



# Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group

## Annual Report 2020





## Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group: Annual Report 2020

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### Chair's Report

A warm welcome to anyone reading this report and thanks to all who have supported us throughout this difficult year.

Despite the challenges of lockdown and the restrictions on collective activities, our Project Leaders and members still manage to find a way of conducting their surveys valiantly (as you will see).

We have also been heavily involved in the Stepping Stones initiative and we thank National Trust and in particular Charlie Bell and Andrew Hearle for the fantastic work they have put in despite various setbacks. Our hope is that this will continue in some way this year.

Our Wetlands project - led by Isabel - has developed impressively and through the support of Middle Marches Community Land Trust in particular, the Cudwell Meadow initiative looks to have an exciting future.

Our website is now refreshed thanks to the input of Lizzie Hulton-Harrop, together with our own John Baines. We invite all to visit it: [www.shropscwgs.org.uk/strettons-area-wildlife-group](http://www.shropscwgs.org.uk/strettons-area-wildlife-group)

Let us hope that 2021 will see us more fully able to continue the valuable monitoring of our beautiful environment in this post Brexit era.

**Steve Butler**  
**Feb 2021**





## Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group: Annual Report 2020

### Introduction

#### Community Wildlife Groups

Community Wildlife Groups bring people together to survey and conserve threatened local wildlife. They enable nature enthusiasts to make a real contribution to wildlife conservation in their local area and develop their own skills.

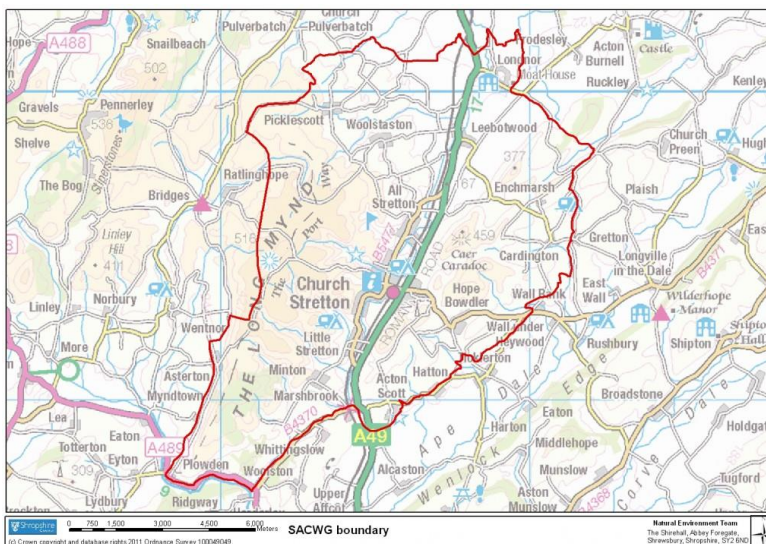
The groups are open to anyone who lives or works in each area, and who wants to actively contribute to local wildlife knowledge and conservation. They are for everyone, from experts to complete novices. Enthusiasm is far more important than detailed knowledge and initial training on identification and simple survey methods is provided. There are currently eight CWGs in the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). For more information on these CWGs, visit the website [www.shropscwgs.org.uk](http://www.shropscwgs.org.uk)

#### Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group

The Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group (SACWG) was launched in February 2012, after consulting local groups and organisations. The group covers a broad area around the Stretton Hills (right). This boundary is not fixed, so activities can be extended according to the location of members and study subjects.

Since 2013 the group has been co-ordinated by a committee, elected from the membership at the Annual Public Meeting.

Survey activities are adopted by members at the Annual Public Meeting, on the condition that they meet the following criteria.



*Each activity requires a leader, who will be responsible for organising surveyors, ensuring that useful data is collected, distributing survey forms (if necessary), analysing data for the SACWG annual report and submitting records to Shropshire's County Recorders. The survey manager will be responsible for ensuring that any necessary training is provided.*

On the Community Wildlife Groups website, you will find that the [SACWG has its own section](#), where you will be able to keep updated with survey activities and the latest discoveries.

We would like to encourage all members to share their wildlife experiences and photographs. If you have seen something interesting or taken a nice wildlife photograph, please let the web manager know by emailing [SACWG\\_Curator@shropscwgs.org.uk](mailto:SACWG_Curator@shropscwgs.org.uk). For those of you into social media, find us on



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Twitter @StrettonsWild or look for the Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group page on Facebook. You can use this to keep up to date with latest news, meet other members and share wildlife news.

*Committee members (bold) and project leaders 2020: **Steve Butler (chair)**, **Penny Bienz (publicity and Stepping Stones coordination)**, **Heather Hathaway (secretary)**, **John Baines (website)**, **Will Priestley (treasurer)**, **John Bacon**, **Leo Smith**, **Isabel Carter**, Mike Carter, Caroline Uff, Julie Cowley and Sandra Whitlock.*

### Stepping Stones

In 2020 SACWG worked closely with the [Stepping Stones Project](#), a partnership nature conservation project led by the National Trust. Through this project SACWG received a grant of £3000, with an additional £5000 received for the Curlew project work. Some of the work detailed in the rest of this report was funded by this award and we are grateful to support from players of People's Postcode Lottery for their support.

Unfortunately, many of the activities planned under the Stepping Stones PPL project had to be postponed, cancelled or altered due to the impact of Covid-19 and the associated restrictions. An extension to the project means that some of these activities will now be delivered in the first part of 2021.



**Green hairstreak (left) and (right) View from Bodbury Hill, Jan 2021 © Charlie Bell**

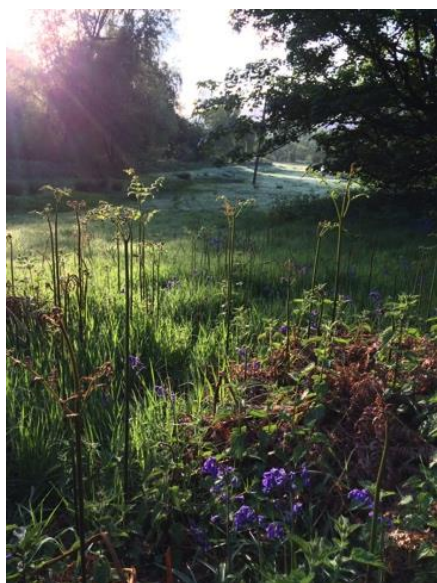


## Survey Activities and Results

### Stretton Wetlands report

#### Cudwell Meadow

The focus of input and energies this year has gone into the purchase of part of the wetlands. In early January the Wetlands Interest Group was offered the opportunity to purchase a three-acre field – an area now called Cudwell Meadow. SACWG is not in the business of land ownership and it seemed best to work in conjunction with a group which could pursue this. The decision to move forward with Middle Marches Community Land Trust was made at the beginning of March, with plans to launch a major community fund raising appeal. And then lockdown began... So, we had all the fun of working out how to bring together several groups and organizations (SACWG, MM, NT, SWT and interested individuals), how to share all information and fundraise virtually. We launched a website and fund-raising campaign in mid-July to raise £25,000. Thanks to many wonderful and generous local people this was raised within 10 weeks and the purchase process began. Lots of complications with fencing, land registry etc followed and the sale finally went through in early January 2021.



**Left: Cudwell Meadow; Right: Members of Stretton Wetlands Interest Group at the entrance to Cudwell Meadow**

Water engineers, a forester and ecologists have been consulted, and a management plan drawn up. The site has many limitations – with sewage pipes, water drains and electricity wires crossing it with considerable limits on tree planting and access. In addition, there is an alien weed – New Zealand Pygmy weed. The key focus of management planning is to develop the area as a wetland meadow – now a rare habitat nationally. The landowner was

very flexible once agreement was reached and sheep were removed in April. This allowed the vegetation to develop.

In the early summer, flora and invertebrate surveys were carried out to establish base line data. The results of these surveys are detailed below.

### **Invertebrate Survey**



Tortoise shield bug larvae

Training in Invertebrate ID was provided by County Beetle Recorder Dr Caroline Uff on July 7<sup>th</sup> with additional skills and support provided by Ian Cheeseborough, County Hymenoptera Recorder.

A total of 62 invertebrate species and five Arachnida were identified. Highlights included two adult Four-banded Longhorn beetles with a nearby rotting willow log full of large holes hopefully containing the

larvae of this beetle. There were also several nymphs of Tortoise Shieldbug. This is slowly moving northwards. It was last recorded in the Wyre Forest, so this was the first record for South Shropshire.

[Full survey findings](#) are available on the SACWG website.



