



**Welcome to the first PCNR Network newsletter of 2025**, a space for sharing updates, upcoming events and training. 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!*



## PCNR Network updates

**We are growing!**

Just before Christmas we were excited to see the **100th member** sign up to the PCNR Network! That's a lot of knowledge and expertise to be shared with each other. We hope to see many of you at future training events, hosting site visits and supporting each other over the coming year!



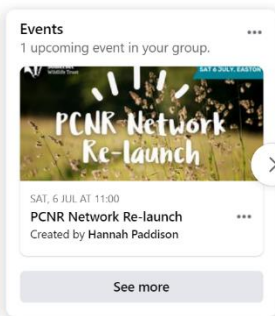
## Pond management and problem solving workshop

On Saturday 30th November we hosted a pond workshop at Fyne Court, on the Quantock Hills. Led by John Dickson, Chairman of the Reptile and Amphibian Group for Somerset, we discussed all things pond management; from which liner to use to how to prolong the life of your pond.

It was a great session, with lots of conversations about the ponds on your reserves. Thank you to all those that attended. For those who couldn't make it but would like to learn more about all things pond related, you can find an online session ran by John a few years ago on the Somerset Wildlife Trust YouTube channel.



## Pond Workshop



## PCNR Network Facebook group

If you haven't already, please do join our dedicated PCNR Network Facebook group. This was 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

---

# Dates for your diary

## **A site visit to Lower Chelmsine**

**Sunday 2nd March and Tuesday 4th March @ 11am**

We would be happy to welcome members to Lower Chelmsine to look for Brown Hairstreak Butterfly eggs. We have a 20 acre holding with a 10 acre broadleaf woodland (20 years old), a 5 acre hazel coppice and a hay meadow.

Our address is Lower Chelmsine, West Buckland, Wellington, Somerset, TA21 9LW.

What3Words: innovate.push.awakening.

GPS: 50.57N 3.9W

There is easy parking on site, and a WC available. Unfortunately there is no wheelchair access.

**To get in touch with David please call 07768453928.**

## **A spring visit to our reserve in Norton St Philip**

**Saturday 26th April @ 11am**

We welcome visitors to our reserve for a tour followed by some hot drinks. We are currently building a dry hedge having done our first major thinning of our wood, which is 13 years old. We also have the restoration of a very old pond on our job list.



Our reserve is at Lyde Green Cottage, Lyde Green, Norton St Philip, BA2 7ND.

We have ample parking in part of our field (weather permitting) or nearby on-street. Visitors could also make their way to the historic George Inn after visiting, which is a five minute walk away.



We would appreciate an idea of numbers beforehand, so please give Neil an email on [neil@neilpollardarchitect.co.uk](mailto:neil@neilpollardarchitect.co.uk) or a call on 07581 343839 if you'd like to come along.



### **Introduction to woodland plant identification**

**Sunday 11th May, 10am-4pm,  
Taunton**

Come along to SWT's introduction to woodland plant ID workshop, where you will learn how to recognise the more common spring woodland plants in Somerset, with a focus on plants of neutral soils.

The workshop includes working through keys to help in understanding variation between different species. We will bring copies of Francis Rose's Wildflower Key and hand lenses for you to use.

For further information and guidance on how to book please visit our website.

**Book now**

### **Ecology skills walk**

**Thursday 22nd May, 10am-2pm,  
Taunton**

Join us for a walk focussing on beginner ecology skills, including collecting field notes and species recording, which may come in handy on your reserves!

To find out more and to book your place, please visit our website.



**Book now**

## **A visit to our wildflower meadow in Westbury-sub-Mendip**

### **Wednesday 4th or Wednesday 11th June (date tbc) @ 6pm**

On Wednesday 4th or Wednesday 11th June (date tbc and included in the next PCNR Newsletter) from 6:00pm onwards we invite you for an explore, a chat and a bring-your-own-barbecue.

Our site is slightly less than 5 acres and comprises overgrown hedges, 2 wildflower meadows, an alder copse, a very small seasonal stream and a pond. It is managed solely for wildlife. Do come to visit and explore on Wednesday 4th or 11th (tbc) June in the evening from 6.00 pm onwards and stay until the bats come out - and beyond! Be free to wander but we will lead a walk and talk at 6.30. We'll fire up a barbecue and cook a few sausages so if you would like to bring some supper to cook for yourselves or a picnic and something to drink that's all to the good. (Plastic glasses please).

We will explain what we have done, how we manage it and listen carefully to your ideas. Best to bring binoculars!

Parking is pretty limited, so if you can we would be grateful if you park in Westbury-sub-Mendip in The Square or School Hill and walk the few hundred yards to the field, up Perch Hill and then Lynchcombe Lane at What3Words [///incur.cave.shun](https://www.what3words.com/). We can accommodate a few cars if needs be, so please drive if the walk would be a bit much - and if so, maybe give others a lift.

