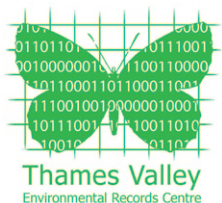


# Community and Parish Guide to Biodiversity



Berkshire  
Buckinghamshire  
Oxfordshire





# About this guidance

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BBOWT	Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust
CLP	Community Led Plan
CTA	Conservation Target Area
GIS	Geographic Information System
KWACS	Kirtlington Wildlife and Conservation Society
LGS	Local Geological Site
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
NERC Act	Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
ONCF	Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum
ORCC	Oxfordshire Rural Community Council
OWLS	Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study
OWP	Oxfordshire Woodlands Project
RSPB	The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
TOE2	Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment
TVERC	Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre
WCA	Wildlife and Countryside Act
WREN	Waste Recycling Environmental

## ABOUT THIS GUIDANCE

In this guide there are handy sections on carrying out practical conservation work, sources of funding, training and advice, and examples what other Oxfordshire communities have achieved.

There is a lot going on in Oxfordshire, so before you get started, do check if wildlife groups, environmental groups, or volunteering parties are already set up in your area – there may be like-minded people close to hand.

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Witney College STEPS group managing scrub (Wychwood Project)



Planting trees at Foxburrow Wood, Witney's new community woodland (Wychwood Project)

# Getting started

## What is biodiversity?

Biodiversity is all the life on earth, from animals and plants to bacteria and fungi. Biodiversity is anything and everything alive in our beautiful landscape of woodland, hedgerows, meadows, rivers and lakes. You can find biodiversity in urban cities and rural villages, from red kites soaring over the Chilterns to bumblebees on the village green.

## Why does biodiversity matter?

All life on earth has an intrinsic value which we, as our planet's dominant species, have a duty to protect. Although wildlife can exist without us, we cannot exist without wildlife, so by protecting wildlife we are improving life for ourselves. A natural environment rich in wildlife delivers numerous benefits to Oxfordshire's communities including improved health and wellbeing, higher property values and flood prevention.

## How can I help?

Wildlife needs protecting and habitats need managing all over Oxfordshire.

Communities can provide vital help by appreciating, protecting and enhancing biodiversity in their local area.

This guide will help you set up a local conservation group and involve the local community, contribute to a Parish or Neighbourhood Plan, find sources of help, information and funding so that you can ensure your efforts will result in a better local environment and contribute to Oxfordshire's Biodiversity Action Plan.

## Getting started

Deciding where to start can be a daunting prospect, but if you follow these steps, you'll soon be well on your way to helping Oxfordshire's biodiversity!

### The four steps to take are:

- 1) **Discover** what's in your area
- 2) **Protect** the most valuable areas
- 3) **Manage** areas to maintain and enhance biodiversity
- 4) **Create** new habitat for wildlife

*One of the best ways to get started is to find out about local groups where you can meet like-minded people.*



Launch of a display of children's work at the Trap Grounds (Friends of the Trap Grounds)

### SETTING UP A LOCAL GROUP

The Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum (ONCF) keeps a record and contact details of all the local groups working in Oxfordshire. Before you set up a new group, check out the ONCF website to find out about your nearest existing group. If there isn't already a group in your area, you can set one up.



Snake's-head fritillaries (Colin Williams)

### OXFORDSHIRE'S BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN (BAP)

Oxfordshire has a [Biodiversity Action Plan \(BAP\)](#) which has identified where the best places in the county are for focusing our efforts on protecting wildlife and improving habitats. These places are called Conservation Target Areas (CTAs).

This targeted approach helps to concentrate the limited resources of the local authorities, government agencies and conservation organisations in Oxfordshire who have all agreed to help implement the BAP. More information, including a map of the 36 CTAs is available on the [Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum \(ONCF\)](#) website.

Conserving and enhancing biodiversity is important, wherever it is. The CTA approach does not imply that areas outside the boundaries have no biodiversity or that biodiversity there should not be protected and enhanced. Communities have the opportunity to positively influence their local area wherever they are.

[The Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study \(OWLS\)](#) provides information on landscape character and biodiversity for the whole of Oxfordshire. OWLS can help people understand their local landscape. The 24 landscape types can be viewed at county, district or parish level.



# Step 1) Discover

## Discover what's in your area

You can find this out from aerial photographs, information from Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) and by carrying out field surveys. First, decide on the boundary of the area you'd like to look at; often this will be the parish boundary, which can be found on the [Oxfordshire County Council website](#).

## What you're looking for

Some areas of our landscape are valuable for biodiversity because they include a large variety of habitats. Often the more 'natural' or 'untidy' an area looks, the better it may be for wildlife.

## How to find out what is already known or recorded about your area

Before you get out and about, it is often useful to find out what is known or recorded about your area. There is a wealth of environmental information

about Oxfordshire available for you to research.

### Aerial photographs

Aerial photographs (from GoogleEarth) can give you an overview of the whole area and can be looked at without getting muddy boots! Although do remember that things may have changed on the ground since the photo was taken.

### Base Maps

[Ordnance Survey](#) produce maps at various scales which can be useful, and maps produced more than 50 years ago are copyright free. The [Bodleian Library](#) in Oxford provides a copying service for old maps.

You can access Ordnance Survey maps in paper format and on freely accessible computers at the [Oxfordshire History Centre \(OHS\)](#) in Cowley. The OHS also has large scale digital mapping from 1876–2011. Do check the copyright conditions of any maps you use.

Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) can also be used to map environmental information.

River Thames (Kerry Lock)



### The following landscape features are most valuable for wildlife:

- Unimproved pasture (grassland used for grazing)
- Rough grassland/scrub/derelict land
- Meadows
- Wetlands e.g. fens, marshes and reedbeds
- Woodlands (deciduous and ancient woodland)
- Hedgerows and scrub
- Native trees (especially old trees with holes and rotten branches)
- Rivers, streams and ditches
- Lakes and ponds
- Older buildings
- Allotments
- Churchyards
- Disused quarries
- Railway embankments and disused railway lines
- Old roads and green lanes
- Traditional orchards

### The following are less valuable (but everything has some value!)

- Arable fields (used for growing crops)
- Short mown grass (on verges or town/village greens)
- Plantation woodland, especially conifers
- Newer buildings and the areas around them

**THAMES VALLEY ENVIRONMENTAL RECORDS CENTRE (TVERC)**

Local Records Centres collect, collate and manage data about the environment in a given area. In Oxfordshire, the [Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre \(TVERC\)](#) holds information on sites, species and habitats. TVERC can provide you with a map showing all the environmental information held for your area and whether it's protected by law or planning policy. Further information can be found on their website or call 01865 815451 or email [tverc@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:tverc@oxfordshire.gov.uk).

West Hendred Parish - Ancient woodland indicator plant records





# Step 1) Discover

## What is already known or recorded

You can also access a range of information and maps about your local environment on the following websites:

### Natural Environment

- [Natural England publications](#), maps and data on the natural environment
- [Nature on the map](#): Maps about nature, including the location of designated sites
- [Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside \(MAGIC\)](#): Interactive map of environmental information
- [The Land Information Search](#): Map based tool on land designations or features
- [Ponds on the map](#): Priority Ponds and Important Areas for Ponds
- [Guidance on biodiversity and planning in Oxfordshire](#)
- [BBOWT nature reserves](#)
- [TVERC](#)
- [National Biodiversity Network Gateway](#)
- [Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study](#)

### Historic Environment

- [English Heritage National Heritage List](#)
- [Historic sites and buildings](#)
- [Historic Environment management](#)
- [Heritage information](#)
- [Heritage at Risk](#)
- [Guidance on heritage and community-led planning](#)

### Other Environment

- [Environmental data](#) at a local level
- [Public Registers](#) of environmental permits and licences
- [British Geological Survey map data](#)
- [Land Information System soils data](#)

### Rights of Way

Many people already know and use the rights of way where they live. These can also be a good starting point for carrying out surveys. If you want more information about where the Public Rights of Way and open access land are within your local area, and don't have access to your own Ordnance Survey maps, Oxfordshire County Council has produced an [interactive map of Oxfordshire's countryside](#) which shows Public Rights of Way, open access land and walks throughout the county. It is designed as a tool to help you explore the countryside and also make it easy to report rights

of way issues you may find. You can use the map to search by postcode or parish, measure the distance between two points, or use the feedback form to report any issues that you may encounter on a Public Right of Way. You can also access [PDF maps showing rights of way](#).