Micromoth *Olindia schumacherana* © Charlie Bell



Four banded longhorn beetle

### **Vegetation Survey**

A flora survey carried out by Mike Carter is reported on the [SACWG Botanical group](#) webpage. The results were most encouraging – given that nothing had yet been done to improve the field. Much of the field is regularly inundated, some areas for more than 6 months a year, other parts for 3 months. Though contours vary across the field by only about 3 meters, these contours proved highly significant when it comes to inundation and plant community types. Most communities are common, but others are rarer and similar to more unusual wetland flora communities in North Shropshire.



145 vascular plant species were recorded in Cudwell Meadow. Species recorded included 6 Shropshire axiophytes; these are not necessarily rare, but they are useful indicators of particular environmental conditions:

1. *Carex muricata* var *pairae* - Prickly sedge; rare
2. *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* - Bluebell; occasional
3. *Lamiastrum galeobdolon* - Yellow Archangel; occasional
4. *Myosotis discolor* - Changing Forget-me-not; rare
5. *Myosotis secunda* - Creeping Forget-me-not; frequent
6. *Veronica scutellata* - Marsh Speedwell; occasional

### **Bird Observations**

A total of 37 bird species were recorded in the meadow during 2020 to date. Of particular interest were Kestrel, Grey Wagtail and Little Egret. Several species were noted as breeding on or immediately adjacent to the site including Mallard, Moorhen, Swallow, Wren, Goldcrest and Song Thrush.

Pete Whitlock is building boxes for Tawny Owl and Kestrel which will be placed in the meadow early spring together with a large bat box which has been donated.

### **Mammals**

Mammals (or field signs) noted during the year were otters (caught on video), moles, badger, shrew and squirrel. Water vole have been recorded in the Quinny brook in two adjacent areas (within ½ mile of Cudwell Meadow).

### **Local Wildlife Site?**



Based on all these findings, a formal request to SWT has been made to for this field to be added to the Local Wildlife Site designation previously given to some adjacent fields of the wetlands.

Following surveying, for the first time in decades the field was moved for hay late July.

### **Future Planning**

Future plans are to tidy up damage from fencing on wet ground, plant trees along some edges and expand a small area of woodland and to gain access to the stream at the lowest point where a small stream joins the Quinny Brook. Creating a year-round small wetland area here would provide a haven for amphibians, fish and water invertebrates. Livestock will be brought in to graze the meadow. There are also possibilities of working in liaison with the Environment Agency to mitigate flooding in the area. More of that next year maybe.





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### Wider wetlands news

The boardwalk path proves wonderfully popular and in consequence has needed further work. The wooden boards became dangerously slippery after several weeks of inundation and wet weather. So, wire was placed on the surface, funded by Shropshire Council Countryside Access Dept and installed by the Parish Paths Partnership in February for which we are very grateful. They also continue to cut back excess vegetation 2 or 3 times a year. Alas the wire was not sufficient and another roll was needed, provided by the town Mayor and the work completed in November 2020. At the railway end the footpath has been very overgrown and extremely muddy in recent months. Dave Hardwick Area Rights of Way Officer has, with help, cut back the vegetation and has negotiated a delivery of gravel in February to improve the footpaths, paid for by several residents who really appreciate the boardwalk. Network Rail has also agreed to replace the two stiles by the railway with kissing gates – which will improve access considerably.

### Wider interest

Alas there were strict limits on attendance for the invertebrate training and ID day in July due to Covid. But it was so successful we hope to repeat this in future years. Online fundraising for Cudwell Meadow invited people to become a 'Friend' and/or a volunteer. We now have over 80 friends and a good number of volunteers that we can call on for surveying or practical help. And of course, we still haven't been able to arrange an opening event for the community ownership of Cudwell Meadow – hopefully sometime in the early summer combined with a butterfly or flower ID session.

### Future plans

Stretton Wetlands Interest Group continues to look for opportunities to improve the biodiversity of the wetlands area with plans to liaise with landowners, Coppice Leasowes reserve, the smaller Ley Gardens wetland site and possibly landowners in Little Stretton. Such liaison may be around developing vision for sensitive wetland management, funding opportunities or with offers to share learning, equipment or volunteer help.

**Isabel Carter**  
**January 2021**

### Crayfish survey report

The survey was done under licence from Natural England and with the support of the Environment Agency (EA). The aim this year was to investigate the failure to find any of the Native **White-Clawed Crayfish** *Austropotamobius pallipes* on the Cound River at Leebotwood (sites 1abc) and see if a more systematic method (i.e. trapping) would discover any individuals.



In 2019 possible causes of a population crash (temporary or permanent), such as Water Quality (pollution, water chemistry & human activity), predators and physical barriers had been investigated also, but no obvious reason had been uncovered. The nearby discovery in 2018 of Crayfish Plague (*Aphanomyces astaci*) - a water born disease carried by the North **American Signal Crayfish** (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*) seemed to be the most likely cause.

#### **Methodology**

**Cylinder trapping** was done using four traps purchased by SACWG (under the Stepping Stones PPL grant), plus three **EA** traps and a Crevice Trap and was begun 11th August and continued until 30<sup>th</sup> September. These Live Traps were kept in place for varied periods using different baits and then re-sited. Unfortunately no crayfish were trapped in the **1abc** area. In consultation with EA it was decided to move the trapping sites downstream to where historical records had indicated healthy populations. If this proved successful then the survey would move back upstream to locate any potential "barrier." A trainee joined in at this stage and was introduced to methodology, safety and bio-security.



**Stone turning** was also begun on 11<sup>th</sup> July until the end of September at all 5 sites. During this period, mainly in clear weather during daylight no signs of crayfish were seen. Sections of the river that were searched included shallow, stony, deeper and muddy stretches, the majority of which were in shaded sections. Medium and large stones were turned as well as bottles, metalwork and piping.



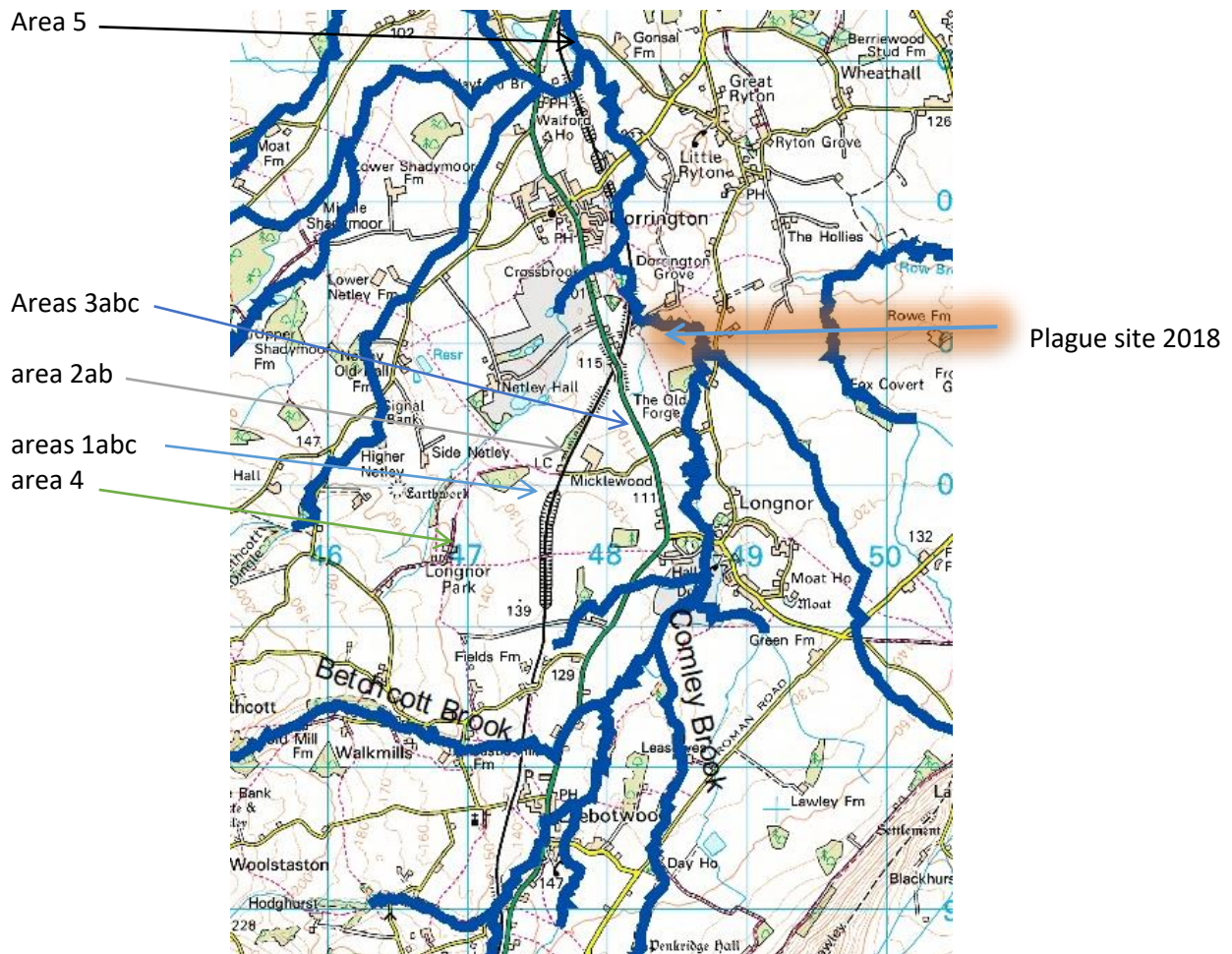
**Night torching** was conducted on 30<sup>th</sup> July on the **1abc** stretch of the Cound River. Again there were no signs of crayfish.

