

Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership

# 2018 Norfolk Community Biodiversity Awards

sponsored by



the **landscape** partnership  
planning and designing environments for life



Pensthorpe  
Natural Park

**R&J HOGG LTD**  
HISTORIC BUILDING SPECIALISTS  
Tel: 01359 227213



[www.norfolkbiodiversity.org](http://www.norfolkbiodiversity.org)

**A voice for Norfolk's nature**



# Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership

## Community Biodiversity Awards 2018

Norfolk has a wealth of wildlife and natural environments that support and enrich our lives. Each year, the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership organises the Community Biodiversity Awards to celebrate groups and individuals whose voluntary efforts lead to improvements for biodiversity and to greater community engagement with local nature sites. The awards are managed by the Communities and Nature Topic Group of the partnership which meets frequently to share news and ideas and to stimulate community action for biodiversity.

### **Our Values**

We seek to encourage: a greater appreciation of nature at a local level; care for the natural environment; long-term gains for local nature sites e.g. through the development of management plans. We are a not-for-profit organisation.

### **Our work**

The Communities and Nature Topic group has an active membership drawn from many organisations including: Norfolk Wildlife Trust; Natural England; Norwich City Council; RSPB; The Conservation Volunteers; local district councils; local conservation businesses and Norfolk County Council.

### **The Community Biodiversity Awards**

The Community Biodiversity Awards celebrate groups and individuals whose voluntary efforts lead to improvements for biodiversity and to greater community engagement with local nature sites. The nomination period is between February and May and our award winners are presented with framed certificates at our summer awards evening. Winning an award is a recognised accolade for effort to improve the local environment. We have run the awards for the past 14 years. Our awards are the only ones in Norfolk that focus on voluntary efforts for biodiversity.

### **Impact**

Feedback shows that winning or being nominated for an award means a great deal. We believe this positive vibe carries back into the heart of local communities, encouraging people to continue their great work for the environment and inspiring others to become involved.

# Award Categories and Sponsors 2018

## Saving Species sponsored by Pensthorpe Natural Park

This award recognises individual or group efforts to improve the lot of wildlife species or species groups. With so many plants and animals, even once common ones, in rapid decline, action is needed at every level to avoid further decline and possible extinction.

## Groups sponsored by The Landscape Partnership

This award recognises the achievements of groups working on biodiversity projects in their local community. Local groups can inspire people to recognise and care for their local biodiversity while providing the chance to get together and work with a common purpose.

## Young People's Achievement sponsored by Kelling Heath Holiday Park

This award is for individuals under 18 or those who enable young people to make a personal contribution to nature and biodiversity. Young people hold the key to the future for our wildlife so their understanding and appreciation of nature is vital.

## Nature for Health and Wellbeing sponsored by The Norwich Community Green Gym

This award recognises the benefits for individuals in terms of improved health and wellbeing as a direct result of activities that bring people and nature together. We know contact with nature is good for both mental and physical health but this award recognises activities that go further to also benefit biodiversity in the community or our knowledge of it.

## Churchyards and Cemeteries sponsored by R and J Hogg Ltd, and Norfolk Wildlife Trust

This award recognises action to care for churchyards and cemeteries so that they provide opportunities for nature to thrive as well as being a welcoming and tranquil oasis for people.

The 2018 Awards have been generously sponsored by :



# Community Biodiversity Awards 2018

## Nominations (in alphabetical order)

### **1. Amy Ranger,** nominated by Gemma Clark

Amy started the Under 5s Out and About Group in the mixed community around Kings Lynn with support, but now runs it herself with help. The monthly circular walk around Reffley Wood attracts about 60 people and involves activities like making bird feeders, insect houses, or nature themed Christmas decorations and there is usually a nature hunt. However, if a child would rather run and climb fallen trees and collect leaves there is no pressure and natural play is encouraged. Amy is providing a brilliant and inspiring activity for local families which draws the community together in friendship and provides a fantastic introduction to nature for very young children and their carers.