Oxfordshire County Council has produced a [Countryside Access – a parish guide](#) which explains the legislation around public rights of way and is designed to help local people get more involved with their local paths and identify and act on local issues, needs and opportunities.

## Mapping the information

Once you've gathered together all this information, you may want to put it all onto a digital map. You can then add the results of any field surveys onto the map too.

There are several types of open-source GIS software available from the internet which may be suitable, including [MapWindow](#), [GRASS GIS](#), [GeoTools](#) and [Quantum GIS](#). Alternatively, you could hand-draw information onto a paper map.

## Field surveys

Although you will have gathered some information on your local area from aerial photos, websites and TVERC, carrying out field surveys is a great way to get even more localised information. Many habitats are on private land so

you should obtain permission from the landowner before carrying out a survey.

For example, hedgerows can be surveyed to find out how many different types of shrubs and plants are growing within them and how old they might be. Several websites have good guidance on carrying out surveys for different types of habitat and wildlife.

- [Hedgerows](#)
- [Wild flowers](#)
- [Ponds](#)
- [Rivers, streams and ditches](#)
- [Bugs](#)
- [Birds](#)
- [Bats](#)
- [Butterflies](#)
- [Otters](#)
- [Dormice](#)
- [Moles](#)
- [Hedgehogs](#)
- [Stag beetles](#)
- [Orchards](#)
- [Wild mammals](#)

If you need help with identification, try the [iSpot website](#) which is aimed at helping anyone identify anything in nature.

Once you've registered, you can add an observation to the website and suggest an identification yourself or see if anyone else can identify it for you. You can also help others by adding an identification to an existing observation, which you may like to do as your knowledge grows. Your reputation on the site will grow as people agree with your identifications.



Identifying pond invertebrates in West Oxfordshire (Wychwood Project)



# Step 1) Discover

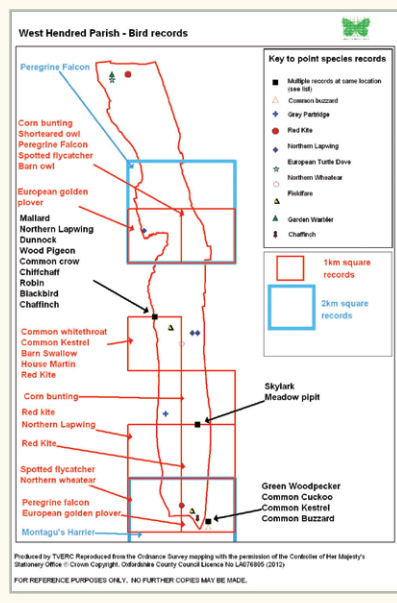
We have given you some suggestions of what information may be out there and where you can get help. Don't worry if you can't do it all – just work out what is important for your group and your area, and get out and have a look.

## Checklist...

- Are there any other like-minded groups or people in my area who can help?
- Find an OS 'base' map of my area
- Have a look online and see whether there are any wildlife designations or reserves
- (or, skip these steps and get a map from TVERC – a charge may be made)
- What else is known and recorded about my area – you may want to focus on what is most important to the group, local people, or special to the area.
  - ✓ Are we in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or Green Belt?
  - ✓ What does MAGIC have on my area?
  - ✓ What's recorded on Heritage Gateway?
  - ✓ What's in My Back Yard (Environment Agency)?
  - ✓ What does OWLS say about our area?
  - ✓ Is there anything in my local studies library?
  - ✓ Are there any surveys or species information available?
- Get out and look at the habitats and landscape of your area – take a copy of your maps and make notes.
- What is most important to the group?
  - ✓ Talks or information – just interested in what is there.
  - ✓ Practical work days?
  - ✓ Informed wildlife gardening?
  - ✓ Transforming or enhancing a particular site?
  - ✓ Informing a community led plan or other document?
  - ✓ Recording species and conserving them?
- Weigh up the information you have and what you already know and form your plan of action.
  - ✓ What are the most important habitats and other features in our area?
  - ✓ What is important to local people?
  - ✓ What can we do or change now?
  - ✓ What might take a bit longer to solve?
  - ✓ What do we need help with?
  - ✓ Which sites can we get to and work on? Who owns it? Have we got landowner permission?
  - ✓ What kinds of practical work can the group focus on?

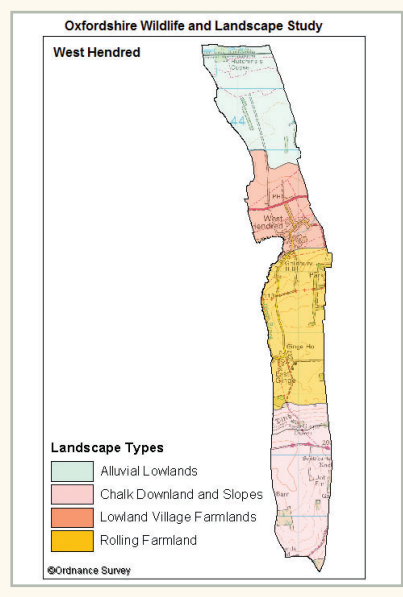
## Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC)

TVERC can provide you with a map showing all the sites, species and habitats in your area.



## Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)

The OWLS website provides information on the habitats and landscape character of each parish in Oxfordshire.



## Aerial photos

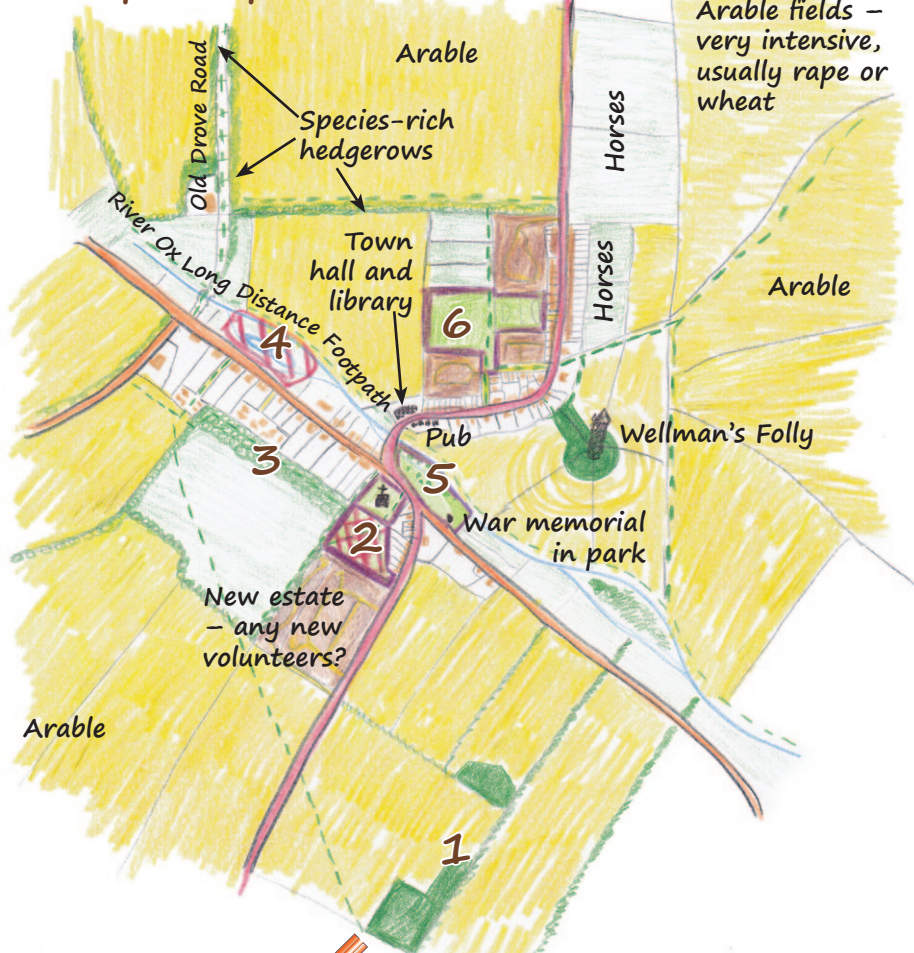
Aerial photos give a good overview of your area.





