

Wild Norley

Think Global - Act Local

May and June

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“To the bee, a flower is the fountain of life, and to the flower the bee is a messenger of love.”

Kahlil Gibran

Despite the still bewilderingly changeable weather, my honey bees have been bringing back pollen loads and nectar. So boxes (supers) for honey have been placed on top of the hives, otherwise there will be no space left for the Queens, beginning in April to lay over a 1000 eggs a day. Their clever workers response to such an impasse is to make Queen cells and then swarm, reducing any honey crop significantly.



There has been a lot of nonsense recently over Honey bees being responsible for imperilling native bees such as Bumbles and Solitaires by “appropriating” their pollen and nectar. Whilst there is a halo effect if there are a huge number of hives in any one area, these “Apicritics” blatantly ignore the fact that honey bees (*Apis mellifera mellifera*) are natives too, without beekeepers to look after them they would in effect be extinct. All bees including the recent migrants viz the solitary Ivy bee and Tree bumblebee are now needed in order to restore our damaged ecosystems, as well as literally feeding us by pollinating food crops.

So everyone needs to grow as many flowering plants to ensure there is enough “scoff” for all the pollinators, bees, butterflies

etc.

That was one of the reasons we have changed one of our pledges in Cheshire's Local nature recovery strategy, see our Wild Norley article in last month's edition.

So whilst we will continue to undertake surveys of wildlife sites and corridors within the Parish to provide a baseline for potential improvements for wildlife, we will now encourage **all Norleyans** (not just landowners, vitally important though they are) where possible to manage their land / gardens for biodiversity.

Indeed everyone can do their bit, so if you missed an autumn sow, May is still a good month to sow wildflowers. But we are conscious that many become frustrated for whilst many wildflower seeds are sown, few actually germinate and even fewer flower. To that end in the Memorial garden we have sown a wonderful meadow mix of flowers and grasses (NATURESCAPE N6 mix <https://www.naturescape.co.uk/> and EMORSGATE EM4 mix <https://wildseed.co.uk/>) onto a plot that has been dug over so the subsoil is blended in, the rest closely mown and then the top 50 mm or so rotavated. Half of that will be sprayed off to kill all the weeds etc. The seed mix and its progress will be set out in our website, an interesting experiment for everyone, hopefully in time for an autumn sowing.

BEATING THE BOUNDS - NORLEY COMMONS - HEALTH ASSESSMENT & CITY NATURE CHALLENGE (CNC)

This, the fourth now, was carried out on Sunday 28th April and a digest of the walk will be on our website. There was a lot of information on our Facebook about the CNC, a global wildlife recording event, which took place 26th-29th April. The 'Chester Region' in the challenge is CWaC. In 2023, recording wildlife over the 4 days, it was placed mid-way in the UK, so I hope others took part too, and who knows, we might even have beaten Liverpool.

PUBLIC MEETING: FIELDS AT SANDYCROFT FARM 17th May, 7:30pm Village Hall

I hope as many people as possible attend, as the huge biodiversity net gains from 20 acres of Sandycroft Farm is a tremendously exciting prospect - see plans on wildnorley.com website. But any signage, access and if there is to be a traditionally managed Community Orchard or a Memorial Orchard, are all in the hands of us Norleyans and our Parish Council.

WI's SEED AND PLANT SWAP 18th May, 10am-2pm at the Village Hall.

NWG will again be here at this super event, please come; we'll have some wildflower seeds, some bee friendly plants and lots of ideas to make Norley's gardens even more wildlife friendly, all on a budget! RECORD the Local Environmental Records Centre for Cheshire, Halton, Warrington and Wirral who ran our region's CNC will also be there see <https://record-lrc.co.uk/>

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