### **2. Avenue Junior School, Norwich,** nominated by the Plantation Garden Management Committee

A wide range of work was completed by children from the school during the course of the Heritage Lottery Fund project, "Experiencing and Understanding the Plantation Garden". Much of it resulted from their own imaginations and built up from first impressions into structured exercises including poetry and creative writing briefs, word searches, maths problems, wildlife searches, 'spot the difference' exercises, etc. Every child from the school visited and the garden was a powerful stimulus generating work across a wide range of subject areas which resulted in a set of booklets, project cards and on-line materials which combine to promote further study of the garden's environment and encourage expression of new understanding through a range of creative media.

### **3. Beeston Common Management Group,** nominated by Elizabeth Withington

Set up in 1983 specifically to renovate and enhance Beeston Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for wildlife, the group has brought the site back from the brink. Since 2002, led by honorary warden Francis Farrow, they have cut scrub from wetland, grassland and heathland areas, dredged ponds, improved access, created bare areas for insects. Their recording efforts have shown a dramatic increase in species of plants and insects. 20 species of dragonflies and 26 species of butterfly have been recorded and plants like sundews, marsh fragrant orchid (*Gymnadenia densiflora*), lousewort (*Pedicularis sylvatica*) and cotton-grass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*) have returned. Trails and walks are well established and recently the group have won the battle to stop water abstraction from adversely affecting the common.

#### **4. Blofield Church,** nominated by Dr David Pilch

In a changed countryside, this rural churchyard is a valuable relic of ancient grassland. Since 1982 it has been managed under The Diocese Churchyard Conservation Scheme receiving many accolades for its success. Management is based on the old practice of hay making and made possible by the volunteer work of Blofield & District Conservation Group, church members and other volunteer groups such as The Great Yarmouth Green Gym. Wildlife surveys are undertaken including bat detection evenings. In 2017 there was a heritage day display on churchyard conservation which was also used at an event at Norwich Cathedral. The parochial church council is committed to the maintenance of the flower rich grassland habitat and there is information in the church about this and the recent surveys.

#### **5. Breckland Flora Group,** nominated by Samuel Neal

Set up in 2016 this group of volunteers carry out targeted recording of Breckland's rare and scarce plants, identified as of greatest conservation concern. Information gathered supports conservation action for these species. With about 58 members, some new to surveying and some expert botanists, they survey nearly all the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in the Brecks with rare Breck flora and are now expanding to cover County Wildlife Sites. They also find populations of rare plants on new sites. Some members spend a day a year, others make 30 visits to survey. They support each other and are now starting to take new people out to see species. A more vital or more enthusiastic volunteer surveying/recording group would be hard to find and their efforts will directly inform management decisions.

#### **6. Chris Brooks,** nominated by Helen Sibley

Chris has voluntarily taken responsibility for the conservation of parts of the village of Scole. Through him, areas have been opened up for walking and enjoyment of nature including the making of permissive pathways. He leads a team that maintains the churchyard and conservation area. He has cleared and nurtured the new churchyard and is planting new hedges with native species. His energy and vision has totally changed the village and the care of the churchyard. He inspires people to be as passionate as he is and to help him.

## **7. Church Action Group - St. Peter's Haveringland** nominated by Nigel Boldero

Over the last two years this Norfolk church, which was threatened with closure, has had a new lease of life from small group of local people who came together to turn it into a 'Festival Church.' There are limited church services but a range of other events and activities to attract and serve the local population and wider community. Part of the plan has been to develop and actively manage the church yard as a wildlife conservation area. The group also wishes to contribute to improving the biodiversity of the surrounding area working with landowners. The group has an 'Avenue of Remembrance' of 26 trees has also been planted to commemorate the closure of the RAF airfield 70 years ago.