#### **Plan B**

In consultation with EA it was decided to move firstly to the Picklescott Brook (**2ab**) with no positive results and then to a stretch of the Cound River above and below the confluence with Picklescott



Brook (3abc). The farmer here confirmed he had seen “lobsters” regularly and indicated which stretches had previously held populations.



## Results and possible causes

A second year of negative returns is alarming, especially as the search area was widened downstream to include known areas of colonies.

### Water quality

One owner noted some cloudiness in the water and a muddier element to the stream (not investigated) from upstream in 2018, but as in 2019 there were healthy populations of fish and invertebrate larvae.

### Predators

There were regular sightings of herons, dippers and kingfishers, and prints of mammals (otter, badger mink/polecat and smaller mammals were seen mainly on sites 3 & 4 plus those of heron and smaller waterfowl. Otter spraints were regularly collected during the period, but contained no crayfish remains only bullhead and trout, plus some invertebrates.



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### *North American Signal Crayfish*

The report from Picklescott brook (historic) has not been confirmed and one large fishpool at Betchcott was reported as never having any Crayfish present in recent times. The owners of a smaller pool at Hodgehurst had never seen crayfish there either. There is a commercial fishpool under nearby Lawley which has a population of Blue Trout (*Onchorhynchus mykiss*) and this may need investigating as a potential threat.

### *Crayfish Plague*

More importantly the sighting of **Crayfish Plague** infested specimens on the Cound River at Longnor 2018 would seem to be the chief suspect in this decline, as the disappearance stems from that time and has also spread downstream of Longnor on well-documented Environment Agency recorded sites.

### **Summary**

In 2019's report it was stated- "In the past only scant evidence of its presence is available and it may be, for what ever reason, that the low population here is more prone to annual fluctuations than a larger population would be." Having switched to two known sites with previously healthy populations It looks as though this may be more than a periodic fluctuation. It is hoped that a more professional and wider investigation in 2021 may reveal if there is a serious population decline or worse.

### **Acknowledgement**

Grateful thanks must go to the owners of the five sections who gave permission for surveys, passed on observations and showed interest. Also to the Environment Agency for advice on sites and loan of traps (in particular to Julie Cowley). To SACWG, National Trust Stepping Stones/PPL for financing new traps and to Lee Blasdale for volunteering as a trained surveyor during a disappointing survey.



**Steve Butler**  
**January 2021**



### Swifts in the Strettons



#### Purpose and objectives of the project

The swift (*Apus apus*) is amber-listed as a bird of conservation concern (due to falling population numbers) and it is thought that the loss of nest sites due to modern building methods and materials has played a key role in their decline. By recording known nest locations, it is possible to monitor whether these sites continue to be used in subsequent years or whether new sites are selected and, importantly, to liaise with residents, builders and planners when works to improve properties is carried out to ensure the preservation of nesting opportunities.

Surveying also indicates where it might be worthwhile installing artificial nest boxes to increase colony size – the birds are sociable and tend to nest within close range of each other.

Swifts are commonly observed in and around the Strettons but there was no formal recording of the locations of nest sites or the number of birds until 2014, when the first “Swifts in the Strettons” was inaugurated by the Stretton Area Community Wildlife Group, under the leadership of Peta Sams. Observations were carried out in 2015 and 2016 which enabled the earlier study to be built on and extended. In 2020 the same methodology was again used, but observations were more ad hoc due to the survey co-ordinator having other commitments. Any reports by members of the public were also followed up.

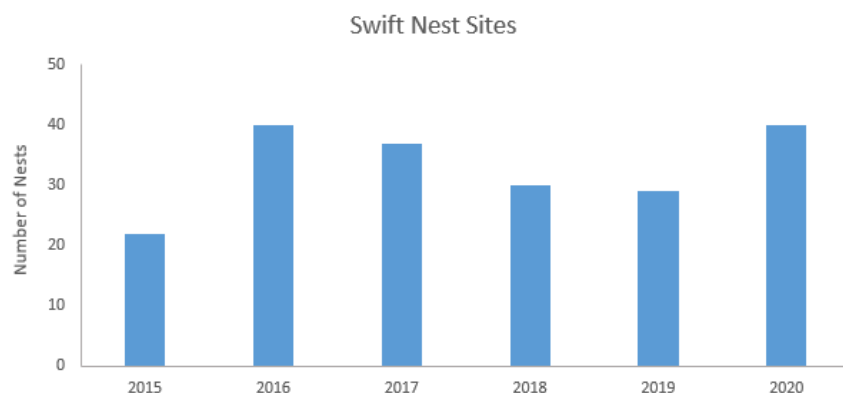
The location of the nest sites recorded will be passed to Shropshire Council, Church Stretton Town Council, Church Stretton Civic Society, RSPB swift survey and the county bird recorder for use when proposals for maintenance or modification of buildings occupied by swifts are filed with planning authorities and to establish the presence of swift populations in the county.

#### Results

##### *General Observations of Swifts in the Strettons*

No formal surveying took place in 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions.

The first confirmed sighting of swifts within the Strettons was 22 May 2020. As the months of May and June progressed more sightings were observed and recorded as nesting birds. As in the previous two years, some of the key locations that had been recorded in the early years of the survey (2014-2017) did not produce records in 2020. At other hotspots in the town swifts were observed in good numbers as aerial counts and as nesting birds. 40 nest sites were confirmed (i.e. birds entering a consistent location two or more times, or feeding young, or presence of young), see Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Number of swift nest sites year on year in the Strettons since 2015.**



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The last date of observation of a swift was 12 August 2020.

### *Swift Nest Site Locations*

Nest aspect is varied although it is evident that a westerly aspect is the least preferred (see table 1).

**Table 1: Nest Aspect for Confirmed Nest sites (where known).**

ASPECT OF NEST	CONFIRMED SITES
N	12
S	13
E	13
W	2

Of the confirmed nest sites in Church Stretton town they were found in 20 buildings at 22 addresses. A nest site was confirmed in both All Stretton and Little Stretton.

In July the nest site(s) in All Stretton fell prey to a sparrowhawk which took at least two adult birds as they exited the nest. Two swiftlets were also rescued from grounding at that location and taken to Cuan House, one of which survived and was later released.

### **Summary**

There are several conclusions that can be drawn from the confirmed nests recorded in the 2020 survey season:

- Nest observations increased on 2019
- The original hotspot area in the town centre has seen a decline in observations over the past three years
- Certain post War buildings have a high occupancy rate
- The installation of two nest boxes on one building in Church Stretton resulted in successful breeding in 2020
- Of the 13 other nest boxes installed in 2017/18 there was one record of occupancy in 2020.

### **Concluding remarks**

The 2020 survey produced extensive recording of certain areas within the Strettons that can now be considered key sites. This has somewhat made up for the lack of observations in the town centre itself. Anecdotally there did not appear to be more birds generally (as aerial counts) and therefore this raises the question of whether some of the previous breeding sites have been replaced by alternative locations.

The 2020 swift breeding season in the Strettons was short compared to previous years, with the last birds seen on 12 August 2020. Weather conditions were favourable for feeding and it is surmised that this was beneficial for chick growth.





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### **Acknowledgements**

This survey would not have been possible without the efforts of Richard Bacon, Gay Walker, Sandra Whitlock, Will Priestley, Steve Butler, Janet Longstaff and Andrew Morton.

