 17 - The Lives of Dormice**

with Andy Bucklitch

**April 21 - Sandy Badlands: wasteground, highwaymen and wildlife**

with Andy Harris & Beccy Somers

More info and to book your place:

**[www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/whats-on](http://www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/whats-on)**

## Your local nature reserves update

Visitors to Upton Warren have been delighted by the huge flock of 600+ linnets and chaffinches feeding amongst the wild bird seed crop on a field just behind the Arthur Jacobs hide at the Moors. Water rail have been showing well along newly cut channels at The Moors created by the Tuesday work party volunteers. In early February the first avocets dropped in for a visit, a sure sign that spring is not so far away!

Over at Piper's Hill & Dodderhill Common we held a volunteer taster day in the hope of bolstering numbers for our monthly volunteer work party. 11 locals joined us for the day, enthusiastically putting their hand to some essential habitat management. If you would like to help out on the reserve then get in touch for more info - the group meet on the last Sunday of every month. Not so positive news on the reserve was finding 100 tyres flytipped in the car park. They have now been removed but at considerable cost and staff time to the Trust.

Volunteers are continuing to work hard in Chaddesley Woods including blocking the temporary access routes that foresters have used to gain access to parts of the wood. The foresters removed quite a bit of conifer this year as well as thinned some oak and reduced the ash with ash dieback along paths. We have also created a traditional coppice plot to see how the hazel and ground flora responds; it is many



## Expanding our team

With the recent acquisition of Dropping Well Farm and, hopefully, Green Farm (see your magazine), the reserve team are recruiting a new officer to enable us to deliver more ecological work and support to our volunteers on our nature reserves. This new post will be the Central Reserves Officer, taking on sites such as Trench Wood, Piper's Hill and Chaddesley Woods as well as some smaller reserves. We hope to have the new officer in place by late April.