# Step 1) Discover

## Example map: Merton Coombe



## Map notes...

- 1 Merton Copse – any way of linking these two patches of woodland in the long term? Would the landowner like any help with managing the woodland?
- 2 Church Yard and Norman's Piece (Owned by Parish Council and a Local Wildlife Site). Can we get designation info or surveys? Interpretation panels old and uninspiring. Any keen botanists in village to re-survey? Church Yard – wonder if we could get the church interested in a Bio-Blitz? Maybe we could mow patches of the grass less often to help biodiversity?
- 3 Old species-rich hedgerow and woodland with big gardens backing onto it - great for birds. See if any keen twitchers in village? Wildlife gardening? Can we get anyone out to talk to village to see what we can all do? Any possible links with Merton Coombe Garden Club?
- 4 Docket's Fen – another local wildlife site – part of Tiney's farm. Bit overgrown – saw some Sycamore saplings in there. Think Mrs Thrupp knows Tiney – wonder if he'd accept a bit of help managing the fen? The group could help clear the sycamore etc.
- 5 Merton Coombe Memorial Park – owned by local council. Zone by the river could be better for wildlife – talk to council – any scope to create a riverside wildflower meadow?
- 6 Village sports grounds – only half used for sports – can we arrange for PC to mow less frequently where not used for cricket etc. and along hedgerows?

## Action list...

What do we want to do? Practical projects on local sites to improve biodiversity and regular work parties outdoors.

### Next steps for the group

- Get a list of species, and a map of designations and habitats from TVERC or online sources, and see if anything to add to map.
- Set up group more formally – we may need a constitution to fundraise for projects or insurance for work parties.

### Quick and easy wins

- Talk to Parish Council about mowing and cutting on land in the village to improve for biodiversity.
- See if Parish Council have any funding for new interpretation boards on Norman's Piece – or can we apply for a grant? can we get school involved?

### Medium-term goals

- Talk to local landowners - see if we can get a programme of work for the group's monthly work party.
- Parish leaflet to promote wildlife walks (sponsored by pubs, shops?)

### Longer term ambitions

- Create wildflower meadow in riverside park



# Step 2) Protect

## Protect the most valuable areas

Now you've found out what's in your area, you'll want to ensure it's protected or well-managed for biodiversity. Your information hunt from Step 1 should be able to tell you whether an area is already protected or not. You can skip to Steps 3 and 4 for suggestions on managing sites, or creating new biodiversity areas.

If your best sites are not already protected, you may be able to gain a local designation, such as a Local Nature Reserve, for your site.

If your town or parish council is writing a Parish or Neighbourhood Plan, your maps and field surveys can be added to the plan.

Town and parish councils also have responsibilities relating to biodiversity and planning, and a duty of care when working in sensitive habitats or where

there are protected species. Read more in the Biodiversity Duty section.

It is useful to know which pieces of legislation and planning policy offer protection to the natural environment.



### DECLARING A LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are a statutory designation made under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. Parish and town councils can declare LNRs if they have the powers to do so delegated to them by a higher local authority.

The town, parish or local authority must either own or lease the land to be designated, or have a nature reserve agreement with the owner.

LNRs should normally be:

- greater than 2 hectares in size;
- capable of being managed with the conservation of nature and/or the maintenance of special opportunities for study, research or enjoyment of nature as the priority concern;

AND

- of high natural interest in the local context;

OR

- of some reasonable natural interest and of high value in the local context for formal education or research;
- of some reasonable natural interest and of high value in the local context for the informal enjoyment of nature by the public.

The site will need a management plan, making it clear what the long term objectives are. This must include the costs for managing the reserve, how they will be funded and who is going to do the work.

Anyone interested in declaring a local nature reserve, who feels their site may meet both the practical and biodiversity criteria can gain further information and guidance from Natural England: [Local Nature Reserves in England: A guide to their selection and declaration \(NE301\)](#).

### THE ENVIRONMENT WITHIN COMMUNITY LED PLANNING

People are often passionate about their local environment, the places close to home where we go walking, riding, have some quiet time, watch wildlife, and mark the changing weather and seasons. Yet we sometimes forget how important it is when it comes to Community Led Plans.

A Community Led Plan (CLP) sets out a vision of how your community wants to develop and identifies the actions needed for you to achieve it. A CLP gives everyone the chance to say what they think about the issues affecting their community and how they would like it to develop. It celebrates the good things, highlights local needs and contains a detailed action plan to help the community meet those needs.

You can use your maps, information, and local knowledge to inform your community plans about biodiversity and the natural environment, and to agree actions and priorities that your community can achieve.

Oxfordshire Rural Community Council can provide further help and advice on CLPs.

### THE BIODIVERSITY DUTY: PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

#### Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC Act, 2006)

The [NERC Act](#) places a duty on all public bodies (including parish councils) to conserve biodiversity (section 40). The NERC Act also lists the habitats and species which it is most important to conserve in England (section 41, replacing S74 of the CRoW Act 2000).

Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum (ONCF) can come to your town or parish council and talk to you about how the NERC Act affects you, contact [Cynth Napper](mailto:cynth@oncf.org.uk) at [cynth@oncf.org.uk](mailto:cynth@oncf.org.uk) or call 01865 407034.

# Step 2) Protect

## PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY – A QUICK GUIDE

The most relevant legislation and policies are outlined below, but more comprehensive information is available from:

### **Biodiversity and Planning in Oxfordshire**

BBOWT, Oxfordshire County Council and TVERC have worked in partnership to produce a [Biodiversity and Planning guidance document](#). It uses maps to illustrate the biodiversity resource within Oxfordshire and combines planning policy with information about wildlife sites, habitats and species to help identify where biodiversity should be protected. The guidance also gives advice on opportunities for biodiversity enhancement.

### **Biodiversity Planning Toolkit**

The [Biodiversity Planning Toolkit](#) has been created by the Association of Local Government Ecologists (ALGE) in partnership with a wide range of conservation and planning organisations across the United Kingdom. The interactive landscape has been specially designed to show biodiversity and geodiversity features in their correct landscape settings along with a growing number of the most commonly encountered development types.

### **Designated Sites and Protected Species**

Some areas of land and some wildlife are legally protected from harm. You should ensure that any conservation work you carry out does not harm these sites or species.

#### *Designated sites – Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)*

SSSIs are the country's very best wildlife and geological sites. Some of these are internationally important for their wildlife, and designated as SACs. They include some of our most spectacular and beautiful habitats – including beech forest, wetland fen, juniper scrub and flower-rich meadows in Oxfordshire. SACs and SSSIs are protected by the [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations](#) (Habs Regs), the [Wildlife and Countryside Act](#) (WCA) and the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF). You can find out where these sites are located from the [MAGIC](#) website. Owners of these sites have a responsibility to manage these sites, and Natural England has produced [advice on management of SSSIs](#).