**Julie Cowley**

**December 2020**

### **IMPORTANT: Confidentiality**

This is an edited version of the report without specific site information. Should you need to know further information please pass your request to Julie Cowley (email: [grahamandjuliecowley@gmail.com](mailto:grahamandjuliecowley@gmail.com) or phone: 01694 722310), who will consider whether this is appropriate.



## **Shropshire Swift Group**

*Looking out for Shropshire's Swifts*



### Butterfly report

#### **The aim**

The aim of the current project is to try and build a better picture of the diversity and numbers of butterflies in the Strettons area and highlight vulnerable colonies that may be threatened if their habitat is lost. The data collected will serve also as a baseline against which we can measure future changes in the butterfly population.

#### **Methodology**

This year members of SACWG have had a three-pronged effort to record butterflies in the Stretton Area. As before, occasional sightings have been recorded by eight members and 28 species identified. This is 28 out of 37 species that can be seen in South Shropshire. One transect has been carried out during 2020. John Bacon has continued his transect on Hazler Hill. A transect involves walking the same route every week between April and September recording butterflies using a proscribed method stated by UKBMS and results have been entered into their site. A second transect in Batch Valley was abandoned during this very strange year. Initially, UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme advised that monitoring of butterflies on transects should be halted during the first lockdown. Later in the year when more movement was allowed, Batch Valley was “discovered” by numerous visitors and walking a quiet path was almost impossible and butterfly sightings rare. There were no timed counts for Grayling and Green Hairstreak carried out in Cardingmill Valley. The survey was composed from sightings made by John Bacon, John Arnfield, Greg Forster, Sue Rooney, Jill Silk, Adrian Cullis, Caroline Uff and Heather Hathaway. John Bacon has made the following summary of his transect, which reflects observations in the wider area:

*2019 rainfall was 42 inches. Winter 19/20 was wettest on record. January to March 2020 rainfall was 291.5mm! with 180mm in February. However, it turned very dry from mid-March. The meadow was not grazed till 23rd December 2019 until 14th February 2020 to keep a good bite in case of severe weather for our 8 Badger faced sheep.*

*What a strange 12 months! The wettest winter on record with over 7 inches of rain in February alone, followed by a very dry spring with only 36mm rain in April and May and very little till end of June; and record high temperatures causing the short vegetation to brown off and be crisp. Then a wet August with over 6" rain. The hot spring resulted in early emergence of many species. The early season emergence of many species coupled to the wet August drastically reduced later season numbers. The three species of whites had a slow start but increased in numbers in August onwards tolerating the wet weather. Common blue well down on 2019. Also Ringlets possibly as a result of tight grazing of their preferred long grass breeding areas.*

*End of season: wet and warm August gave huge growth of vegetation making up for the very short turf in the spring. Small Tortoiseshell had a good autumn. Main meadow again not being grazed till winter for sheep keep.*

Thank you, John, for your summary and to all the contributors for their records. New contributors are always welcome.



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### Results

The following compilation of results combines all the observations received, but the numbers are a mere approximation, as some of the reports recorded only the presence of the species and did not include the number present.

<b>Analysis of recordings made in 2020</b>					
<b>Species</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>First</b>	<b>Last seen</b>
	<b>Recorded</b>	<b>seen</b>	<b>of sites</b>	<b>Seen</b>	
Brimstone	14	1	6	01/03/20	12/07/20
Comma	9	2	3	22/03/20	28/09/20
Common Blue	12	8	3	20/05/20	19/08/20
DK Green Fritillary	4	1	2	24/06/20	19/07/20
Essex Skipper	1	1	1	19/07/20	
Gatekeeper	11	1	5	15/07/20	19/08/20
Grayling	0	0	0		
Green Hairstreak	6	2	3	25/04/20	29/07/20
Green veined White	23	12	7	15/04/20	30/08/20
Holly Blue	16	2	5	15/04/20	09/09/20
Large Skipper	6	2	3	09/04/20	24/06/20
Large White	23	13	6	17/06/20	23/09/20
Marbled White	2	2	1	01/07/20	15/07/20
Meadow Brown	23	22	8	27/05/20	19/08/20
Orange Tip	22	1	7	08/04/20	10/07/20
Painted Lady	6	2	5	17/06/20	02/09/20
Peacock	30	15	9	22/03/20	19/08
Pearl Bordered Fritillary	0	0	0		
Purple Hairstreak	1	1	1	13/08/20	
Red Admiral	23	4	8	30/04/20	28/09/20
Ringlet	13	12	5	17/06/20	01/08/20
Silver-washed Fritillary	1	1	1	25/07/20	
Small Copper	24	6	6	20/04/20	15/10/20
Small Heath	8	51	3	13/05/20	02/09/20
Small Skipper	7	19	1	17/06/20	29/07/20
Small Tortoiseshell	42	19	9	22/03/20	28/09/20
Small White	33	25	7	15/04/20	28/09/20
Speckled Wood	24	2	6	22/03/20	16/04/20
Wall Brown	8	2	4	01/05/20	31/08/20
White-letter Hairstreak	1	1	1	13/08/20	
<b>Total 28 Species</b>					



In comparison to last year's recordings, Gatekeeper, Comma, Ringlet and Painted Lady numbers were down, but Common Blue, Large White and Small Skipper had a better year. Small Heath, where they are found is seen in good numbers. There were no recordings of Grayling or Pearl Bordered Fritillary this year.



Common Blue (left) and Small Heath (right)

**Heather Hathaway**  
**January 2021**

## Strettons Meadow Group



Following the Stepping Stones public meeting in January 2020 and delays due to Covid, a very first get together of newly joined Marches Meadow Group (MMG) meadow owners from around Church Stretton and nearby areas was finally held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> August. Fifteen meadow owners spent an enjoyable couple of hours visiting meadows on the eastern end of the Ragleth Hill.

Subjects discussed included the effects on vegetation and invertebrates of the extreme weather events during 2020, namely the wettest winter on record followed by the hottest spring and early summer. We reviewed how the recent trend for warm and mild winters was increasing winter grass growth requiring more over-winter intervention. It was agreed one species-poor meadow would benefit from application of seeds from the semi-parasitic hay rattle plant to reduce the vigour of the grasses. This to be followed by application of flower seeds and green hay collected locally from an adjacent native species rich meadow using the recently purchased pedestrian brush seed harvester from Australia.

The pros and cons of whether and how to control unwanted widespread invasive agricultural weeds were reviewed including creeping thistles, spear thistles, docks, perennial nettles, hog weed and bracken. Management options were discussed for another native flower bank, a small part of which was being invaded by stolon's of 'Rough Stalked Meadow' grass (*Poa trivialis*), forming a 75mm thick carpet with underlay! The options ranged from: increased grazing but grass was too vigorous with spread by stolons; scarification and application of hay rattle seed but grass carpet too thick and dense for germination and phosphate index too high; herbicide application but residues affecting subsequent seed germination. It was decided that unusually scraping off the 'carpet and underlay' followed by seed scattering and green hay application from elsewhere on the same meadow gave the best chance for success.





**Above: MMG's 'Grass Grabber', a brush seed harvester used at Ragleth meadows**

Thanks to the MMG for use of their brush seed harvester and funding through SACWG from the Stepping Stones Project/Peoples Postcode Lottery it was possible to implement the management ideas during August and September. We now look forward to learning from the results over the next couple of years. We welcome other meadow owners to join the MMG and hope to arrange further field visits in the Church Stretton area.

MMG Contact: Richard Small, Tel: 01743 791476; email: [richard.w.small@gmail.com](mailto:richard.w.small@gmail.com)

**John Bacon  
January 2021**



## Lapwing and curlew survey

### Introduction



© Gareth Thomas

Lapwing and Curlew have both suffered a massive contraction in range and population decline in the last 20 years or so, nationally and locally. Curlew has been described as the UK's highest bird conservation priority, as we have an estimated 28% of the European breeding population, and 19 – 27% of the world population.

The Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group agreed to conduct a Lapwing and Curlew survey in 2017, to complement similar surveys carried

out by other Community Wildlife Groups in different parts of the Shropshire Hills. The Church Stretton branch of the Shropshire Ornithological Society also agreed to participate in the survey.

An area was selected where these species were found breeding in the 2008-13 Shropshire Bird Atlas, comprising 30 2x2 kilometre squares on the Ordnance Survey National Grid, known as “tetrads”, shown below in Figure 1. The aim was to locate the territories of breeding pairs, and record behaviour, to estimate the population. No attempt was made to locate nests. Although the survey concentrated on the two main target species, and their habitats, surveyors were asked to also record on their maps any of 23 other target species seen, if they were confident that they could do so.