**Enquiries welcome: Simon and Sue Reece, 07818 415354 and 01749 870618. and [simon.reece19@btinternet.com](mailto:simon.reece19@btinternet.com).**



# Member updates

## **A questions from Nicola Hunt**

We only joined the network a few months ago and have an acre of paddock which has been mowed throughout the growing season for the last 10 years. We want to manage the paddock to increase biodiversity so we let half of the paddock grow following No Mow May and found we had thinly scattered flora throughout including red and white clover, birds foot trefoil, cut leaved cranebill, self heal and ox-eye daisy amongst others. We then mowed it in September and in October/ November were surprised and delighted by the appearance of 5 species of waxcap and spindle spread mostly across the area that had not been mowed during the summer. We had thought whether to use sheep to graze in winter and initially had the idea to scrape parts of it to

sow with wildflower seed. However the fungi has thrown up a question as how best to manage for both the flowers and the fungi as we would not want to lose the potential fungi.

**Does any one in the network have any advice how to manage this?** If so, please email me on [nrhunt77@btinternet.com](mailto:nrhunt77@btinternet.com). We live about 1km from the coast to the east of the Quantocks, near Hinkley Point.

This section of the newsletter is for members to share updates, whether that's something you've been up to on your site, a question you have for other Network members or something else you want others to know about.

If you would like to include something in our next issue, which is due in May 2025, please email Hannah on [teamwilder@somersetwildlife.org](mailto:teamwilder@somersetwildlife.org).



## Reserve spotlight



### **Maidenbrook Country Park**

Nestled between the Quantocks and Blackdown Hills, our 30 acres encompass open grassland and woodland. This memorial park also boasts a forest school (with young hazel copses and fallen deadwood for invertebrates), a developing pond habitat (attracting varieties of insects, amphibians and birdlife) and hedging along both western and eastern boundaries.

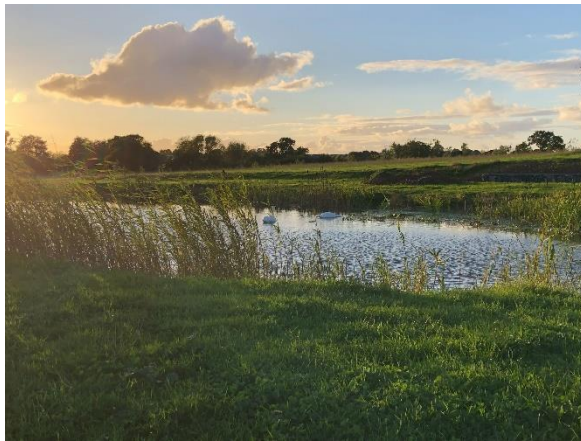
On behalf of West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Councils, the park is run by a group of enthusiastic and willing volunteers who tirelessly work to see this beautiful green space flourish. In addition to the management of this former agricultural land and planting of

~3,000 native Somerset trees and shrubs (including Beech, Silver Birch, Rowan, Field Maple, Crab Apple, Wild Cherry and more), we are in the process of planting secondary hedging to secure safe habitat for small wildlife and nesting birds. Extension to the park is also planned for an additional ~10,000 trees.

We hugely appreciate Somerset Wildlife Trust's support as we, in turn, aim to support the return of wildlife to the area. Green Woodpeckers are often seen foraging near the forest school and volunteers have reported field voles and shrews glimpsed below (or within) tree guards. Windfall apples and other fruits are a food source for local wildlife and woodlands along the Allen's Brook form a foraging corridor for local bats.

Of course, we also have a series of challenges at the park; namely dogs disturbing our aquatic habitat and roving, ravenous deer.

We'd love to welcome you for a visit (What3Words: buck.bolsters.radiated) to get an exchange of experience and ideas, particularly relating to practical management of hedge borders, coppicing and dead hedging (we're considering a natural barrier around the pond to try and deter dogs and their over-eager owners). Additionally, small ways to encourage wildlife (both small mammals and aquatic) would be hugely appreciated, whilst tactics to discourage deer predation on our young trees would also be useful.



Contact Candy Sully, Volunteer Coordinator (07888387525).

**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'd love to hear about the wildlife you've seen 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 in the middle of planning a woodland management workshop, so we hope to be able to give you some more details about that in the next few weeks!

The next newsletter will be due in May, so if you have any events planned over the spring 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 email [teamwilder@somersetwildlife.org](mailto:teamwilder@somersetwildlife.org).

We hope you enjoyed this issue, 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](mailto: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

---

*PCNR Relaunch - Emily Weatherburn, Pond workshop - Hannah Paddison Facebook group - screen grab, Norton St Philip - Neil pollard, Woodland canopy - Matt Sweeting, surveying - Steve Bond, Meadow at Maidenbrook Country Park - Candy Sully, Pond at Maidenbrook Country Park - Candy Sully.*