



Welcome to the first PCNR Network newsletter, a space for sharing updates, upcoming events and training, as well as seasonal tips and funding opportunities. We want this newsletter (and the Network!) to be shaped by you, so please let us know if there's anything you'd like to add or see in future issues.

Psst... this email works best if images are downloaded!

We'd like to give a special thanks to Valerie and John Godsmark, who have played a huge part in re-launching the PCNR Network. Without their 23 years of dedication to the Network and insights on how to go forward we would have been quite lost!

A note from Valerie...

Welcome to New & Previous members of the PCNR Network. I know & you know how much work you've been doing on your land-holdings since the last Newsletter of the Network appeared in Autumn 2019. No doubt some of it will have been a wonderful contribution to supporting a large variety of wildlife through improved habitats although it probably presented some challenges.

What you don't know is how much has been going on behind the scenes to get the Network back up & running in a sustainable manner. Some detail was given in my covering letter sent out with the Survey last Summer & more will be found herein. Hannah will explain SWT's involvement in co-ordinating the survey responses and data, the outcomes of the 2 meetings about the re-launch and the way forward with re-vamped Newsletters, Website and our first in-person "event" scheduled for Saturday 6th July. I sincerely hope this will be a most enjoyable event with a good turn out as the Network moves forward...

...It's up to us all.



PCNR Network updates

What's new in the Network?

Where have we been?

Originally launched in the 1990s, Somerset's Private & Community Nature Reserves (PCNR) Network was set up to support owners, land managers and community groups who manage their primarily land for nature. Unfortunately COVID paused the activities of the group, but we are excited to be re-launching and heart-warmed by the enthusiasm for the Network we have seen so far.

If you'd like to find out more about the PCNR Network, please visit our website.

[Find out more](#)

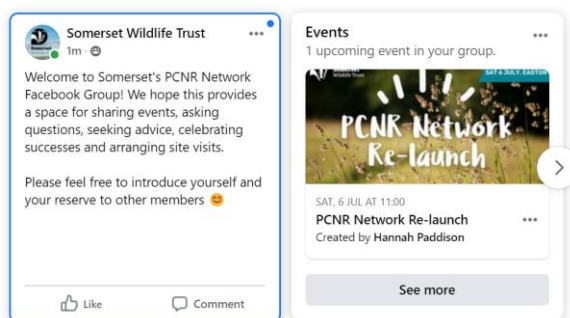
Re-group, Re-launch sessions

We recently held two sessions (one online and one in-person) for members to have the opportunity to re-group and contribute thoughts for the proposed re-launch and activity programme for 2024. It was great to meet those who came along, the feedback gathered has helped us to shape both the newsletter and upcoming events, including the re-launch!

Newsletter

Based on discussions had in the re-group, re-launch sessions, the newsletter will be sent out three times a year, plus email updates in between where needed. Each newsletter will include updates from us at SWT, dates for your diary, members' updates and PCNR Network reserve spotlights, plus anything else you'd like to add!

Content is very flexible and Network led, so if you have anything you'd like to add then get in touch by emailing teamwilder@somersetwildlife.org.



PCNR Network Facebook group

We are pleased to launch and host a dedicated PCNR Network Facebook group. This seemed the simplest way to enable members to communicate directly with others. We hope this provides a space for sharing events, asking questions, seeking advice, celebrating successes and arranging site visits.

[Join here](#)

Events

The Re-group, Re-launch sessions also involved a chance to share upcoming events or training sessions that members would like to see as part of the Network. It was useful to see what people's priorities were, and as a result we will be organising our first SWT event later in the year (details to follow in a few months).



We are aiming for two SWT led events/training sessions a year, but we encourage members to run their own events throughout the year to support others and share skills, challenges and successes. If you'd like to run your own event, please [get in touch](#) as we can include it in upcoming newsletters, support with risk assessments and lend kit where possible.



Do you need practical support on your reserve?

