

CCPC Environment Group Action Notes
In Person Meeting 16 March 2023 7.30pm
Mortons Manor Hotel

Present – Helen, Richard, David, Luke and 14 members of the public.
Apologies received from 2 people.

1. Introductions

Helen welcomed everyone, introduced herself and then introduced our first speakers, Richard Hughes and Christine Hill

2. Speakers Richard Hughes and Christine Hill, on the Corfe Common Transect

The evening's talks started with Richard Hughes and Christine Hill, who survey the Corfe Common Transect. Richard began by describing the area covered by the transect, which is a botanically rich area of approx. 400 acres, and then explaining that their survey results contribute to the UKBMS (Butterfly Monitoring Scheme). The data in this database is used to guide environmental decisions, so Richard and Christine take their responsibilities to ensure the information they provide very seriously.

Richard then went on to entertain and inform us with a series of photos, providing a description of each and, for butterflies, commenting on how they are faring both nationally and locally on the common. His extensive collection of butterfly photos included over 30 species, ranging from the familiar "cabbage" white, (two butterflies, the Large White and Small White), Painted Lady, Peacock, and Brimstone, to the lesser known Essex, Small and Dingy Skippers.

Other flora and fauna were also included – did you know there are Green Winged and Heath Spotted orchids on Corfe Common? As well as animals such as hares, common snipe, adders, roe deer, kestrels and flocks of up to 30 linnets!

At the end of the talk, there was an interesting Q&A session, when it was explained that butterflies are a good indicator of the health of populations of other insects that are much more difficult to survey.

3. Martin Warren, a Crash Course on Garden Butterflies

Martin Warren then gave a Crash Course on Garden Butterflies. He began by explaining that there are 5 main families of butterflies, including Whites, Blues, Browns, Skippers and Vanessaids, which includes, for example, the Peacock and Tortoiseshell.

He then spoke about why butterflies visit gardens - to drink nectar or to lay eggs. Some good nectar plants include buddleia, marjoram, scabious, ice plant (sedum) and brambles. Flowers to grow for spring nectar include Dame's Violet (Hesperis), wallflowers, bluebells and dandelions. Plants to grow for butterflies to lay eggs on include nettles for Red Admirals; Alder or Purging Buckthorn for Brimstones; Holly and Ivy for the Holly Blue; Dame's Violet or Honesty for Orange Tips and of course, cabbages for the Large and Small White! If you have a bigger garden, an area of long grass is also beneficial for butterflies.

In terms of garden design, Martin explained that butterflies need sun, shelter, structure and variety, and finally recommended information from Butterfly Conservation.

4. Sarah Spurling, Sustainable Swanage's work creating new surveys around Swanage

Sarah Spurling then spoke about Sustainable Swanage's work creating new surveys around Swanage, including at Prospect Green and the Downs.

Sustainable Swanage initially set up the surveys to involve people and give them a connection with nature, and in 2021 trained 15 volunteers to identify butterflies. The surveys also offer an opportunity for mindfulness.

Sarah explained that while the Transect at the new Local Nature Reserve at the Downs and Peveril Point has been surveyed for the last two years, it hasn't yet been registered with the UKBMS, to allow the route to be trialled and tweaked prior to this. The Transect is split into sections covering different habitats, and in 2022 it was surveyed in 22 of 26 weeks between 1st April and 30th September.

The surveys mean the site is monitored every week, with significant sightings of flowers and other insects recorded, and as volunteers walk around with a clipboard and butterfly guide, people ask them what they are doing, and so word_ spreads about the butterfly surveys.

5. Feedback on last EG Meeting actions, next meetings and Energy event

Seed Circle

Unfortunately Sharon had to leave before we discussed the seed circle, but David advised the ex-Brownie shed is suitable for storing seeds. Richard has contacted Sharon about helping with the Seed Circle Design work (Seed Circle logo design and engagement with the school / the public in a competition to design pictures of plants / veg for the envelopes).

Jenny mentioned that we need people to save the little silica gel packets that come with various products to keep them dry. **ACTION** All to save these and bring in to future meetings.

For information – Church Knowle Reading Room has a seed swap.

Church Lawns / Cemetery Biodiversity Improvements

David advised he hoped the No Mow areas would continue at St Edwards.

Last month it was suggested that No Mow and other environmental improvements be carried out at the East Street cemetery. Helen advised she had followed this up and was advised it hadn't been deconsecrated. She said she agreed that the trees needed some management, but that an initial task might be to complete a plant survey as we did at St Edwards. Christine said she might know someone who could help with the surveys. **ACTION** Christine to liaise with David.

Post Meeting Note – the person to contact about East Street Cemetery is Trevor Ford, Regional Property Surveyor, email trevor.ford@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk or phone [01305 252306](tel:01305252306).

Helen would also like God's Acre to be surveyed. **ACTION** Helen to contact Michelle to see if we can progress this.

April event about Energy – Helen advised that she hadn't made much progress so far on holding a joint Purbeckwide event. It was suggested that this would be a good event to tie in with either the Planet Purbeck Festival or the Dorset CAN Open Greener Homes, so it was agreed to postpone this until the Autumn to allow sufficient time to plan this effectively and tie in with Open Greener Homes.

ACTION Luke to ask Sharon if she would like to present the film about Seed Circles. If not **ACTION** Helen to contact Dorset Waste Services if someone would come and speak to us.

May event about foraging - Luke advised Guiseppe from Cat's Eye Cottage would be pleased to lead an event. This would need to be in spring when the plants suitable for foraging can be found, so it is proposed we hold an outdoor event in April or May, depending on when the Energy event is held.

May Fair

Luke advised that he is working on the date of the May Fair on 29th May, and other core team members are unable to commit to helping for various reasons, so it is unlikely that we can run a stall. To be discussed further between core team members.

June Meeting To be decided.

July Meeting To be decided.

August event at St Edwards Church Fair – Agreed we will have a stall again, which David has booked.

September / October – Energy event

6. Sharing your ideas, and AOB

David raised that the National Wildflower Centre, based at the Eden project, will be providing all libraries with packets of a specially selected wildflower seed mix which will be available to hand out to customers as part of the Coronation celebration, and wondered if the Eg might be able to get involved. After discussion it was agreed that we would wait for the next library meeting, but that at least we would advertise this via email and Facebook.

Martin advised that he is hoping to run some more moth traps at Sandy Hills Arts this year, and will let us know dates so we can share these.

7. Dates of next meetings and events

- **20th April** – To be advised
- **18th May** – Outdoor event - Foraging with Guiseppe
- **15th June** – To be advised
- **20th July** – To be advised
- **10th August** – St Edwards Church Fair stall

CCPCEG Core Group members; Josey, Helen, Tom, Luke, David, Richard

Contact us via the clerk (Michelle) at: environmentgroup@corfecastleparishcouncil.gov.uk