



Newsletter - Spring Edition 2025

Welcome to the Spring 2025 Friends of Polegate Jubilee Nature Reserve newsletter.

The sun was shining brightly on the reserve earlier in April, and those of you who stopped by on our open day will have seen the spring blossom out on the Blackthorn (below).

The birds have been singing loudly, and there are plenty of insects and butterflies about, drawn by the warm sunny weather.



Firstly, let's get the bad news out of the way. No sooner had we put up our new noticeboard but someone went to the effort of putting a hole in the glass front, despite it being safety glass. We assume someone shot at it as we discovered a ball bearing inside the frame. We hadn't even had time to put any proper notices in it! So, at the moment the board is wrapped in a fetching blue tarpaulin while we work on getting it fixed.

Unfortunately, it looks like we'll have to resort to plastic instead of glass.



On the plus side, we want to embark on a major project this year to dig out a wildlife pond. We hope this will attract even more wildlife and provide an ideal habitat for frogs, newts and other water-dwelling creatures to increase the diversity on the site. It's well known that putting in a pond is the best thing you can do for wildlife. The pond will have a natural clay liner rather than using a plastic liner, and we expect it to dry up and fill with the seasons, just as certain other areas of the woods already do on a smaller scale! We've enlisted the help of 'Pete the Pond', a local pond expert (and featured on Sandi Toksvig's recent television programme about acquiring a woodland). We just need to persuade the town council to give us approval to go ahead!

We've had lots of fabulous video footage from the camera traps now set up around the reserve. We've seen all the usual suspects: foxes (more than one we think, but not at the same time), birds, squirrels,

mice... and cats! The area we're hoping to put a wildlife pond in was a particularly good spot to see them all. We aim to have the footage available whenever we have an open day or events and will try to get some still photos for future newsletters.

Not from one of our cameras, but just a chance picture of a Dunnock singing beautifully on the bramble:



Thanks to Steve, who's done a marvellous job planting the apple trees in the orchard area. They may be small at the moment, but we have high hopes for future harvests. We just need to make sure they don't get swamped by the fast-growing nettles and other vegetation before they've had a chance to get established.



Also this month we held a lichen walk and talk with lichen enthusiast Sim Elliott. Sim showed us the intricate structure of these tiny organisms and left us with some handouts about the lichens we have at the reserve. We have some copies in the shed for anyone to look at. We had no idea we had so many varieties - differences are often only visible under a lens. Nothing particularly rare, but interesting all the same, and good to know we

have the varieties we should have for our conditions and location.



Above - Large patch of Black Stone Flower - one of the more easily seen lichens!

And zoomed-in below- you can just see the black underside that gives it its name.



We may even find "our" lichens on Sim's website in due course, where he documents nature sites he has visited - www.simelliott.net

Upcoming Events

Visit our stall to talk to us about the reserve at the Polegate Town Council Annual Assembly at 7.00 pm on Monday 28th April in St. George's Hall, 110 Eastbourne Road, Polegate, BN26 5DF.

Look out for future events or open days, including our popular (now annual!) bat walk in the Autumn.

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