#### *Designated sites – Local Wildlife Sites*

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) are areas in Oxfordshire which include important and rare habitats and species. LWS create a better connected landscape of wildlife buffers, corridors and stepping stones so that the countryside is more resilient to the pressures of modern living and climate change. LWS are protected from harmful development through the planning system but as most sites are in private ownership, their long-term survival depends upon the interest and goodwill of their land managers and owners. You can find out where LWS are in your area by contacting [TVERC](#).

#### *Designated sites – Local Geological Sites*

Some geology sites are recognised for their scientific, educational, historic and aesthetic value and are protected from harmful development by legislation and planning policy. These protected sites include [geological Sites of Special Scientific Interest](#) (SSSIs) and Local Geological Sites.

Local Geological Sites (formerly known as RIGS – Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites) exhibit important geological and geomorphological features and are designated by Oxfordshire Geology Trust. You can find out where LGS are in your area by contacting [TVERC](#).

#### *Protected species*

Some species of wildlife are protected by legislation and planning policy because of their rarity or historical persecution. These species are called 'protected and notable species'. This legislation applies to people managing land, as well as to developers so you need to ensure that practical work you carry out doesn't break the law. Natural England has produced [advice on protected species](#).

### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Localism Bill**

#### *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) is a single, streamlined and easy to use document published in March 2012. New development plans must comply with the NPPF, in addition to any local plans and policies (see section on 'Biodiversity and Planning in Oxfordshire').

#### *The Localism Bill and Neighbourhood Planning*

The Localism Bill moves power from central government towards local people and encourages communities to get more involved in decisions about planning in their local area. The Bill allows local 'neighbourhoods' to draw up their own neighbourhood plan. The plan must be aligned with national policy and the local planning authority's strategic view for the area.

Neighbourhood plans are subject to a local referendum and if passed they have legal status forming part of the local authority's development plan. That means that planners have to consider your plan when making recommendations or decisions on planning applications in your area. Biodiversity is an important component of neighbourhood planning, and enhancing biodiversity can improve local ecosystem services, health and education.

As well as neighbourhood plans, the Localism Bill gives communities other powers such as the community right to build. Through this power, a community organisation will be able to bring forward local development (such as new homes and shops) provided it meets minimum standards and is supported by a local referendum. Further guidance is available from the [Environment Agency](#) and the [Woodland Trust](#).



# Step 3) Manage

## Manage areas to maintain and enhance biodiversity

Many biodiversity-rich spaces in your area are likely to be in private ownership, managed as part of a farm, business or other landholding. If you know the landowner he or she may be able to tell you what they already do for biodiversity. Some may even welcome help with managing their biodiversity sites. Others may just want to be left in peace however, and do remember that we need to respect differing opinions about how land is managed – there will be lots of different ideas and solutions!

With many areas, a small change in management can make a big difference. For example, mowing grassland less

frequently will result in more wildflowers for bees and areas for butterflies to breed.

## Management Plans

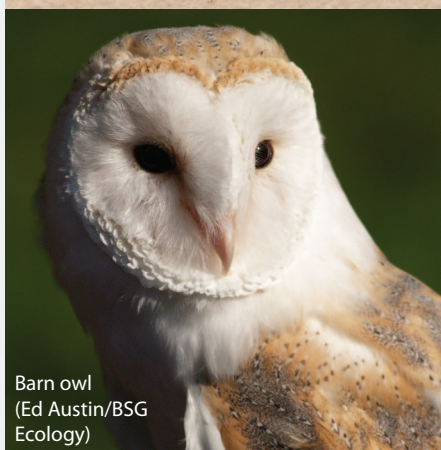
If you are managing an area of land, you're more likely to achieve your aims if they're set out clearly for everyone to see. Your whole group will need to know what you want, and how you're planning to accomplish it. The best way to do this is to create a management plan, which will also help you prioritise your work. The management plan will need to be more detailed for larger sites with lots of different habitats, and much simpler for small sites with only one habitat, and may include information on improving access so the local community can enjoy and appreciate the site.

The CMS consortium, based in Wales, has created a useful and detailed [guidance on how to write a management plan](#) or you may wish to use the [simple management plan template](#) on the Oxfordshire County Council website as a starting point. If you are managing a woodland site, you could use the MyForest [woodland management tools](#) which allow you to create a woodland management plan to help assess, record and manage woodland resources.

A wide range of organisations have information available on habitat management, these include [Natural England](#), [RSPB](#), [Forestry Commission](#) and [People's Trust for Endangered Species](#). Please also see the boxes on page 11 for information on specific habitats.

### MANAGING HABITATS

*Whilst in some cases wildlife will thrive when left alone and undisturbed, many of our most valuable habitats need ongoing management in order to survive. Often this will involve traditional methods like hay cutting and low intensity grazing on grasslands, or coppicing of woodlands.*



Barn owl  
(Ed Austin/BSG Ecology)

Wildflower Meadow (BSG Ecology)





# Step 4) Create

## Create new habitat for wildlife

Now you've identified where the most valuable areas are to protect, you may also have spotted some places which could be improved.

You will need the landowner's permission before you start any work, but there may be areas in your community such as village or town greens, churchyards, road verges or parks which are owned by organisations who may be happy for you to enhance the area, for example, parish or town councils, churches, or Oxfordshire County Council.

Development can be an opportunity to enhance biodiversity by creating new habitats within and around the built environment.

There is guidance available to manage and create the habitats below, and see the section on 'What other people have done' to find out how other communities in Oxfordshire have created wonderful wildlife spaces.

### WILDFLOWER MEADOWS



BSG Ecology

[Flora locale](#) promotes the restoration of wild plants and habitats. The online [Restoration Library](#) and seed supplier directory provide good quality and up-to-date information and case studies to help farmers, land managers and others to plan, design and restore habitats and landscapes including village greens. [The Grasslands Trust](#) also provides advice on creating wildflower meadows or restoring grasslands.

### CHURCHYARDS



Ian Stone

[Caring for God's Acre](#) is a conservation charity for churchyards and burial grounds and their website includes information on biodiversity in churchyards and involving the local community in their management; more is provided in their [Action Pack](#) which you can buy or download for free. [ChurchCare](#), a Church of England organisation, has also produced a guidance note on wildlife in your churchyard.

### WOODLAND



Nigel Phillips

The [Oxfordshire Woodland Project](#) can provide advice and assistance on planting new woodland, setting up a community coppice and managing existing woodland. The [Sylva Foundation](#) runs MyForest, which is a free service for woodland owners and wood users, providing tools for creating maps, management plans and an inventory for woodland, plus a directory of wood products for sale and wanted.

### HEDGEROWS



Wychwood Project

[Hedgelink](#) provides information on the wildlife you might find around hedgerows; why they are important and the legislation which protects them; how to include hedgerows in Farm Environment Scheme; using hedgerows for woodfuel; plus advice on the management and creation of hedgerows. The [Wychwood Project](#) has a hedgelaying group which undertakes regular hedge restoration in the Wychwood Forest Area.

### PONDS



Celia Haddon

[Pond Conservation](#) is a national charity (based in Oxford) with the aim of protecting freshwater wildlife, particularly focusing on ponds. Their excellent website has all the information you could ever need to know about ponds, including defining ponds, solutions to common problems, pond safety, what wildlife lives in ponds, how to create and manage ponds, and available sources of funding.



# Carrying out practical conservation work



Planting trees at Foxburrow Wood in Witney (Wychwood Project)

## Practical work

Once you've decided what you want to do, you need the people to do it! There may already be enough people in your conservation group to carry out the work, but if you need some extra help you could use the Green Gym or Oxford Conservation Volunteers. Green Gyms are groups of volunteers which carry out practical conservation work in the outdoors. These groups were initially established by The Conservation Volunteers, and are now run entirely by local volunteers.