## **8. David Savory,** nominated by Nigel Robson

David Savory is a founder member and Chairman of the Bure Valley Conservation Group. Meeting every Wednesday, they carry out conservation work at many sites in, or close to, the Bure Valley. Examples are meadow restoration at Roman Wood, Acle, at Cremer's Meadow, Brundall, and at several churchyards; woodland management at Roman Wood, Acle, coppicing and pollarding a new woodland planted in 1995, clearing and maintaining a number of ponds and surveying wildlife. David Savory is an excellent chairman, maintaining good communication, dealing sympathetically and compassionately with problems. He runs an efficient committee, and liaises closely with similarly interested group organisations. He devotes a huge amount of his time to ensure the group prospers.

## **9. The Friends of All Saints Church, Hemblington (& associated conservation groups),** nominated by Susan Rowe

The friends group has been instrumental in co-ordinating interest and practical working in the two churchyards. One area has been managed by the local Blofield and District Conservation Group (BADCOG) since 1985, more recently the Bure Valley Conservation Group has managed another area. A small team of volunteers surveyed the churchyards monthly between April and September in 2016 and occasionally in 2017. The original 1982 report listed 14 "interesting and rare species" in the churchyard, the most recent boasted 113 species. "Let's go Wild in the Churchyard" and annual "The Big Churchyard Birdwatch" events have boosted interest and records which are used to update the exhibition boards, displayed in church during special events held at the church.

## **10. Friends of Cremer's Meadow** nominated by Samuel Neal & Helen Baczkowska

The four acre Cremer's Meadow, owned by the parish council, is available for the benefit of the residents of Brundall and visitors to the village and is preserved as a wildlife and nature reserve. Since 2015 the friends group has worked extremely hard and fast to clear the junk and rubbish and cut and rake the meadow. The results are incredible. The wet meadow has improved dramatically, with early marsh orchid and southern marsh now flourishing. The commitment of the community to turning this site around and making it a nature reserve– tackling so much of the work themselves and truly valuing what they have is remarkable. It is not only a lovely site, but one that is now well cared for and flourishing.

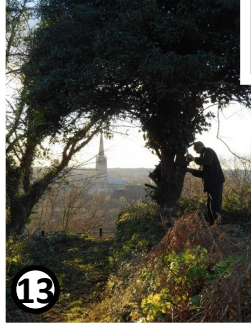
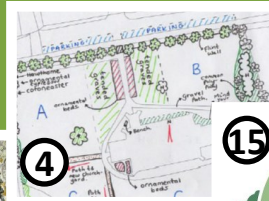
## **11. Friends of Earlham Cemetery** nominated by James Emerson

Set up in 2011 by local residents to protect, conserve and enhance Earlham Cemetery for wildlife and as a place of freedom, recreation and enjoyment, the group organises monthly themed walks, surveys and conservation tasks. They have a very informative website which is regularly updated and they produce newsletters. They have recently introduced trial plots of yellow rattle which is semi parasitic on grasses so will help plants that would otherwise be outcompeted to grow. They encourage others to get involved and record the wildlife.

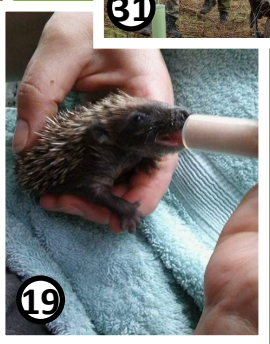
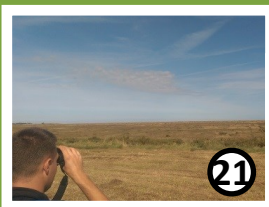
## **12. Friends of Horsey Seals** nominated by David North

The friends aim is to protect the grey seal population at Horsey from disturbance by over 60,000 visitors between November and January. 170 wardens work all weekends in all weathers from November to Christmas and daily over the two week Christmas holiday period and into January and until all the pups have safely left the beaches. They lead visitors and their dogs away from breeding areas to the best, safe view points and inform people about seal behaviour. Pup numbers have risen from 350 in 2002 to over 1000 in 2015/6. The friends have created great pride in this wildlife spectacle and shown that local people can make a huge difference to the conservation of one of Norfolk's iconic protected species.