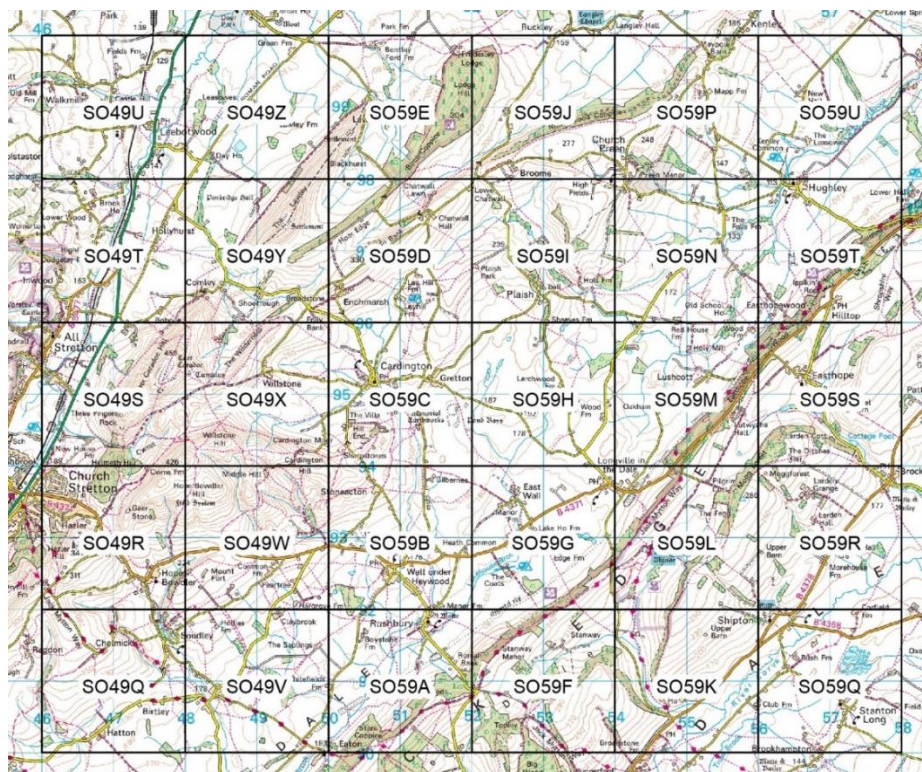


Figure 1. Survey area (30 tetrads)

Surveyors were recruited for each of the 30 squares, and were asked to make three visits, around 1 April, 1 May and mid-June, at times convenient to them, with visits concentrating on habitats where the main target species might be found, and lasting around three hours each. The surveys were conducted from Public Rights of Way, unless individual surveyors obtained landowners permission to leave them. Survey maps and recording instructions were supplied. A practical fieldwork training meeting was held for those that wanted one.

The survey was a success, and all 30 squares were covered. It was repeated in 2018 and 2019, using the same methodology and aiming to cover the same 30 squares.



Plans were made to repeat it in 2020, but the briefing meeting and training session for new participants, and the first and second surveys, had to be cancelled due to Government restrictions to limit the spread of coronavirus. However, efforts were made to continue to record Curlews, as “the Curlew situation is critical, with a 77% decline between 1990 and 2010, and a further decline since. There are probably only 120 pairs left in the whole of the County now, and we haven’t got long to save them from local extinction. We can’t afford a total loss of data on their population and distribution in 2020”. Therefore, surveyors were requested to consider ways to continue to record Curlews, while still complying with the Coronavirus lockdown restrictions.

When the restrictions were eased in mid-May, surveyors were requested to resume survey work, and do a survey of their square(s) as soon as possible (the early May survey, 2-3 weeks late), and the mid-June survey as usual. However, it was recognised that some of them would not be able, or willing, to do so, for various personal reasons. At the same time, members were advised that there have been more Cuckoo records than usual, so they were asked to submit all records of Cuckoo as well.

In the end, no records were received from 11 of the 30 squares, and only casual records were received from a further six. The squares that had Curlews last year were well covered, some better than in previous years because people were exercising near home. Twenty-eight people undertook surveys or submitted records, and 11 participated for the first time.

### **Results**

The following maps show the distribution of Lapwing and Curlew territories found in 2020. The Curlew population is estimated at 7 - 9 pairs. Only one pair of Lapwing was found, but there were probably more in squares with little or no coverage.



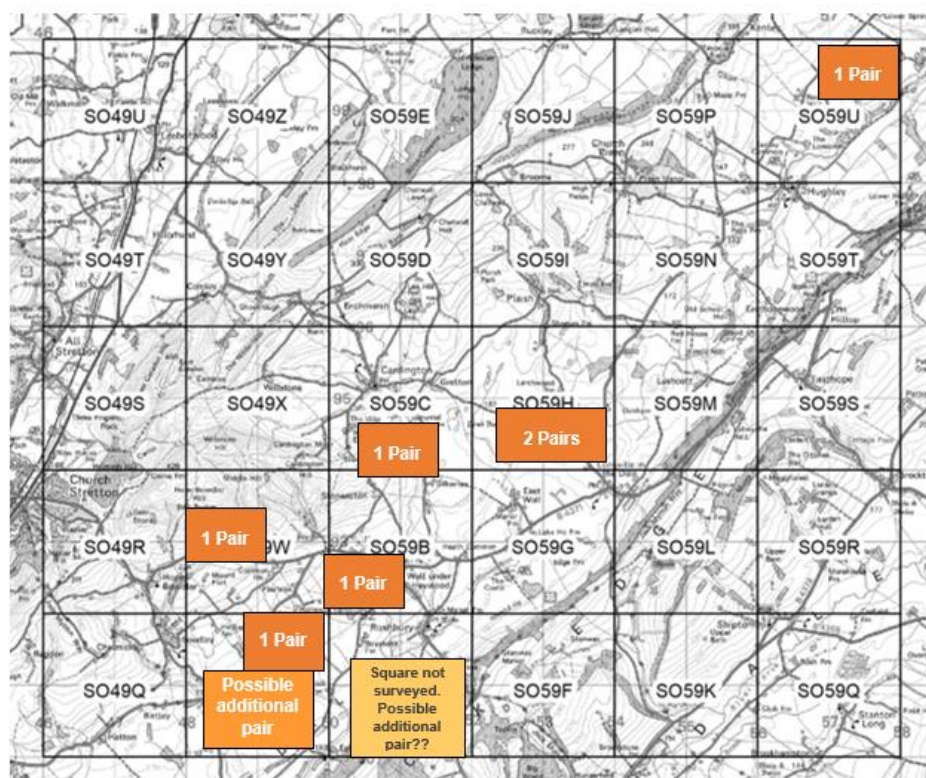
**Strettons Area CWG  
&  
Church Stretton SOS**

**Lapwing &  
Curlew Survey  
Results 2020**

**Curlew  
territories**  
(All survey  
and other  
information)

**Estimated  
population**

**7 – 9  
Pairs**



One pair had chicks, but again there was no evidence of any fledged young. There was no evidence that the Curlews produced any chicks, let alone fledged young in 2019, but there were at least two chicks (outcome unknown) in 2018.

**Strettons Area CWG  
&  
Church Stretton SOS**

**Lapwing &  
Curlew Survey  
Results 2020**

**Lapwing**  
(All survey  
periods, + casual  
records)

**Estimated  
population**

**Only 1 Pair  
Found**







## Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group: Annual Report 2020

Comparison of the 2020 results with those from previous years is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Summary of survey results 2017-20**

Species	Population Estimate			
	2017	2018	2019	2020
Curlew	6	6	6-7	7-9
Lapwing	8-9	6-8	5-7	1

The apparent increase in the Curlew population is probably due to better coverage in 2020 from people staying at home. A pair found in 2017 and 2018 was not found in the two later years, so it is likely that a pair has been lost.

### **Other Target Species**

Participants were requested to try to record Kestrels, as a nest box scheme and colour-ringing project is being undertaken, as they too have declined considerably in recent years. An estimated 7-9 pairs were found, compared to 4 – 5 pairs in 2019 (a very poor year for them), and up to 10 pairs in 2018, perhaps a few more than the 6 – 8 estimated in 2017.

Cuckoo has also become increasingly rare – the BTO Breeding Bird Survey has found a 71% decline in both England and the English West Midlands region between 1995 and 2018.