You could also contact ONCF to find out if there's a group working near you who would be willing to work on your site, check out their website to find out about [your nearest existing group](#).

### Abingdon Green Gym

Abingdon Green Gym work sites in and around Abingdon-on-Thames, Oxfordshire. They undertake a wide variety of tasks including clearing overgrown vegetation, coppicing, reed cutting, and building and maintaining paths. They have events planned for most Saturday mornings throughout the year which generally run from 9.30am until 12.30pm.

### Biodiversity Action Team

The Biodiversity Action Team is The Conservation Volunteers' own volunteer group. It carries out work every Thursday and once a month on a Saturday, throughout the Thames Valley as far as Oxford and occasionally further afield too.

### Bure Park Green Gym

Bure Park Green Gym was established in

2006 and works in Bicester. They meet every Tuesday between 9.30am and 12.30pm, and sometimes on Saturdays.

### Earth Trust Practical Volunteers

Earth Trust volunteers help create habitats and manage land for conservation at Earth Trust sites in Little Wittenham, Wallingford, Didcot and Radley. Tasks are seasonal and include coppicing, tree planting, fencing, scrub clearance, natural land reclamation. There are two groups, one meets every Friday at the Earth Trust Centre, Little Wittenham between 9am and 4pm. The other meets on the first Thursday of every month at the Sandles Building, Thrupp Lake, Radley between 10am and 1pm.

### Oxford Conservation Volunteers

The Oxford Conservation Volunteers have been carrying out practical work conserving the wildlife and traditional

landscape of the Oxford area since 1977. The group organises work parties every Sunday (and some Saturdays) and undertakes a wide variety of nature conservation work. This can range from the traditional craft of hedge laying to the modern practice of fence building; from creating new hedges by tree planting to conserving chalk grassland habitats by scrub clearance.

### Sonning Common Green Gym

Sonning Common Green Gym was the first Green Gym to be established in the UK in 1999 and works in south Oxfordshire. Participants join in conservation activities such as tree planting, hedgelaying, installing fences, gateways and stiles, restoring downland, and creating nature areas.

### Wallingford Green Gym

The Wallingford Green Gym meets every Tuesday from 10am to 1pm. It carries out work on a wide variety of sites, from the outskirts of Didcot and throughout Wallingford, including the water meadows by the Thames, to the chalk downs and woodland of the Chilterns scarp.

### Woodstock and Chipping Norton Green Gym

The Woodstock and Chipping Norton (Woodchip) Green Gym was set up in 2007. They have a number of regular commitments, such as helping to maintain the water meadows in Woodstock and a newly planted community orchard in Chipping Norton.

## A CHANCE TO LEARN

*Local wildlife spaces offer valuable opportunities for people to enjoy and learn about the natural world. Involving children and families with their local habitats will help to ensure a better understanding of biodiversity in the wider community.*



Volunteers looking for pond wildlife at Hill End field studies centre (Wychwood Project)

# Funding sources

## Funding Sources

There are various grant schemes offering support for projects which improve the biodiversity of local habitats. You could also carry out your own fundraising activities.

Communities and Local Government (CLG) have produced a document which sets out the potential funding available to community and voluntary organisations. This will be updated regularly and is available to download from the [CLG website](#)

### Big Lottery Fund Awards for All grant

Up to £10,000 for projects which benefit the local community.

### Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

The foundation aims to improve people's quality of life, by funding projects which conserve the natural environment (amongst others).

### Gannett Foundation

The Gannett Foundation supports projects which take a creative approach to fundamental issues such as education and neighbourhood improvements, economic development, youth development, local problem solving, assistance to disadvantaged or disabled people, environmental conservation and cultural enrichment.

### Heritage Lottery Fund

Money from the National Lottery to sustain and transform parks, gardens and wildlife habitats.

### Landfill Communities Fund

Grants towards practical habitat management and improvements on sites within 10 miles of a landfill site. The main distributors in Oxfordshire are:

- [Grundon Waste Management](#) (distributed through TOE2)
- [WREN](#)
- [Viridor Credits](#)
- [Biffa Award](#)

### Local Authority Funding

Some local authorities have grants available to support biodiversity projects; contact your local District Council for further details.

- [Oxfordshire County Council](#)
- [Cherwell District Council](#)
- [South Oxfordshire District Council](#)

- [Vale of White Horse District Council](#)
- [West Oxfordshire District Council](#)
- [Oxford City Council](#)

### Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum (ONCF)

The ONCF's weekly email bulletin advertises funds available for biodiversity and community projects in Oxfordshire.

### Sustainable Development Funds

Grant schemes are available within the three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) that include some of Oxfordshire within their boundaries:

- [Chilterns AONB](#)
- [Cotswolds AONB](#)
- [North Wessex Downs AONB](#)

### The Chestnut Fund

An independent charity, making grants available to encourage and enable community groups to carry out conservation activities, which are administered by The Conservation Volunteers. There are start-up grants (up to £150) for groups in their first year of existence to enable them to begin practical work and cover administrative expenses and support grants (up to £350) for existing groups to purchase tools, equipment and training.

### The Co-operative Group

The Community Fund is allocated via a local area committee to local projects.

### The Oxfordshire Community Foundation

May support biodiversity projects which involve and benefit the local community.

### Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE2)

The Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE2) provide grants of up to £5,000 for wildlife surveys, advice on drawing up management plans for local wildlife habitats, practical habitat management work, creation of new wildlife habitats and support for setting up and resourcing local conservation groups.

### Woodland Grant Scheme

The Forestry Commission provide grants for landowners wanting to create new woodland and carry out sustainable woodland management.



Raking grass with the Cotswolds wardens at Enstone (Wychwood Project)



Young barn owl from a nestbox near Stanton Harcourt (Ian Anderson)



Farmer scattering seed at a field edge as part of a local BirdAid project (Wychwood Project)



# Help and advice



Learning to survey wildlife (BBOWT)

## TRAINING

There are many organisations in Oxfordshire which offer training; from species identification, to survey techniques and from practical conservation work such as coppicing, to volunteer management. Some of the organisations will train you for free if you volunteer with them. Check out the websites of these organisations for the latest training courses:

- [Ashmolean Natural History Society](#)
- [BBOWT](#)
- [Braziers Park](#)
- [Chilterns Conservation Board](#)
- [Cotswolds AONB](#)
- [Earth Trust](#)
- [Harcourt Arboretum](#)
- [North Wessex Downs AONB](#)
- [Oxford Botanic Gardens](#)
- [Oxford Brookes University – Centre for Ecology, Environment and Conservation](#)
- [Oxford Conservation Volunteers](#)
- [Oxford University – Department for Continuing Education](#)
- [Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action](#)
- [ONCF](#)
- [Oxfordshire Woodlands Project](#)
- [Pond Conservation](#)
- [RSPB](#)
- [Shotover Wildlife](#)
- [TVERC](#)
- [The Conservation Volunteers](#)
- [Withmead Nature Reserve](#)
- [Wychwood Project](#)

## Where you can get help and advice

There are several organisations in Oxfordshire which can provide you with a variety of help and advice.

### [Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust \(BBOWT\)](#)

BBOWT provides advice on planning and wildlife and on land management for the owners of Local Wildlife Sites. For more information please contact the Conservation Officer on 01865 775476 or [conservation@bbowt.org.uk](mailto:conservation@bbowt.org.uk).

### [Local Authority Advice](#)

Some local authorities will be able to offer advice, contact your local District Council for further details.

### [Earth Trust](#)

Earth Trust provides experiences and information to help individuals and communities make small changes to their everyday lives that affect our impact on the environment.

