



# Newsletter - Autumn / Winter Edition 2024

Welcome to the Autumn/Winter 2024 Friends of Polegate Jubilee Nature Reserve newsletter.

It seems like a very long time ago, but we ended the Summer with a very popular and successful blackberry picking event. Suggested uses for the blackberries from our visitors ranged from the usual pies, crumbles or jams to gin/vodka or syllabub! This was followed in September with another excellent bat walk in the field adjacent to the reserve, led by our good friend James from the Sussex Wildlife Trust. This was a repeat of last year's fabulous event. If anything, this year gave us even more bat activity as they flew around our heads! It was well worth it.



There has been plenty to do on the reserve with the mild wet weather encouraging plant growth well into autumn. For a while it seemed that every Monday the rain would come to stop

us working. Some areas became quite flooded, although fortunately not yet reaching the levels of last winter! At sunset (on the odd occasion when there was sun) it made for an atmospheric view (bottom left). In more recent weeks the path next to the railway land, which had more or less dried up, has become pretty flooded again - you definitely need your wellies!

Despite the weather, we managed to keep on top of the paths, making sure they remained clear. With autumn turning into winter the undergrowth is dying back enough that we no longer need to spend so much time cutting back along the paths each time we visit the reserve. We've now turned our attention to the bank at the front of the reserve, clearing the ground ready for our new community orchard area.



We will have four English apple saplings, two dessert - Claygate Pearmain and Charles Ross - and two cookers - Bramley's Seedling and our local variety, Alfriston. We expect to plant them in the new year, and hopefully come the early

spring they will be nestling amongst the snowdrops we planted last year!

The exciting development is that we finally had our official notice board erected next to the gates, courtesy of the Payback Team. We'll now be able to advertise any upcoming open days or events directly to passers-by. If anyone is willing and able to make some posters for us to put in the notice board, please let us know.



Some sad news - having watched the construction of the hornets' nest on the ceiling of our shed over a number of weeks with great interest, unfortunately the nest failed. We arrived one day to see the front of the nest had disintegrated and the hornets gone (or dead)! We think that the nest was started just too late in the season to be viable. Maybe next year...

We welcomed a group of the Polegate Ramblers to the reserve in October, who told us how much they enjoyed the visit. Our latest event took place in November. We welcomed Andy and Beverley from Strandliners to tell us about their work and test the water quality of the stream. Strandliners is an East Sussex community interest company run wholly by volunteers. They started out working along the coast surveying for plastic pollution (hence "Strandliners") and have also been working with Blue Heart on community projects testing for pollution in our rivers and streams.

For more information about Strandliners visit their website: [www.strandliners.org](http://www.strandliners.org)  
Blue Heart's website is: [www.blueheart.org.uk](http://www.blueheart.org.uk)

Andy and Beverley tested the stream for ammonia and phosphate. It was fascinating watching the precision testing process and we're very pleased to note that the stream was clear - no ammonia detected and minimal phosphate! We plan to hold another event with Strandliners in the Spring and may have the opportunity to become involved in doing our own monitoring using the same parameters.



**Upcoming Event : AGM**  
*6.00 pm on Monday 3 February  
at Polegate Town Council Offices.*

Please join us for a review of our activities over the year and to discuss future plans, including (re-)election of the committee.

We are interested in attracting new committee members to expand our small group, and welcome volunteers, not only to work on site, but to help us with other activities such as organising and publicising events, grant applications and any other one-off tasks. If you would like to find out more about the reserve or how to get involved, please email [polegatenaturereserve@gmail.com](mailto:polegatenaturereserve@gmail.com)