Members were advised that there were more Cuckoo records than usual, but “it’s not clear whether there are more Cuckoos about, or we’re better able to hear them in the peace and quiet of staying at home”. The population estimate of 7 territorial males is substantially more than recorded in previous years. In 2019, there were up to three males, and probably only one in 2018 and 2017

The first successful breeding of Red Kite in Shropshire for 130 years occurred as recently as 2006, but there are around 40 known pairs now, still mainly in the south-west hills, but a nest north of Shrewsbury was reported in 2017, with others in 2018 and 2019, and the most easterly nest to date was reported in 2019 from near the Staffordshire border.

In the Strettons area too, Red Kites have increased rapidly. The first nest east of the A49 road was found in 2012, and, in 2019, two nests were found: one pair fledged one young, and the other failed. The successful pair raised two young in 2020, and a (different) unsuccessful nest was found, but no comparison can be made of the number seen with previous years because of the limited survey coverage. There are likely to be other pairs nesting at unknown locations, as wing-tagged birds that are old enough to breed have been photographed in the area.

Apart from the five main Target Species listed above, members are normally asked to record observations of 19 Other Target species. Very few records of any of them were received in 2020, because of the limited extent of the survey work, so no table of the tetrads where these species were seen has been produced.

The Other Target Species usually recorded are: -

Barn Owl	Skylark	Snipe	Wheatear	Yellow Wagtail	Spotted Flycatcher	Swift (nest sites only)
Bullfinch	Meadow Pipit	Linnet	Whinchat	Grey Partridge	Tree Sparrow	
Dipper	Red Kite	Stonechat	Duncock	Reed Bunting	Yellowhammer	

### **Save our Curlews Campaign**

The Shropshire Ornithological Society (SOS) has been carrying out research with other Community Wildlife Groups to find nests, put an electric fence around them to protect the eggs from predators, and then fix radio-tags to the chicks and track them to see how they use the landscape, and what happens to them. Not enough young birds fledge to replace the older birds dying off. We need to know why.



This innovative research will be extended to the Strettons area in 2021, with landowners help. It is expensive, but we have a grant of £5,000 towards the cost from the National Trust's Stepping Stones Project, which has benefitted from support received from players of People's Postcode Lottery. We need to raise another £4,000 or so to carry it out and have launched a Strettons area *Save our Curlews* Appeal. You can find more information about the Appeal, including details of how to make donations and where to send them, on our website [www.shropscwgs.org.uk/strettons-area-news/2021-curlew-fundraising-appeal/](http://www.shropscwgs.org.uk/strettons-area-news/2021-curlew-fundraising-appeal/)

The work is part of the SOS "Save our Curlews" Campaign: see [www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/](http://www.shropshirebirds.com/save-our-curlews/)

The campaign is encouraging a network of 10 Community Wildlife Groups across Shropshire, including ours, to monitor Curlews. The Groups cover 137 tetrads where the vast majority of the County's Curlew population was found in the recent 2008-13 Bird Atlas project. A map showing the area covered by each group, overlain on the Curlew distribution map, can be found on the SOS website. Around 80-100 pairs were found altogether in 2019. Over 270 people participated, and put in nearly 2,300 hours, a clear indication of the commitment of local people to saving our Curlews.

### **Participants**

Thanks to the following people, who undertook the survey work and / or supplied records: - John Bacon, Alison Bennett, Phil Constable, Julie Cowley, Stephen Cox, Adrian Cullis, Gill Davies, Anne Davis, Jude Duffy, Paul Eade, Ros & Charlie Ephraim, Joe Gomme, Melanie & Peter Houlder, David John, Tony Jones, Sarah Lane, Shirley McNichol, Valerie Morris, Andrew Morton, Claire Nicholson, Ron Parnell, Phil Playford, Ian & Jill Plumridge, Leo Smith and Pat Stokes-Smith.



## **Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group: Annual Report 2020**

### **Full Report**

A detailed report of the methodology and results has been supplied to all the participants, and can be found on the website, [www.shropscwgs.org.uk/strettons-area-wildlife-group/lapwing-and-curlew-survey/](http://www.shropscwgs.org.uk/strettons-area-wildlife-group/lapwing-and-curlew-survey/)

### **Plans for the Future**

The survey will be repeated in future years, so we can get a better picture of the population and distribution of Lapwing and Curlew. In 2021, new work will start, in co-operation with farmers, to promote conservation, and organise nest protection for Curlews.

New participants are needed for the survey in 2021. It's easy and enjoyable and simple instructions will be provided. We normally hold a meeting in March to report back on last year's results and explain what's involved to new participants. However, we won't be able to do that this year, so if you're interested in helping, or want more information about what's involved, please tell us. We do need more helpers, so we hope to hear from you, please. There will be a practical (socially distanced) training session, explaining how to go about the survey, and record what you see, around the end of March.

**Leo Smith**

**January 2021**



## Dipper Project

### **Dipper Habitat**



Dippers inhabit fast flowing streams with rapids, small waterfalls and gravelly beds, and the Shropshire Hills, particularly in the Teme catchment, is the County stronghold.

They feed largely on larvae collected on the stream bed (they don't take invertebrates from bankside vegetation, like Grey Wagtails do), and, to a lesser extent, on small fish. They take readily to carefully sited nest boxes over water.

Several other Community Wildlife Groups have put up boxes, and shown that they help increase the population, partly by

providing new nest sites on suitable stretches of stream which otherwise lack them, and partly by protecting the eggs and chicks from predators, so the average number of fledged young per nest increases.

### **Dippers in the Strettons area**

Dippers have been absent from most of the Strettons area since the 1980s, but the population has increased across the whole of the Teme catchment in recent years, as a result of the nest boxes, which has led to more observations here. The Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group has now started its own Dipper Project, covering the Cound Brook north to Longnor, and the Quinney Brook south to Marshbrook, and their tributaries.

Dippers are very territorial, so the first step was getting a better understanding of which streams they inhabit, their favoured locations and the distances between nests, before putting up boxes.

Members were asked to report sightings in 2020, and from previous years, and an appeal for information appeared in *Stretton Focus*.

Nest building usually starts in early April, and young are being fed in late April or early May, so that is the best time to locate breeding pairs. Some pairs raise two broods.

Three were found at previously known sites, and four were found at new sites. The nests of two pairs could not be found, as they probably nest under bridges in private gardens, in Church Stretton itself, and Little Stretton. Three previously known sites were not visited, but it is likely at least two were occupied. The population in the area is therefore estimated at 9 – 11 pairs.

Two of the found nests each produced four fledged young, four more almost certainly produced fledged young (they were about to fledge from the nest), and the unfound nest in Little Stretton produced at least two fledged young. The final found nest was definitely predated. A pair near Leebotwood laid a second clutch, but the outcome is unknown.

### **Nest boxes**

The Community Wildlife Group has received a grant from the Stepping Stones project, with the support of players of People's Postcode Lottery, which includes funding to install 10 new nest boxes. The nest finding in 2020 has identified some sites that will be more secure if boxes are placed there, and other suitable sites have been identified, some mid-way between nests now known, which may result in a population increase. These boxes should be installed before the start of the 2021 breeding season.

### **Rings**

Ringling has been going on for many years, across the whole of the Teme Catchment, but also on the Cound Brook around Leebotwood and Longnor, but the colour-rings to identify individual birds in the field were only introduced in 2014. A colour-ring on the left leg is shown in the lower photo. The letter and two numbers on each ring are unique, so if the ring can be read it will add to what is known of the life history of the bird.



Colour-ringed Dipper © John Hanley

The smaller ring looks silver, and in silhouette it looks like a small wellington boot (the leg appears thicker at the bottom than the top). The Dipper in both photos has a small metal (BTO) ring on the right leg.

Members were asked to look for colour-rings and the smaller metal rings, and an attempt was made to read them all, by photography with a long lens, or a telescope. Nine colour-ringed birds were found: five were read, but four did not provide a good enough view.

Two of the five were colour-ringed in Cardingmill Valley in the winter of 2018, and the other three were all ringed in winter 2019, all adults at or very close to the sites where they nested. None of these five had been ringed earlier, as nestlings

By carrying on with the project in future years, it will be possible to build up an understanding of how long Dippers live, how far they move between fledging, roosting and nesting, and fidelity.

**If you see a Dipper, please try and see if it has a ring and colour-ring, and report it, with the location, to Leo Smith (01694 720296 [leo@leosmith.org.uk](mailto:leo@leosmith.org.uk)).**

**Leo Smith  
January 2021**

### Red Grouse Counts on the Long Mynd



Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group and the Long Mynd Breeding Bird Project, supported by the National Trust and Church Stretton Branch of the Shropshire Ornithological Society, have organised a Red Grouse count each year since 2011.