### **13. Friends of Kett's Heights,** nominated by Vanessa Trevelyan

Set up in November 2015, the group aims to support the regeneration of Kett's Heights so that it can be a welcoming space for the local community and visitors to Norwich; an attractive space with diverse plants and wildlife; an event space with activities to suit a wide audience, and an educational space where its long and interesting history can be investigated and interpreted. Besides fortnightly practical work sessions, the friends have introduced an events programme which includes monthly guided tours, "Get Creative" day with the BBC, and theatre performances by the Common Lot and Crude Apache. There are now signs at the entrance, an interpretation panel at the viewpoint and an informative website which includes downloadable trails guides.

### **14. Friends of the Tud Valley Conservation Volunteers,** nominated by Helen Sibley

Formed just over a year ago to encourage the community to help manage East Hills Woods in Costessey and other local sites, the group meets monthly to carry out practical tasks. They have worked extremely hard to clear woodland glades of brambles and sycamore saplings to expose and encourage the display of bluebells. They have linked with the adjacent high school and the probation service whose Community Payback Scheme helped out last winter. The woods are popular with walkers and they plan to improve pathways, signage and interpretation.

### **15. Friends of Train Wood and Marriott's Way,** nominated by Lucy Galvin

Started in 2013 to bring people and nature together, they aim to ensure this historic and natural site stays is looked after and open to visitors. Besides practical work and wildlife recording, they have engaged with many groups including the Good Gym, local Beavers, Scouts and the Dragons Nurture Group with Goldcrest Outdoors – which supports students from a range of backgrounds, strengths and difficulties, including students who have suffered trauma, have special educational needs, and social and emotional difficulties. The friends also work alongside the Needle Exchange to deal with the problem of drug use and rough sleepers on site, making sure to welcome rough sleepers to events and promoting events at Under One Roof, the homeless medical practice.

## **16. Lord Hugh Somerleyton**, nominated by Fritton with St Olaves Parish Council

The re-wilding initiative is a 1000 acre reserve around and including Fritton Lake, part of the re-wilding Britain project. The 'nature first' principal is here interpreted as giving space for nature to thrive with little or no intervention. The entire area is being stock fenced so larger deer will be free to roam inside /outside while inside cattle, sheep, ponies and pigs will be introduced to roam free as an agent in creating dynamic environment of natural regeneration and rich biodiversity. Wild meat will be harvested from the reserve. In addition dyke clearing work has been done to facilitate and encourage eels to migrate through these dykes.

## **17. Greening Wymondham** nominated by Helen Sibley

The group started 18 months ago, sharing a love of the environment and wanting to improve the green spaces around Wymondham. They have made improvements to spaces around the arts centre and the north Wymondham community centre and have also starting working on the woodland at Kett's Park. They have inspired many people in Wymondham to come and join them on the various projects they have achieved.

## **18. Hilary Hunter** nominated by Jacqueline Mary Thompson

In 2016 Hilary took over the west side of the churchyard at Wymondham Abbey to create a conservation area, She ran many churchyard activity days for both adults and children to encourage participation in wildlife activities. They made a "Grand Bug Hotel", hedgehog habitat, compost bins and nest boxes. The transformation has been a great success. Monthly surveys have been carried out and the species list has grown for 47 to 247. Other events included "Green Hallowe'en", bat evenings, toad rescue, bird song identification, a talk on herbal medicines, scything workshops and making ladybird homes using non-recyclable coffee cups from the abbey café. Every month Hilary writes an article for the parish magazine. The project itself has been a previous winner in 2016 and highly commended in 2017.

## **19. Hodmedods Hedgehog Support** nominated by Maria Thornberg

Hodmedods was started over a year ago aiming to help hedgehogs all over Norfolk. They do fundraising, education and hands-on rescue. The organiser, Paula not only started a small rescue centre but fund raised for others. Through the educational side of Hodmedods she has reached 100s of children and by fundraising, she has helped Hallswood Animal Sanctuary build a hedgehog hospital and helped small rescues all around Norfolk. She works tirelessly to save our prickly friends in every way that she can.