The **Sedgemoor Conservation Volunteers** are an experienced, roving group of volunteers who carry out practical tasks for nature conservation and recovery. This includes coppicing, scrub management, grassland management and ditch maintenance.

Most tasks take place in the Somerset Levels, but occasionally they are available to help in other areas within the old Sedgemoor and Mendip District Council boundaries.

[find out more](#)



Dates for your diary

**PCNR Network Re-launch,
Saturday 6th July**

**Easton Village Hall, 11am -
3pm**

The re-launch will start with a welcome talk updating everyone on the PCNR Network, current plans and how to get involved. We will then hear from SWT's Director of Nature Recovery, James Grischeff, on how the PCNR Network is playing an important role in nature's recovery across Somerset and opportunities to build on this for the future.



Over lunch (which is provided), there will be an Open Space session where attendees will have a chance to talk to others managing similar habitats and share challenges, successes and arrange site visits if you wish.

After lunch there will be a choice of afternoon activities, including a visit to Chancellor's Farm for a guided walk from our Central Mendip Reserves Manager, James Ozolins.

You can find out more about the day and book your place using the button below.

[Book now](#)



**Wildflower & Grasslands ID
Training, Tuesday 18th June**

**Longrun Meadow, 6pm -
8:30pm**

Want to learn how to identify wildflowers and grasslands? We are pleased to be offering an introductory training session free of charge thanks

to the Wild Flower Society.

This evening session will be run by a member of the Somerset Botany Group in Longrun Meadow, Taunton. As many of the species found in semi-improved and amenity grasslands are quite common, this will offer a great introduction to basic wildflower identification for beginners and those who are keen to improve their own lawns and share their learning for the benefit of wildlife in community spaces.

[Book now](#)

Member updates

Knyfton's Firs Open Afternoon

Sunday 12th May, 2:30pm - 5:30pm

Knyfton's Firs is a private nature reserve just off Broad Road. In the woods there's a succession of spring flowers to enjoy and wild flowers are slowly returning to the grass paddocks. Help with surveying butterflies, plants and birds, or just enjoy a walk and a picnic.

We'll be there to show you around and explain how our small team, with the help of local volunteers, is managing this reserve for the future.

Don't forget your picnic tea!

Knyfton's Firs, Broad Road, BA5 1HT.
Below the quarry and above Slowland Lane - look out for our signs.



Dogs and children welcome if kept under control. Please stay on the paths and pick up poo.

For further information please call 01749 870404/870640.

Andrew, Angela, Buffy, Mick, Peter, Sue



Greenbush Nature Reserve Open Day

**Saturday 22nd June, 11am -
4pm**

Started in 2014, Greenbush Nature Reserve now has 1200 plus trees, a meadow, rides, a glade and three new ponds. It was in equine use for years and had thin hedges surrounding green grass with hardly a flower, butterfly or bird. It now has an ever increasing number of all three. Wonderful views of the Mendips. Wander where you want and marvel at how fast the trees grow.

Entry by donation to Somerset Wildlife Trust and Butterfly Conservation. Donations of help on the day, cakes and native plants for the reserve are very welcome. Parking is available next to Greenfields Cemetery,

Doctors Hill, Wookey.

Please email susanmbates@hotmail.co.uk for more details.

This section is for members to keep each other updated on what they've been up to! Whether you want to share an upcoming event, celebrate an achievement or share a challenge you've been having, this is a space to do so.

If you'd like something included just let us know by emailing teamwilder@somersetwildlife.org or giving Hannah a call on 07549 031412.



Reserve spotlight

**Park Wood Chaffcombe,
Ancient Woodland, Local
Wildlife Site & Private Nature
reserve.**

**Valerie & John Godsmark
PCNR Network members 23
years.**



Writing a very brief article to cover 24 years of ownership and subsequent management throws up its own challenge. Some of you have visited our woodland and are aware of the tasks involved. Our focus from the start has been to conserve a 48 acre patch of Ancient Woodland which we believe is special, to increase its biodiversity, provide some firewood and offer a pleasant place to share, relax and enjoy.

