

Recently, it has been a very busy time and we would like to give you an update on where we are up to.

Over the last few months we have been surveying the area and are generating a good understanding of both the landscape and the environment, including the varied flora and fauna that inhabit it - and have made some amazing discoveries along the way.

The golf course is home to nearly 70 veteran Oak trees (not including those set within boundary hedgerows), many of which are between 2-300 years old or more. We also have long stretches of ancient hedgerows. These together with the many ponds and large



swathes of unmanaged grassland make this an increasingly rare environment for the UK. These grasslands support masses of insects including many species of butterfly and bees – both of which are known to be under serious threat. We have already recorded many key and protected species, some expected, and some such as a regular Oyster Catcher are not!

If further development is allowed on this site all this will be lost forever.....

Our environment is valuable not only for us, but also to a wider ecological network stretching from Barthomley and Englesea Brook, through Wychwood and onto Weston and beyond. Two recent reports highlight the value of sites such as ours: 'making Space for Nature' (Lawton, 2010) and the 'State of Nature' launched by Sir David Attenborough on May 22nd this year. Both highlight concerns over the erosion of our countryside. In fact the 'State of Nature' report laments the decline of 60% of species studied over recent decades. Much of this is due to habitat loss. Diverse environments such as ours are key areas to protect.



In the next few weeks we will be organising activities including a talk by a local barn owl group, an introductory bat walk and talk, an introduction to a survey you can help us with and a social walk to enjoy our environment. Dates and times will be sent out soon!

Many of us see the bats flying around our gardens and the park each night; there is a link below to a sunrise and sunset survey if you fancy getting up early or watching them at dusk. If you do then please also let us know your results!



We also, as you may know already, have our film underway. There is a good collection of film clips and photographs (including those on this newsletter) which will soon be edited and set to a soundtrack for release. If you have any pictures you would like to send in, please contact us. These pictures are of enormous importance as we now have great evidence of how abundant and varied the wildlife is here. Should the proposed development end up at

appeal in Westminster the intrinsic value of this site, its ecology and context in the wider landscape will be evident. As will our determination to protect it.



Whilst surveying or enjoying the nature surrounding us please remember it is very **important we keep off of the golf course** – especially the long unmanaged grass areas, preferably keeping to the country park perimeter or the public rights of way. Keeping off the golf course will ensure we do not damage key wildlife habitats.

It is especially important to keep dogs off the course please!

Why? We are seeing a **boom in wildlife since the heavy golf course management has been relaxed; we need this to continue undisturbed.** By staying off we are all helping to build the biodiversity and are increasing the ecological value of the site way beyond that of farmland. This will be a very strong argument against further development here in the future.





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Please do record any wildlife you have seen; we are working to compile a database of everything that lives here, so telling us about bats, birds or butterflies for instance would be perfect. Just log the time and dates and let us know! It is a great thing for the kids to do over the summer too, especially if the weather remains good. This is a magical place and a resource for the entire extended community to enjoy, so get out and take a look!

Lastly if you want to **join in with the group, you are very welcome.** We have been getting together most weeks and working on quite a few different projects, it has been an amazing experience for us all. As mentioned earlier, there will soon be a session to introduce those interested to a simple survey we have designed that you can take part in whenever you have time over the next year and beyond. This will help add to a database of valuable information and be something different to do.

Wychwood is a real jewel in the Cheshire East crown and we are working hard to keep it that way..... ***Keep an eye out for future events!***

Wychwood Wildlife Watch: wychwoodwildlifewatch@gmail.com

CW2 Community Group: cw2@wychwoodvillage.co.uk

Contacts



Bat survey http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/sunset_sunrise_survey.html
Butterfly survey <http://www.bigbutterflycount.org/>
Various surveys <http://www.opalexplornature.org/surveys>