Red Grouse are restricted to heathland, and the Long Mynd (and Stiperstones) hold the only population in England between Dartmoor and the Peak District. Nationally, the population is falling, and it is on the *Amber List of Birds of Conservation Concern*. The results help the National Trust's management of the heathland to provide suitable habitat.

Unfortunately, the 2020 count had to be cancelled because of the Government's coronavirus restrictions.

Assuming the coronavirus restrictions have been eased by early April, it is being repeated this year. Counts will be held around sunset on seven Thursday evenings starting on 1<sup>st</sup> April. We want as many helpers as possible, please. We normally hold a Project Briefing for new participants, but that won't be possible this year. However, there will be a written brief, and a practical on-the-job (socially distanced) training session, explaining how to go about the survey, and record what you see, on the first date, 1<sup>st</sup> April.

For further information see the Community Wildlife Groups website [shropscwgs.org.uk/strettons-area-wildlife-group/long-mynd-red-grouse-project/](https://shropscwgs.org.uk/strettons-area-wildlife-group/long-mynd-red-grouse-project/) or contact Lorna Taylor (email: [lorna.taylor@btinternet.com](mailto:lorna.taylor@btinternet.com), phone 01694 723301).

**Leo Smith**  
**January 2021**



### Botanical surveys

The Botanical Group is a 'project' of the Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group. Our group is coordinated by Shropshire Wildlife Trust to survey Local Wildlife Site or potential LWSs. Each year SWT staff develop a programme of sites for us to visit and correspond with landowners for permission; depending on priority, the aim is to assess LWSs in rotation every 5-10 years. For each survey site we compile a report that includes a list of vascular plant species, where relevant, quadrat data for identifying National Vegetation Classification (NVC) communities, and management observations and suggestions. SWT later gives feedback to landowners and to the County LWS committee; and data is added to the county and national databases.

In addition, each year we may visit one or two local sites that we identify, e.g. a churchyard, or where a landowner has contacted us directly.

This year the Covid lockdown meant the programme failed to get off the ground; mid-April to July is the main survey window and this coincided precisely with lockdown1. So, survey activities this year were limited to what individual members could do locally whilst exercising. This is a summary of some of those activities.

#### **Ley Gardens Nature Reserve SO45939419; 12 July 2020**

This is a little species-rich gem within Stretton Town itself. It is a small nature reserve of 0.5ha sandwiched between the Ley Gardens housing development and the Shrewsbury to Hereford railway line. It is really part of what is now Coppice Leasowes Nature Reserve cut off by the railway in 1850, Ley Gardens to the west and Coppice Leasowes to the east.

Ley Gardens Reserve is highly engineered for drainage and levelling for the railway and the housing. It includes a steep bank and paths around two connected seasonal ponds and a large culvert that carries storm water away under the railway. The Reserve has open public access and is managed by the Housing Group, Connexus. Management is mainly limited to mowing grass paths and kind provision of a couple of benches.



**Figure 1: Ley Gardens Reserve beside the railway line with Hazler Hill in the distance**

The flora is very diverse; the survey found 102 species in an afternoon including 7 axiophytes<sup>1</sup>:

- i) Sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica*
- ii) Small-fruited Prickly-sedge *Carex muricata subsp. pairae*
- iii) Water avens *Geum rivale*
- iv) Water dock *Rumex hydrolapathum*
- v) Grey Willow *Salix cinerea*
- vi) Skullcap *Scutellaria galericulata*
- vi) Small-leaved Lime *Tilia cordata* (probably planted).

The diversity is in part due to some imaginative tree planting (e.g. Whitebeam, Small-leaved lime, Aspen), in part relic species that perhaps have hung on since the advent of the railway (e.g. sneezewort, prickly sedge, water dock, skullcap). It is diverse also because in a very small area there are steep dry mesotrophic grassland banks through to swamp communities. There are problems: a) purple loosestrife has become invasive and is taking over pond beds (which were completely dry when surveyed); b) nettles cover a large area of the site suggesting eutrophication; c) grass clipping piles encourage eutrophication; d) trees (mostly planted) are fine now but will soon shade large areas so need managing and thinning; e) the herb layer is getting taller in the struggle for light, since there is no grazing and cutting of vegetation other than the grass paths.



Figure 2: Sneezewort

The survey findings were fed back to Connexus Housing. It would be excellent if some residents (not all of whom are elderly) would see the value of what they have on their doorstep and form a volunteer group with occasional work parties to manage the site.

### The Mountain Pansy (*Viola lutea*) hunt

The mountain pansy is not common in the Stretton Hills. On the National Biodiversity Network database there are only 5 records since 2000, all on the west side of the valley at the Golf Course (2 records), Ratlinghope Hill, Ashes Hollow and High Park. Records going back 125 years indicate presence on several other sites including in the eastern hills of Caer Caradoc, Ragleth, and Hope Bowdler.

*Extract from the 2015 Shropshire Flora (Lockton A and Whild S)*  
***Viola lutea***

Once abundant in fields on all the hills in the west of the county and even on lowland heaths, but now it is rare to find more than a couple of dozen plants in the unimproved fields that remain. Plants in Shropshire are all yellow-flowered now except at Rhos Fiddle, where there are purple ones (D.M. Young, 2002). In a few places there are still large populations, notably on the summit of Titterstone Clee (J. Bingham, 2008), on the Long Mynd Golf Course (P. Carty, 2008), on the north end of Stapeley Hill (J. Clayfield, 2007) and at Rigmoroak.



Figure 3: Mountain Pansy

<sup>1</sup> Axiophytes are of particular interest to botanists as useful indicator species of habitats; they are not necessarily rare, but they are good to find.



The hunt was sparked off in 2019 by Jane and Peter Howsam who found a patch on the Church Stretton golf course; at the same time Isabel Carter found a single plant on Ashlet. The search resumed during the first lockdown 2020; finds were:

Who	Grid Ref	Where	Notes
Gay Walker	SO 42909720	South of the Portway, Henley Nap (aka Colliersford Gutter), Upper Darnford valley.	An extensive spread of pansies. This find matches records from 1979 and 1963; so it is very good to see it is still there.
Frances and Frank Hay	SO 44649515	Golf course nr 13th tee	About 30 plants. A different patch, 200m from those found in 2019; 2 further patches later found nearby.
Frances and Frank Hay	SO 47849557	North slope of Caer Caradoc	About 15 plants. An excellent find since the last record here was 1979; before that, there were several 19th century records.



**Figure 4: Mountain pansy in abundance at Henley Nap**

Look out for the Mountain Pansy as you walk the nearby hills. If possible, take a photo and grid reference and feedback details to the Botanical Group and *iRecord*.

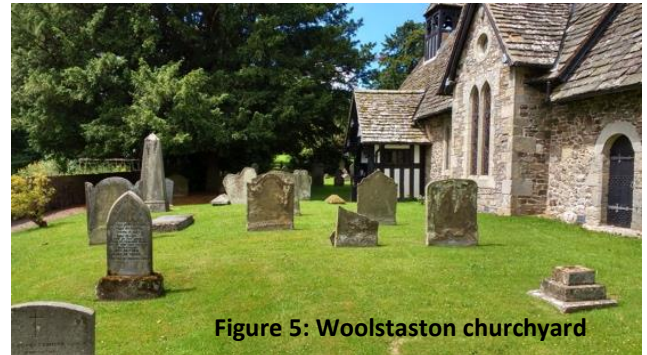


**Three churchyards: Leebotwood SO47069867, Smethcott SO44949938 and Woolstaston SO45229847**

Caring for God's Acre (CfGA) want all churchyards in the county, indeed country, to be surveyed. These three churchyards were visited three times at monthly intervals over the summer.

All three churchyards included interesting tree species as solitary plantings or along boundaries; many are veteran, some ancient.

Woolstaston was the least diverse of the three churchyards with just 32 vascular species, woody and herb. It is regularly mown to billiard table height, so only the toughest species survive.



**Figure 5: Woolstaston churchyard**

Leebotwood and Smethcott churchyards were promising when first visited in early May. Unfortunately, both had been almost completely mown or strimmed, probably by the same contractor or volunteer, when visited 4 weeks later. 59 vascular species were recorded in total at Smethcott; 55 species at Leebotwood.



**Figure 6: Smethcott churchyard**

None of the herb species found were axiophytes or particularly unusual. Nevertheless, churchyards are important wildlife reservoirs for the local area. Persuading churchwardens not to regularly mow has clear benefits for diversity. It is better to avoid mowing all but paths for 3 months May to July and removing mown materials to compost heaps. Best is

adopting a Management Plan with areas managed differently with vegetation of varying heights; paths, meadow areas, bulb patches, winter refugia etc.

