

## April 2020

After a magnificent start to the year with poster displays in the Hub, our Mass Unwrap event at the Co-op, our work preparing the School wetland site and planting over 2000 trees, it's a shame we can't now be out and about.

Our planned **village spring clean** with the Scouts at the end of March had to be cancelled and we should now be starting work on our village **wildflower sites**, digging out pernicious broad-leaved docks, planting wildflower plug-plants and arranging with Bradford Council exactly where not to cut the grass!



We were also gearing up to get our bee and butterfly recording under way from the beginning of this month, building on the impressive start we made, thanks to our volunteers, last year. Our new project on bat recording, due to start this year, is now also on hold. Just as sadly we have been forced to cancel our annual Environment Weekend scheduled for May 16/17<sup>th</sup>.

However, whilst some of our green spaces will have to look after themselves for a while, there's much we can continue to do, both as part of our allowed one-exercise session per day routine and in the confines of our homes and gardens.

The organised spring clean didn't take place but many of our volunteers have been going for walks with their litter pickers and some of our beck stewards, working in family pairs are taking their exercise by walking along the becks to remove rubbish washed down by the storms. Please don't work in the becks unless you're a beck steward but **there's nothing to stop you litter-picking!**



In the same vein, whilst we have cancelled our formal bee and butterfly reporting many of our volunteers will be walking along their allotted village transects on a regular basis for exercise and enjoyment, looking out for wildlife as they go.

This is a special time of year when queen bees are looking for nests, butterflies (especially small tortoiseshells and peacocks) are on the wing, curlews and other birds are busy, celandines, cowslips and golden saxifrages are flowering and hedgehogs are active.

So why not **enjoy spring on your walks** as much as possible, look out for wildflowers and wildlife and **keep a diary**. Even better send Diane Morris ([diane.barrie@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:diane.barrie@yahoo.co.uk)) your butterfly sightings, Chris Acomb ([candj.acomb@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:candj.acomb@blueyonder.co.uk))

your bird sightings, and Rick or Gill Battarbee ([r.battarbee@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:r.battarbee@ucl.ac.uk) ; [gillbattarbee@gmail.com](mailto:gillbattarbee@gmail.com)) your hedgehog and other mammal sightings.

We just need to know (i) **what you saw** and how many (but only if you're confident in your identification); (ii) **where it was** (as close as possible); (iii) the **date** (and time of day); along with any comment you'd like to make about **behaviour** (flying, feeding, nesting etc).

As long as we follow Government guidelines we're also allowed to go to our **allotments**. We have two allotments, one on the Newtown site, where we've just built a pond and one on the Lower Stamp Hill site that we use as a tree sapling nursery. If you'd like to visit and do some work as part of your daily exercise please contact Rick in the first instance.



Then, of course, there are so many things to be done **in the garden!** Do look out for your bumblebees, butterflies, birds, bats and hedgehogs and report your sightings as above to Diane, Chris, Gill and Rick.

And can I suggest that **if you have a lawn**, leave some (or all!) of it uncut to allow wildflowers to grow, flower and set seed. It might look like only grass but if it's anything like our lawn there will be quite a lot of wildflowers in there, not just daisies, dandelions and buttercups but probably things like vetch, speedwell, cuckoo flower and self-heal. **Let the flowers grow** to provide nectar and pollen for pollinators, and enjoy watching (and identifying) insects that stop by. If you don't like the idea of dedicating your whole lawn to wildflowers you could simply leave a few patches to grow on (see our two tear-dropped shaped patches on our lawn from last year).



Watching and enjoying nature is great therapy! Try it! It will help us through the coming weeks and months.