### [Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum \(ONCF\)](#)

Cynth Napper can come to your parish council and talk about how the NERC Act affects you. email [cynth@oncf.org.uk](mailto:cynth@oncf.org.uk) or call 01865 407034. ONCF can also provide guidance on Oxfordshire's Biodiversity Action Plan and Conservation Target Areas and information on Oxfordshire's Local Nature Partnership.

### [Oxfordshire Rural Community Council \(ORCC\)](#)

ORCC is a charity that brings together people who care about local village life, with a focus on 'helping people to help themselves'. ORCC provides advice and training on community planning, the rural economy and sustainability. Call 01865 883488 or email [orcc@oxonrcc.org.uk](mailto:orcc@oxonrcc.org.uk).

### [Oxfordshire Woodlands Project \(OWP\)](#)

OWP provides advice and assistance on planting new woodland, setting up a community coppice and managing existing woodland. Call 01865 815427 or email [owp@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:owp@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

### [Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre \(TVERC\)](#)

TVERC can provide you with a data search of the records they hold for your area (for which a donation is invited) to

highlight the sites and species of interest. TVERC can also digitise, process and manage your wildlife data and may be able to provide facilities for you to enter the data at their offices. TVERC can also provide an experienced TVERC surveyor to visit your site, record its wildlife interest and features, and provide you with specific management advice for your site. Call 01865 815451 or email [tverc@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:tverc@oxfordshire.gov.uk).

### [The Conservation Volunteers](#)

The Conservation Volunteers provides advice, support and assistance to groups of local people, community groups and town and parish councils that wish to carry out their own practical projects on local greenspaces. This includes insurance, tool and equipment loan, on-site training, funding advice, 'good practice' reviews, health and safety guidance and a national membership network. It can also provide small grants through The Chestnut Fund and help people to set up their own groups, register as a charity and plan their programmes of activities. It can also provide extra volunteers itself, through its Biodiversity Team or Conservation Holiday programme, to help you carry out your projects. Call 0118 956 8959 or email [oxfordshire@tcv.org.uk](mailto:oxfordshire@tcv.org.uk).

## EVENTS AND NEWS

Sign up to ONCF's weekly email bulletin to find out what's happening in the conservation world. The bulletin provides up to date information relating to Oxfordshire including events, walks, talks, jobs and offers of, or requests for, help. If you would like to receive the free Bulletin, then contact Cynth Napper: [cynth@oncf.org.uk](mailto:cynth@oncf.org.uk), 01865 407034



# What other people have done

Here are some examples of groups and projects around Oxfordshire. You can find more examples on the [ONCF website](#).

## LETCOMBE VALLEY COMMUNITY NATURE RESERVE

Every month groups of volunteers are busy at [Letcombe Valley Community Nature Reserve](#) ensuring this precious chalk stream habitat in the [North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty](#) is looked after for wildlife and local people to enjoy all year round.

The reserve straddles the parishes of Letcombe Bassett and Letcombe Regis, and volunteers come from these villages and further afield. In summer the popular open day attracts many families eager to explore their local nature reserve and spot wildlife in the hedgerows.

In 2010, the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) took on a 50-year management plan for the nature reserve under a lease from the Richmond Care Village at Letcombe Regis, which abuts the reserve. Since then, dozens of keen volunteers have opened up an old nature trail and made a new wooden bridge (designed by longstanding volunteer Eddie Jenkins) to create a circular route accessible for families with pushchairs. Thanks to an [Awards for All](#) grant from the Big Lottery Fund, some paths in the nature reserve were finished with a special grit dressing, and a bench gives visitors a place to sit and enjoy lovely views across the valley.



Letcombe Open Day fun  
Wendy Tobitt/BBOWT

## NORTH LEIGH COMMUNITY PONDS

A well-designed pond that attracts lots of wildlife can be a joy to observe during the changing seasons. With a little help and lots of enthusiasm, communities can achieve a lot for the wildlife of their local pond.

North Leigh residents have taken on the challenge of increasing the freshwater wildlife in their local patch and have joined [Pond Conservation](#) and the North Leigh Wildlife Group to manage their ponds for wildlife. With help from Pond Conservation ecologists and landfill tax funding from [TOE2](#), residents are learning how to identify and protect freshwater species.

The project got off to a good start when local school children discovered that both smooth newts and palmate newts were breeding in their school pond. Rare species will receive a boost from this project through the development of ponds on North Leigh Common and creation of new ponds within the parish. It is hoped that beautiful, aquatic plants such as water-violet and marsh stitchwort will thrive alongside pond-loving creatures such as the tiny pipistrelle bat, whose diet is composed largely of aquatic insects, and the song thrush, which feeds on invertebrates found in damp soils at the pond edge.



Investigating pondlife  
Pond Conservation



# What other people have done

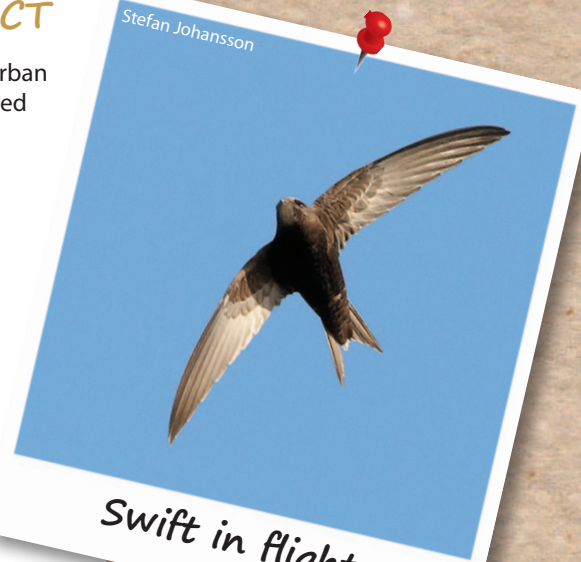
## CHERWELL SWIFTS CONSERVATION PROJECT

**S**wifts are summer visitors to the UK which that enliven even the grimest the urban landscape with their spectacular acrobatic flight and calls. Information collected by the British Trust for Ornithology shows that the number of swifts breeding in Britain has declined considerably over the last 15 years.

Much of this decline is caused by the loss of nesting sites, due to building repairs or even simple re-pointing of brickwork, which means that swifts can no longer access traditional sites. So Chris Mason from the Kirtlington Wildlife and Conservation Society (KWACS) started the [Cherwell Swifts Conservation Project](#), with support from Cherwell District Council.

The aim of the project is to protect existing swift nesting sites and maintain a widespread distribution of swifts throughout Cherwell. Local people have been encouraged to record the places where swifts nest so that existing nest places sites can be looked after, new ones designed and built into eaves and swift nest boxes can be installed.

The project has now been gathering information for five years, identified about 150 buildings where swifts nest and has a network of over 30 enthusiasts who keep an eye on their local swifts and their nest places. Contact Chris Mason for more information [mason@cando.eclipse.co.uk](mailto:mason@cando.eclipse.co.uk).



Swift in flight

Wychwood Project



Newly planted oak

## WOODSTOCK 900: CREATING A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY WOODLAND

**C**reating community woodlands are a fantastic way of enhancing the local biodiversity and landscape, can be a source of sustainable energy for the community and provide a lasting legacy for future generations.

In 2009, to celebrate the 900th anniversary of the Blenheim Palace wall, Sustainable Woodstock worked with the landowner (the Duke of Marlborough) and the Oxfordshire Woodland Project (OWP) to plant one tree for each year of the wall's existence.

Woodstock Community Woodland was designed by OWP, who also managed the community planting of the woodland using tree-shelters and recycled mulch from nearby Worton Farms.

The beautiful woodland contributes to the life of the whole community and was complimented in Woodstock in Bloom. The firewood copse will be managed cyclically to increase biodiversity and provide carbon neutral fuel for local people.

The younger generations enjoy the woodland as a Forest School site and glades will be used for Scout and Guide activities including a shelter-raising competition. See [http://www.sustainablewoodstock.co.uk/community\\_woodland.htm](http://www.sustainablewoodstock.co.uk/community_woodland.htm) for more information.