## **20. Jane Harris** nominated by Abi Gray on behalf of Norwich Bat Group

Jane's contribution to Norfolk's bats goes back over more than two decades. Not only does she volunteer as a bat carer with the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT), she is also a volunteer bat roost visitor for Natural England/BCT, and is also a vital founder/member of several bat projects in the county, as well as being the project officer for the Norfolk Barbastelle Study Group. Jane provides training on bats for the Norwich Bat Group and other groups. Often travelling hundreds of miles per week to collect and release bats, she has cared for many dozens of injured bats over the years, ensuring they are fit for release back to the wild and is a truly inspirational and dedicated individual, the epitome of the all-round bat enthusiast.

## **21. Joe Harkness** nominated by James Emerson

Joe's project is called Bird Therapy. He has used bird watching to help him cope and improve his own mental health and, as a result of this, he launched the project to help others similarly. He has written about reducing stress in birdwatching and now keeps a blog and has started "well birding" walks, taking people out to nature reserves to put his ideas into practice. In 2017 Joe gave a talk at the "Earth Optimism" event in Cambridge, and has also given talks to a number of local groups. Long term Joe is still looking to publish his book, which would contain a mixture of his experiences, the results of questionnaires and interviews with naturalists about their mental health and his ideas for birdwatching for mental health improvement.

## **22. Joseph Hubbard** nominated by Samuel Neal

At an early age, Joseph was inspired by seeing the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society (NNNS) stand full of an incredible array of fungus. He developed skills in fungus identification and other biodiversity, and then began organising wildlife weekends as well as information displays for public engagement, surveys, recording meetings and creating a native species conservation plan for the Dinosaur Adventure Park where he was offered a job as a zookeeper. Joseph's main passion is to "pass on the thrill of wildlife to other people, especially the younger generation". He uses his exceptional communication skills to talk to hundreds of school groups and adults at events. Joseph is now only 19 and says "If we could just engage a few people, we could change the world..... what's the point in gaining knowledge if you don't pass it on!"

### **23. North Walsham and Dilham Canal Trust** nominated by Cllr Nigel Lloyd

Formed in 2008, the trust's aim is to protect, conserve and improve the route of the canal and its branches, for the benefit of the community and environment, promoting access to the navigation for all. Restoration work by volunteers on the upper reaches of the 19th-century North Walsham and Dilham Canal has opened up a two-and-a-half-mile stretch between Ebridge Mill Pond and Swafeld Bridge to walkers. As a result, flora and fauna have increased. Some 380 species of wildlife have been recorded over the past 2 years including water voles, otters, red-tipped clearwing moths and kingfisher. The is now a much loved spot for walkers, fishermen, boaters and those seeking some quiet solitude in a stunning piece of Norfolk countryside

### **24. North Walsham Conservation Group** nominated by Mark Webster

The group started up by The Conservation Volunteers in 2016, aims to provide weekly volunteering opportunities along the Norfolk Trails long-distance paths near North Walsham. Initially the group worked at 3 sites along the old railway lines near the town and the old railway station at Briggate. Since then the group has worked at more than 10 different sites, and regularly gets 10-15 volunteers from teenagers to pensioners turning out each week. On two important areas, at Knaption and Felmingham, the effects of the volunteers' work has been dramatic, rescuing a habitat that had almost completely disappeared and providing hundreds of square metres of new space for wildflowers and grasses to colonise.

### **25. Rose Hoare** nominated by Christine Ryding

Rose, Ted Ellis's grand-daughter, runs several groups which encourage children to get outdoors and enjoy the wonderful wildlife around Surlingham. From toddlers to teenagers, she takes them all, and teaches them a love of the natural world. Her Young Explorers, aged 7-12, explore and help maintain Wheatfen, have visited the archives at Norwich Castle, been taught by snail specialists and mud specialists among others. The group has links with the Ted Elis Trust and South Yare Wildlife group, as well as being run alongside several Forest Schools projects. Rose is so calming, and allows the natural world to do the teaching, whether that be a muddy bog, making bird feeders or cutting back rhododendrons.