CfGA pass survey findings and management suggestions back to churchwardens. Let's hope they see the potential for increasing biodiversity.

### **Cudwell Meadow SO 453937, 7 July 2020**

The biosurvey of this wet meadow of just under 1ha is reported separately as a Stretton Wetlands project of SACWG.

In summary, a total of 145 vascular plant species were recorded including 6 axiophytes,

- i) *Carex muricata* var *pairae* - Prickly sedge; rare
- ii) *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* - Bluebell; occasional
- iii) *Lamiastrum galeobdolon* - Yellow Archangel; occasional
- iv) *Myosotis discolor* - Changing Forget-me-not; rare
- v) *Myosotis secunda* - Creeping Forget-me-not; frequent
- vi) *Veronica scutellata* - Marsh Speedwell; occasional.



Figure 7: Marsh Speedwell

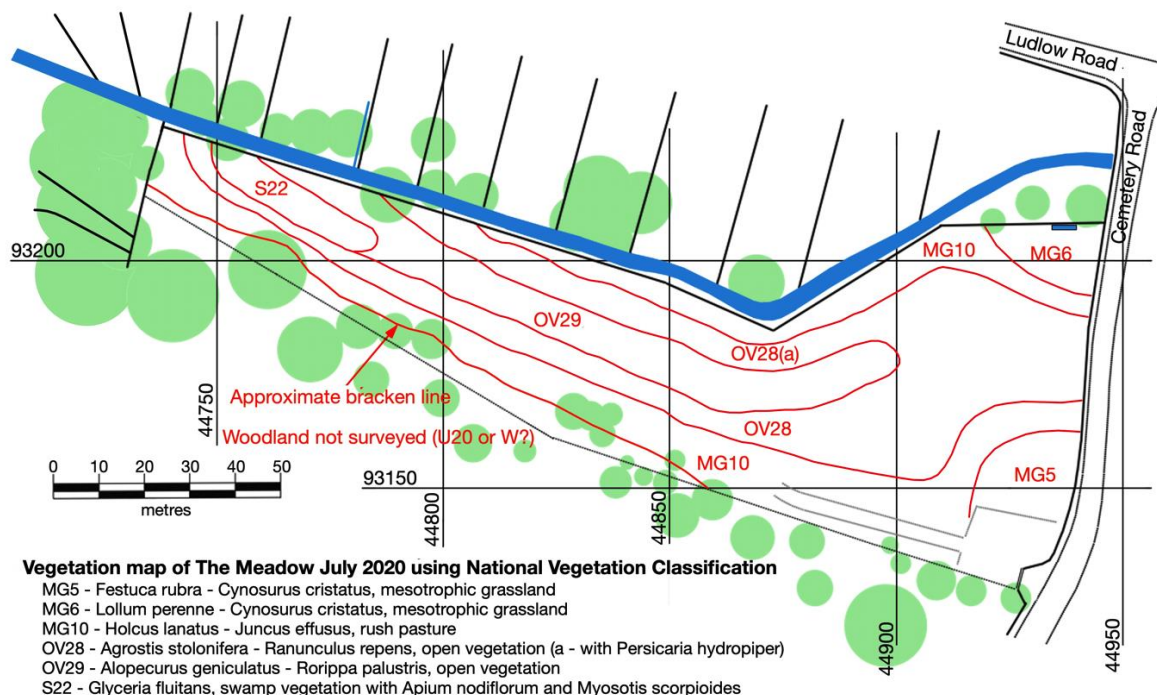


Figure 8: Cudwell Meadow in a wet August 2020

Quadrat data were also collected to determine vegetation communities within the meadow using the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) system.

145 plant species is an encouraging number for a field of less than a hectare. This probably reflects two main factors:

- i) management in recent decades. The field has not, so far as is known, been cultivated or resown or received artificial fertiliser for several decades.
- ii) inundation. Diversity is enhanced by the spectrum in different parts of the field of months under water, from more or less 0-12.



**Figure 9: Vegetation zones in Cudwell Meadow**

The different vegetation communities reflect the amount and duration of flooding especially in the spring. Some communities, in particular OV28 and OV29 are not common in South Shropshire; they are in effect more akin to the Meres and Mosses communities of North Shropshire. These open vegetation communities can be important as grazing marshes for wintering wildfowl and waders in the spring.

Further details can be found [here](#). The full Vegetation Survey Report can also be found here on the SACWG Wetlands Project website.

### Chatwall SO 521982

One of our group, Margaret Westhead, surveyed verges and paths close to home near Broome and Lower Chatwall. Over 25 herb species were recorded, not including grasses but including 3 axiophytes (Wood sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*, Yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor* and Wood speedwell *Veronica montana*), suggesting this an area little known to most of us, that the group should visit in future.

### The New Year Plant Hunt

The BSBI (Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland) New Year plant hunt took place from 1st to 4th January 2021. It is one of the ways used to find out how our wildflowers are responding to changes in climate. Wild species in flower seen on a walk of up to 3 hours are recorded. The results are then analysed and published on the BSBI website.

Frances and Frank Hay found 15 species on a walk around All Stretton batch, Castle Hill and Inwood:



<i>Campanula trachelium</i>	Nettle-leaved Bellflower
<i>Cymbalaria muralis</i>	Ivy-leaved Toadflax
<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	Broom
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb-Robert
<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Wood Avens
<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	Hogweed
<i>Lamium maculatum</i>	Spotted Dead-nettle
<i>Pentaglottis sempervirens</i>	Green Alkanet
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	Bramble
<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	Smooth Sow-thistle
<i>Tanacetum parthenium</i>	Feverfew
<i>Teucrium scorodonia</i>	Wood Sage
<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	Gorse
<i>Valeriana officinalis</i>	Common Valerian
<i>Vinca major</i>	Greater Periwinkle

If you'd like to try next year, go to the BSBI website <https://bsbi.org>. The longest list so far submitted nationally is of 86 species!

### **Finally, recording in 2021...**

Let's hope 2021 is a better year for surveying. At present (January 2021) it is not clear what will be possible, or whether SWT will be able to put together a programme of visits. Do get in touch if you'd like to join us.

In the meantime, do report any interesting finds. Much the easiest way to do this is to do it yourself using the *iRecord* app. Your record, ideally with a photo, goes through to the County Recorder and, once verified, onto the National Biodiversity Network database <https://nbn.org.uk>

**Mike Carter**  
**December 2020**



## **Treasurer's Report**

Year ending 31 January 2021

### **BALANCE SHEET**

<b>INCOME</b>		<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
Carry forward from last year	£1,173.01	Hanscan Ltd wire mesh and staples for Boardwalk	£359.84
AGM donations 2020	£35.25	L. Hulton-Harrop web work Cudwell Meadow	£407.00
Shropshire Council re: Boardwalk	£360.00	Birnbech NSU insurance	£168.00
Church Council donation	£40.00	Huws & Gray re: bat boxes	£39.91
PPL money, from National Trust	£2,556.00 *	Crayfish traps balance	£3.48
PPL money (Curlews)	£5,000.00	CWG Media balance	£0.09
National Trust for insurance	£168.00	L. Smith bird survey balance	£110.00
Donation for tree planting/hedgehogs (anonymous)	£50.00	Hedgehogs balance	£9.25
		PPL money spent to date, general	£1,922.61
		PPL money spent to date, Curlews	£5,000.00
		<b>Balance in bank 31.01.21</b>	<b>£1,362.08</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 9,382.26</b>		<b>£9,382.26</b>

*\*£3000 PPL award, minus £444 paid by National Trust directly to McCartneys for survey of Cudwell Meadow*

<b>MONIES HELD AS FOLLOWS</b>	<b>31.01.21</b>	<b>31.01.20</b>
Wetlands Project	£145.37	£552.21
Tree Planting Project	£41.02	£0.18
PPL	£633.39	
Undedicated funds	£542.30	£620.62
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1362.08</b>	<b>£1,173.01</b>

**L W Priestley, Treasurer**  
**January 2021**

## Acknowledgements

Thanks to all those members of SACWG and the public who supported us this year, especially committee members and project leaders.



We are grateful to the support of players of People's Postcode Lottery who supported various activities detailed in this report.

Many thanks to the Middle Marches Community Land Trust for their hard work and fundraising efforts to support the purchase of Cudwell Meadow.

Thanks to Church Stretton Branch of Shropshire Ornithological Society, for help with publicity and recruiting participants for the Lapwing and Curlew, and Red Grouse, projects

This report was compiled by the National Trust.