1,000-year old oak



# What other people have done



## KIRTLINGTON CHURCHYARD

**C**hurchyards are often even older than the churches which sit within them, because early Christian churches were often built into or adjacent to pre-Christian sites of worship. They can include ancient yew trees, hedgerows, flower-rich grassland and lichens on old stone walls and gravestones, not to mention bats in the belfry!

Kirtlington Wildlife and Conservation Society (KWACS) was formed in 1997 to look after the local habitat and wildlife in Kirtlington. There are nine committee members and about a dozen local volunteers. In 1997 KWACS and agreed with the Church Council to manage two designated areas of the churchyard, which are managed rather similarly to a traditional hay meadow.

Spring and summer-flowering plants are allowed to flower and seed before mowing is carried out in late July. Cuttings are allowed to dry out over a few days, shed their seeds and the hay is then raked up. A wild boundary is left along the wall and hedgerow for butterflies and other insects to hibernate and recolonize; and yellow rattle has been introduced to reduce the dominant grass and leave room for the flowers.

Records show an increase in flowers and birds since the work began – good news for wildlife and excellent news for KWACS, showing their hard work has paid off!



## TRAP GROUNDS REEDBED

**S**mall sites in urban areas can be teeming with wildlife and provide a tranquil place for people to escape the hustle and bustle. The Friends of the Trap Grounds are a group of about 100 local volunteers in north Oxford who have reclaimed the Trap Grounds (a former rubbish tip) from dereliction and created a haven for wildlife, which they now manage in partnership with the owner, Oxford City Council.

The Friends involve local people in the site by organising bat and glow-worm expeditions, dawn-chorus bird-song walks, and occasional moth-trapping nights. They also run a weekly after-school environment club for children aged 7–10 with at the local primary school next door.

These lucky children have tracked and identified animal prints in the snow, mapped birds' nests, planted saplings, built shelters for small mammals and reptiles, made a worm observatory out of recycled materials, learned to use binoculars for bird watching, and (most popular of all) collected plants and insects to study under microscopes in the classroom. Next year they will be able to do pond dipping in the newly created pond; a wonderful way to inspire children and their parents to care for their environment in the future.





# Useful website links and contacts

Further information		
Organisation	Information	Website
Bat Conservation Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Take part in national bat surveys</li> <li>- Information on bats</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.bats.org.uk">www.bats.org.uk</a>
Bodleian Library	Historic maps	<a href="http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/bodley">www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/bodley</a>
Butterfly Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Take part in national butterfly surveys</li> <li>- Information on butterflies</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.butterfly-conservation.org">www.butterfly-conservation.org</a>
Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location of and information about BBOWT nature reserves</li> <li>- Advice on planning and wildlife for the public</li> <li>- Advice on land management for the owners of Local Wildlife Sites</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.bbowt.org.uk">www.bbowt.org.uk</a>
Biodiversity Planning Toolkit	Interactive guide to biodiversity and planning	<a href="http://www.biodiversityplanningtoolkit.com">www.biodiversityplanningtoolkit.com</a>
British Geological Survey	Geological survey map data	<a href="http://www.bgs.ac.uk">www.bgs.ac.uk</a>
British Trust for Ornithology	Source of bird records and a way for communities to upload/store their own data	<a href="http://www.bto.org">www.bto.org</a>
Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)	Guidance on planning regarding landscape including hedgerow surveys	<a href="http://www.cpreoxon.org.uk">www.cpreoxon.org.uk</a>
Caring for Gods Acre	Managing churchyards and churches for biodiversity	<a href="http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk">www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk</a> <a href="http://www.churchcare.co.uk">www.churchcare.co.uk</a>
Cherwell District Council	Guidance on the management and funding of parish sites, the production of parish/neighbourhood plans, and the designation of local nature reserves	<a href="http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/naturalenvironment">www.cherwell.gov.uk/naturalenvironment</a>
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interactive map of environmental information</li> <li>- Hedgerow survey handbook</li> </ul>	<a href="http://magic.defra.gov.uk">magic.defra.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications">www.defra.gov.uk/publications</a>
Department for Communities and Local Government	National Planning Policy Framework	<a href="http://www.communities.gov.uk">www.communities.gov.uk</a>
Earth Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location of and information about Earth Trust nature and wildlife sites</li> <li>- Information for schools, how to start a green business, connecting families with nature</li> <li>- Traditional rural skills courses, wildlife walks and talks</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.earthtrust.org.uk">www.earthtrust.org.uk</a>
Environment Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What's in your backyard? Access to environmental data at a local level</li> <li>- Public Registers of environmental permits and licences</li> <li>- Neighbourhood Planning</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk">www.environment-agency.gov.uk</a>
English Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Finding and managing your local historic environment</li> <li>- Data on the historic environment (Heritage Counts, Heritage at Risk)</li> <li>- Guidance on heritage and community-led planning</li> </ul>	<a href="http://list.english-heritage.org.uk">http://list.english-heritage.org.uk</a> <a href="http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk">www.heritagegateway.org.uk</a> <a href="http://www.helm.org.uk">www.helm.org.uk</a>
Flora Locale	How to create and manage wildflower meadows and verges	<a href="http://www.floralocale.org">www.floralocale.org</a>
Forestry Commission	Woodland land designations and features on the Land Information Search	<a href="http://www.forestry.gov.uk">www.forestry.gov.uk</a>
Geo Tools	Open Source GIS software	<a href="http://www.geotools.org">www.geotools.org</a>
GRASS GIS	Open Source GIS software	<a href="http://grass.fbk.eu">http://grass.fbk.eu</a>
Grasslands Trust	How to create and manage wildflower meadows and verges	<a href="http://www.grasslands-trust.org">www.grasslands-trust.org</a>
Hedgelinek	Hedgerow survey, creation, management and legislation	<a href="http://www.hedgelinek.org.uk">www.hedgelinek.org.uk</a>
Ispot	Species identification	<a href="http://www.ispot.org.uk">www.ispot.org.uk</a>
Land Information System	Soils data	<a href="http://www.landis.org.uk">www.landis.org.uk</a>
Mammal Society	Guidance on the conservation of mammals	<a href="http://www.mammal.org.uk">www.mammal.org.uk</a>
MapIt GIS Information	Shows political boundaries and historical areas for free in your web browser	<a href="http://mapit.mysociety.org/">http://mapit.mysociety.org/</a>
MapWindow	Open Source GIS software	<a href="http://www.mapwindow.org">www.mapwindow.org</a>
National Biodiversity Network	Wildlife records	<a href="http://www.nbn.org.uk">www.nbn.org.uk</a>
National Archives	Full text of the following legislation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006</li> <li>- Conservation of Habitats &amp; Species Regulations 2010</li> <li>- Wildlife &amp; Countryside Act 1981</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk">www.legislation.gov.uk</a>
Natural England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guidance on sites of special scientific interest &amp; protected species</li> <li>- Maps about nature, including the location of designated sites</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.naturalengland.org.uk">www.naturalengland.org.uk</a> <a href="http://www.natureonthemap.org.uk">www.natureonthemap.org.uk</a>
Open Air Laboratories (OPAL)	How to undertake various wildlife surveys	<a href="http://www.opalexplornature.org">www.opalexplornature.org</a>
Ordnance Survey	Base maps	<a href="http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk">www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk</a>
Oxfordshire Amphibian and Reptile Group (OxARG)	Information on the frogs, toads, newts, snakes and lizards found in Oxfordshire	<a href="http://www.oxfordshire-arg.org.uk">www.oxfordshire-arg.org.uk</a>
Oxfordshire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guidance on biodiversity and planning</li> <li>- Interactive map of Oxfordshire's rights of way</li> <li>- PDF maps showing rights of way</li> <li>- Parish Guide to Countryside Access</li> <li>- Parish, District and County boundaries.</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk">www.oxfordshire.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://mymaps.oxfordshire.gov.uk/lvinternet">http://mymaps.oxfordshire.gov.uk/lvinternet</a>
Oxfordshire Geological Trust	Information on local geology	<a href="http://www.oxfordshiregt.org">www.oxfordshiregt.org</a>

