

## Thoughts of Wildlife ...what do they conjure up?

Deer, Hedgehogs, rabbits, birds, probably?

## But what about insects?

**Insects probably don't immediately spring to mind**

**BUT:**

**“So much of our food production and wildlife species are reliant on insects ...It is a really important topic”,** said Cathy Smith, Conservation Officer from Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) at a presentation at Stansfield Village Hall on November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The vital importance of insects was emphasised by Cathy who illustrated this fact by saying that raising just one brood of blue tits required something like 10,000 caterpillars and insects! Seed and suet feeders were very helpful for adult birds but insects were vital too, and some species like swifts and swallows were totally reliant on them.

Churchyards were really good habitat for wildlife, she said. The Old Chapel Graveyard at Stansfield was refuge not only for birds, mammals and insects, but also for some plant species like the wild primroses which make such a pretty sight in Spring, and the ancient yew trees. Apparently 80% of our nation's yew trees are in churchyards. Poslingford Churchyard is a haven for butterflies, and Stansfield CofE churchyard has some attractive pyramid orchids. Limestone headstones in churchyards are great for lichens.

Ancient woodlands, like the several in our Glem Valley are irreplaceable habitats, and Playing Field margins and roadside verges are also important...some communities in Suffolk are fostering verges, with some designated as roadside nature reserves by Suffolk County Council, with a warden appointed to look out for them, look out for the white marker posts! Some farmers around the old Wool Towns like Lavenham are joining together to enhance and connect wildlife habitats across farmland, with help from SWT experts.

Gardeners were encouraged to check for the presence of hedgehogs before lighting a bonfire and also with long grass to take a higher cut first, in case they, or any other creature might be hiding. Maybe also if possible to leave an area of garden untouched. Hares rest in shallow depressions in the ground, and so are vulnerable to agricultural machinery. Surprisingly there is no close season for the shooting of hares which are rated an important species for conservation.

Wildlife corridors were now recognised as important in planning exercises in order for animals to roam in search of food. Hedgehogs could roam 2 kilometres a night, said Cathy!

Cathy also spoke about the large projects being undertaken in Suffolk by the SWT with donations and volunteer help being vital. To find out more or to join this worthy group please go to [www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/join-us](http://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/join-us).

***This talk was one of a series of events organised by Stansfield Parish Council at which councillors are present to allow residents to interact with them and give their views on the village. The next will be a coffee morning and village tidy up on April 26<sup>th</sup>. Good Neighbour Scheme volunteers were thanked for providing and serving refreshments.***

**Next Stansfield Parish Council Meeting:  
Wednesday January 8<sup>th</sup>, at 7pm in the Village Hall**