

# Wild Norley

Think Global - Act Local

## March and April

Phil Gifford - Chair of Norley Wildlife Group (NWG)  
01928 787217 Email: [ansellpgifford@gmail.com](mailto:ansellpgifford@gmail.com)

### THAW by Edward Thomas

*Over the land freckled with snow half-thawed  
The speculating rooks at their nests cawed  
And saw from elm-tops, delicate as flower of grass,  
What we below could not see, Winter pass.*

Just as in past years I'm writing this in mid February; freezing rain and bitter winds still remind us that life is often a struggle to survive. Springtime seems to beckon on the horizon then suddenly retreats back into icy darkness. But the speculating rooks are once again back in force and I'm sure from the Rookery in the Wild Wood (corner of Town Farm Lane) they'll see, "Winter pass", their very noisy "parliament" undoubtedly informing us on a daily basis! Another harbinger of spring, a big fat toad was seen in January near the ponds at Norley Bank Farm, only to be stymied by heavy frosts and snow.

But in southern England there have already been reports of frogs starting to spawn and newts heading towards the nearest pond as they emerge from their winter hibernation. Amorous amphibians will soon be busy up here once there are warm (10C and above) humid nights.

We now have the permanent toad crossing signs around the above farm installed at Cow/Moss/Bag Lanes and have organised some evening Toad Patrols. See our Facebook page for details if you wish to help.



I mentioned in January's article the exciting plans for 20 acres of fields at Sandycroft Farm, which are to be taken over by CWAC's Green Infrastructure Team (GIT), much of them being turned into wildflower meadows, though still cut for hay. There is to be a public meeting at the NCK centre to discuss the scheme from the point of view of public access and the possibility of a community

orchard. Roger Goulding the GI Team leader will lead the discussion, though the Parish Council and NWG will also participate. Various dates from 7pm - 9pm in March have been suggested and by the time you read this a firm date will have been finalised. Details of the proposals are on our website, [www.wildnorley.com](http://www.wildnorley.com) A related matter is Cheshire's Local nature recovery strategy which can be accessed at <https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your-council/consultations-and-petitions/consultations/current-consultations/working-together-for-a-wilder-cheshire-and-warrington> NWG has already made its 3 pledges as set out below. You can of course help us, or make your own either separately or in addition.

**\* We will continue to pursue projects to improve areas of common land and verges in Norley for greater biodiversity e.g conservation of Wickentree and Flaxmere Mosses, the restoration of Breech Moss, the Memorial Garden, the Waste, the Wild Wood (CoE land), Norley Wildflower Memorial Walk, and to support rewilding projects in Norley such as the Biodiversity Net Gain CWAC project at Sandycroft Farm.**

**\* To arrange toad patrols in early Spring to complement the Toad signs already erected around the ponds at Norley Bank Farm.**

**\* To continue to undertake surveys of wildlife sites and corridors within Norley Parish to provide a baseline for potential improvements for wildlife and encourage landowners where possible to manage their land for biodiversity.**

Finally, you will see that our Spring Garden Survey form now awaits to be filled in. They can either be left at the Stores or delivered to Sheila Hills at 15 School Bank.

This year the form <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/B889MH7> is also available on our website.

Please note that there are still problems in the Wildwood from unsafe trees so public access is prohibited by the Parish Church Council until remedial work is carried out. But happily a few of us will be allowed, under supervision, to clean out and put back bird nest and bat boxes assisted by the Cheshire Bat Group.



## SPRING GARDEN SURVEY (1st March - 31st May 2024)

Norley Wildlife group are collecting information from gardens in the Parish to help identify the type of habitats and wildlife present in Norley.

### 1.Name and Contact Details (Optional)

### 2.Location - Street Name and Postcode

### 3.What size is your garden?

- Small  Medium  Large

### 4.Which of the following features do you have in your garden?

- Trees  Pond  Hedge  
 Compost heap  Flower bed  
 Lawn  Other

### 5.Which of the following have you seen in your garden this quarter?

- Badger  Bat  Fox  Frog  
 Grass snake  Hedgehog  Newt  
 Slow Worm  Toad  Other

### 6.Which birds have you seen in your garden this quarter?

- Blackbird  Blue Tit  Coal Tit  
 Great Tit  Long-tailed Tit  
 Chaffinch  Goldfinch  Greenfinch  
 Dunnock  House Sparrow  
 Jackdaw  Magpie  Nuthatch

- Pigeon  Collared Dove  Robin  
 Song Thrush  Wren  Other

### 7.Tick any of the following that you provide for birds and animals in your garden.

- Food  Water  Bird box  
 Owl Box  Bat Box  
 Hedgehog Home  Other

### 8.Are there birds nesting in your garden this quarter?

- Yes  No

### 9.Which butterflies have you seen in your garden this quarter?

(Download chart at <https://bigbutterflycount.butterfly-conservation.org/about>)

- Small Tortoiseshell  Small White  
 Large White  Common Blue  
 Speckled Wood  Painted Lady  
 Comma  Holly Blue  Gatekeeper  
 Small Copper  Peacock  
 Green Veined White  Red Admiral  
 Brimstone  Silver Y  Ringlet  
 Marbled White  Meadow Brown  
 Six Spot Burnet  Jersey Tiger