# Useful website links and contacts

Further information continued....		
Organisation	Information	Website
Oxfordshire History Centre	Base maps and historic maps	<a href="http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oro">www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oro</a>
Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum (ONCF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guidance on Oxfordshire's Biodiversity Action Plan</li> <li>- List of existing Local Conservation Groups</li> <li>- Case studies of what local groups have done</li> <li>- Sign up to the monthly bulletin</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.oncf.org.uk">www.oncf.org.uk</a>
Oxfordshire Rural Communities Council	Advice and guidance for rural communities	<a href="http://www.oxonrcc.org.uk">www.oxonrcc.org.uk</a>
Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)	Descriptions and locations of different landscape types in Oxfordshire	<a href="http://owls.oxfordshire.gov.uk">http://owls.oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>
Oxfordshire Woodlands Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Woodland management plans</li> <li>- Coppicing, pruning, community woodlands</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/woodlandproject">www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/woodlandproject</a>
Oxfordshire Wychwood Project	Managing and enhancing the environment in the historic Wychwood Forest	<a href="http://www.wychwoodproject.org">www.wychwoodproject.org</a>
People's Trust for Endangered Species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How to undertake various wildlife surveys</li> <li>- Information on wildlife</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.ptes.org">www.ptes.org</a>
PlantLife	Take part in the national wildflower count.	<a href="http://www.plantlife.org.uk">www.plantlife.org.uk</a>
Pond Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location of ponds</li> <li>- How to survey, create and manage ponds</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.pondconservation.org.uk">www.pondconservation.org.uk</a>
Quantum GIS	Open Source GIS software	<a href="http://www.qgis.org">www.qgis.org</a>
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information on birds and other wildlife</li> <li>- Advice on managing habitats, protecting sites and planning</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.rspb.org.uk">www.rspb.org.uk</a>
Sylva	Managing woodlands for ecological and economic benefits	<a href="http://www.sylva.org.uk">www.sylva.org.uk</a>
Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC)	Information on and the location of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local Wildlife Sites</li> <li>- Local Geological Sites</li> <li>- Notable and protected species</li> <li>- Conservation Target Areas</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.tverc.org">www.tverc.org</a>
The Conservation Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How to set up a local group</li> <li>- How to carry out practical conservation work</li> <li>- Green Gyms</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.tcv.org.uk">www.tcv.org.uk</a>
Woodland Trust	Neighbourhood Planning and woodlands	<a href="http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk">www.woodlandtrust.org.uk</a>

Funding sources			
Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment	<a href="http://www.trustforoxfordshire.org.uk">www.trustforoxfordshire.org.uk</a>	Cherwell District Council	<a href="http://www.cherwell.gov.uk">www.cherwell.gov.uk</a>
WREN	<a href="http://www.wren.org.uk">www.wren.org.uk</a>	South Oxfordshire District Council	<a href="http://www.southoxon.gov.uk">www.southoxon.gov.uk</a>
Viridor Credits	<a href="http://www.viridor-credits.co.uk">www.viridor-credits.co.uk</a>	Vale of White Horse District Council	<a href="http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk">www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk</a>
Biffa Award	<a href="http://www.biffa-award.org">www.biffa-award.org</a>	West Oxfordshire District Council	<a href="http://www.westoxon.gov.uk">www.westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Chilterns AONB	<a href="http://www.chilternsaonb.org">www.chilternsaonb.org</a>	Oxford City Council	<a href="http://www.oxford.gov.uk">www.oxford.gov.uk</a>
Cotswolds AONB	<a href="http://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk">www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk</a>	Oxfordshire Community Foundation	<a href="http://www.oxfordshire.org">www.oxfordshire.org</a>
North Wessex Downs AONB	<a href="http://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk">www.northwessexdowns.org.uk</a>	The Chestnut Fund	<a href="http://www.tcv.org.uk">www.tcv.org.uk</a>
Oxfordshire County Council	<a href="http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk">www.oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>	DCLG	<a href="http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/greenspacefunding">www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/greenspacefunding</a>

Training providers			
Ashmolean Natural History Society	<a href="http://www.anhso.org.uk">www.anhso.org.uk</a>	ONCF	<a href="http://www.oncf.org.uk">www.oncf.org.uk</a>
BBOWT	<a href="http://www.bbowl.org.uk">www.bbowl.org.uk</a>	Oxfordshire Rural Community Council	<a href="http://www.oxonrcc.org.uk">www.oxonrcc.org.uk</a>
Braziers Park	<a href="http://www.braziers.org.uk">www.braziers.org.uk</a>	Oxford University – Department for Continuing Education	<a href="http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses">www.conted.ox.ac.uk/courses</a>
Chilterns Conservation Board	<a href="http://www.chilternsaonb.org">www.chilternsaonb.org</a>	Pond Conservation	<a href="http://www.pondconservation.org.uk">www.pondconservation.org.uk</a>
Earth Trust	<a href="http://www.earthtrust.org.uk">www.earthtrust.org.uk</a>	RSPB	<a href="http://www.rspb.org.uk">www.rspb.org.uk</a>
Harcourt Arboretum	<a href="http://www.harcourt-arboretum.ox.ac.uk">www.harcourt-arboretum.ox.ac.uk</a>	Shotover Wildlife	<a href="http://www.shotover-wildlife.org.uk">www.shotover-wildlife.org.uk</a>
North Wessex Downs AONB	<a href="http://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk">www.northwessexdowns.org.uk</a>	TVERC	<a href="http://www.tverc.org">www.tverc.org</a>
Oxford Botanic Gardens	<a href="http://www.botanic-garden.ox.ac.uk">www.botanic-garden.ox.ac.uk</a>	The Conservation Volunteers	<a href="http://www.tcv.org.uk">www.tcv.org.uk</a>
Oxford Brookes University – Centre for Ecology, Environment & Conservation	<a href="http://bms.brookes.ac.uk/ceec">http://bms.brookes.ac.uk/ceec</a>	Withymead Nature Reserve	<a href="http://www.withymead.co.uk">www.withymead.co.uk</a>
Oxford Conservation Volunteers	<a href="http://www.ocv.org.uk">www.ocv.org.uk</a>	Woodlands Project	<a href="http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/woodlandproject">www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/woodlandproject</a>
Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action	<a href="http://www.oxnet.org.uk">www.oxnet.org.uk</a>	Wychwood Project	<a href="http://www.wychwoodproject.org">www.wychwoodproject.org</a>





### **Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)**

The Lodge, 1 Armstrong Road, Littlemore, Oxford OX4 4XT  
01865 775476  
[conservation@bbowt.org.uk](mailto:conservation@bbowt.org.uk)  
[www.bbowt.org.uk](http://www.bbowt.org.uk)

### **Oxfordshire County Council**

Signal Court, Old Station Way, Eynsham, Oxon OX29 4TL  
01865 810226  
[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/naturalenvironment](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/naturalenvironment)

### **Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum (ONCF)**

Manor House, Little Wittenham, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RA  
01865 407034  
[bap@oncf.org](mailto:bap@oncf.org)  
[www.oncf.org.uk](http://www.oncf.org.uk)

### **Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC)**

Signal Court, Old Station Way, Eynsham, Oxon OX29 4TL  
01865 815451  
[tverc@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:tverc@oxfordshire.gov.uk)  
[www.tverc.org](http://www.tverc.org)

**Berkshire  
Buckinghamshire  
Oxfordshire**