How? Learn new skills. Develop a Management plan, then revise it. Spend 7 years clearing invasive *Rhododendron ponticum* regarded as impenetrable on an early survey for LWS. Work!

Monitor and record species including changes and plan for resilience. Take photographs, including use of trail cams. Make notes. Encourage specialists to record. Enter data.

Challenges to face: Weather events; neighbouring influences; run-off; impeded access; pests & diseases.

Best advice: "Remember it's not a Garden!"

Rewards: improved knowledge; the thrill of seeing a new species on site; shared friendships and expertise.

Looking ahead: Is there a chance Nightingales are spending time here? Will some of our big old trees be accepted on to the Ancient Tree Inventory? Will some Ash trees be resistant to dieback? Is there any chance our Middle track will dry up?

The **highlight of the year** is then we offer a guided Bluebell and Spring flower work in aid of Somerset Wildlife Trust. We're always keen to share management ideas especially if the visit coincides with when Ancient Woodland Indicators are in flower. If not, any fine day.



Two Oaks Nature Reserve

Sophie Laurie

Having lived in Somerset for 25 years my family has always tried to make space for nature. Starting off with an acre of former pony paddock on top of the Mendips, we then bought a 4 acre smallholding on the edge of the Moors with a small area of ancient orchard and species poor grassland.

Historically it was mostly grazed by high intensity dairy herds, with just a few mature trees including two magnificent oaks and a couple of ancient pollarded willows. Over the past 12 years we have planted two areas of cider apple orchard, in all about 70 trees of traditional varieties on standard rootstock, the property itself having a history of cider making. We harvest some of the apples for a local wine and cider maker but leave a good proportion of windfalls to feed the starlings and other winter visitors.

The ground has been separated into different parcels with areas of coppice, some space for our poultry (ducks, hens and geese) all enclosed by many yards of hedgerow, in part provided for with grants from Reimagining the Levels. It borders the Sheppey river and is home to a wide range of birds and invertebrate life as well as many small mammals. It has been a real joy to watch wildlife return to this small field. The real challenge is the grassland, with thick sward increasingly populated by nettles and docks, which is hard to cut and manage. I am looking forward to engaging with other PCNR members to learn how to increase the biodiversity and perhaps share equipment or access to grazing animals.

Want your reserve to have a spotlight in an upcoming newsletter? Please get in touch! You can either submit information by [emailing](#) or giving Hannah a call on 07549 031412.

We ask that reserve spotlights are no more than 250 words long and include a photo. We'd love to hear about the wildlife you get at your reserves, challenges, successes, things you're proud of, advice you'd give and future plans - anything you'd like to share about your reserve!



What's next?

We are looking forward to seeing some of you at the re-launch event in July, and hoping to welcome some new members as a result!

The next newsletter will be due in September, so if you have any events planned over the summer or want to arrange visits with other members, we encourage you to post on

the Facebook group. If you'd like to include anything in the next newsletter, please get in touch before Friday 6th September.

We hope you enjoyed the newsletter, if you have any feedback then we'd love to hear it!

The PCNR Network is hosted by Somerset Wildlife Trust, and Hannah is your key contact. You can get in touch by emailing teamwilder@somersetwildlife.org but to get in touch with other members, please use the [PCNR Network Facebook group](#).

H Paddison

Hannah Paddison

Volunteering & Community Support Officer

Facebook group - screen grab, Meadow walk - Matthew Marshall, Ragwort pulling - Emma Danial, PCNR Network Re-launch - SWT, Longrun Meadow - Lisa Whaley, Knyfton's Firs - Peter Bright, Greenbush - Susan Bates, Park Wood - Valerie Godsmark, Two Oaks - Sophie Laurie.



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