## **26. South Norfolk Tree Wardens** nominated by Helen Sibley

In 2016, South Norfolk Tree Wardens became an independent group and their executive committee is now responsible for managing, training and the ordering of trees for planting under the district council's scheme in south Norfolk. There are now some 80 tree wardens appointed to parishes providing advice, highlighting areas for tree planting and carrying out vital after care, surveys and advice. They attend local events to spread the word and recruit new volunteers and also put on their own training and events.

## **27. South Wootton Junior School Garden Project** nominated by Nolan Mills

In 2008 a small area of the school playing field was rotavated, where in 2010 an allotment was created growing a range of fruit and vegetables. A rabbit proof fence, gates, compost bins and a hedgehog den were added. Alongside the plot, a strip is sown with wildflowers to encourage insects and butterflies. Sunflower seed heads are left as winter feed for the birds. During term time, pupils work on the plot, eight at a time with at least two volunteers, between March and October. The project is self-supporting; sales of vegetables and fruit at the school and parish office provide enough money to buy the following years plants and seeds and any equipment required.

## **28. St Mary's Church, South Wootton - Churchyard Garden** nominated by Nolan Mills

Started in 2005 by South Wootton in Bloom, the aim is to clear out all the accumulated years of rubbish in the south east corner of the churchyard and create an attractive garden. Plants and shrubs were selected to give all year round colour, scent and textures so that a sensory garden was created. Discarded church stone was used to create a rockery/dry garden, red hawthorn trees and shrubs and bulbs were planted and an area left to grow "wild" where plenty of wild flowers now thrive. The garden has been planted for year round effect with sight, sound, smell and touch in mind.

## **29. Stillwater Farm Restoration Project** nominated by Thomas Jones

This project aims to return 16.5 acres of neglected farmland back to its former glory for the benefit of nature. Overgrown willow has been cleared to allow marshland to re-develop and, using historical aerial photographs, dykes around the land which had completely disappeared have been sensitively reinstated. Land drains have been installed to control surface water run-off from adjacent farmland, and the huge task of the removing acres of invasive Himalayan balsam by hand have been tackled. The current phases of work will see Whitewater River and the large ponds on the farm restored. While working with expert and statutory bodies the owners are funding the work and plan to open the site to charities and groups.



### **30. The Raptor Trust** nominated by Margaret Stevenson

This long standing charity rescues and rehabilitates wild birds of prey across Norfolk and returns them to the wild. They also work hard in education, giving talk, events and projects including education packs. Working every day of the year, they come at all hours to rescue birds. Their volunteers work from home on very limited funding but are totally dedicated and selfless.

### **31. The Volunteers of the Norwich Fringe Project** nominated by Chris Stebbing

Initially the volunteers undertook practical conservation tasks under the supervision of the project's staff, now they have considerably expanded their activities taking a leadership role on tasks and redeveloping the project's website, adding new features. Some volunteers make a photographic record of our work days which are then integrated with our blog, also written by volunteers. The blog includes recipes for work day treats or "Tailgate Tucker". Several volunteers are keen amateur naturalists and interesting finds are photographed and identified in the blogs. The team is diverse and turns out at least two days a week to carry out conservation and access work on 34 public spaces around the Greater Norwich area. It is heartening that the public really do appreciate their work.

### **32. Zara Gardener** nominated by David Todd

The Conservation Volunteers (CT) run Tuckswold Food Growing Project in the heart of Tuckswold, Lakenham, Norwich. They work to create healthier and happier communities for everyone. They take willing volunteers out to protect and enhance some of Norwich's many fine greenspaces, working in partnership with the City Council, Norwich Fringe Project and Broadland District Council. They also travel further afield supporting like-minded community and youth conservation groups

