



Summer 2026 newsletter

Welcome to the **summer 2026 edition** of our biodiversity newsletter!

In this issue:

- Progress on our Biodiversity Action Plan – Year 2
- Local Nature Recovery Strategy launched
- Wilder Communities – free trees, hedgerows and wildflower seeds
- Help care for newly planted trees
- Plant a tree for the future with CPRE's Centenary Oak Tree Fund
- Help map ancient trees across Warwick District
- Support the Children's Forest Project
- New Green Social Prescribing Network launched
- Wild bee house and nature trail launched in Warwick
- Hoverflies and bee-flies: nature's clever imposters
- Harvest mice found at local nature reserves
- Helping prevent wildfires this summer
- The People's Emergency Briefing
- Ways to help nature at home this summer
- Summer events and activities



A Scarce Chaser Dragonfly spotted in a garden in Barford

Progress on our Biodiversity Action Plan - Year 2

The infographic below shares key successes from the second year of our Biodiversity Action Plan, highlighting work delivered across parks, open spaces, and the wider district to protect and enhance biodiversity.

We're pleased to be delivering our '30 by 30' commitment ahead of schedule, with 31% of Council land now managed to support biodiversity.

Each year builds on the last as we continue to create more space for nature and strengthen ecological connections across the district.

Our work aligns with Warwickshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy, helping ensure action is focussed where it can have the greatest benefit for nature.

[Find out more about the work we've been doing.](#)

31% of council land under active management for biodiversity*



1,325 metres of hedgerow planted and repaired with support from Warwick District Council

632 metres of hedgerow traditionally laid**



7 scrapes created and extended (temporary shallow wetland habitats) **

2 ponds and sustainable drainage (SuDS) features enhanced **



Over **139,000** bulbs planted including daffodils, crocus and snake's head fritillary**



Over **16,000** new trees planted with support from Warwick District Council

Over **1 hectare** of new wildflower roadside verge created



Continued management of **9** Local Nature Reserves and **10** Local Wildlife Sites**



5 new hibernation and refuge features created for wildlife **

13% reduction in pesticide use in Warwick District Council parks and open spaces***



An additional **2.77 hectares** of grassland now managed for nature (roughly the size of 100 tennis courts)**



4 biodiversity newsletters published with updates on local biodiversity work and how to get involved

1648 subscribers to the biodiversity newsletter



22,875 views of biodiversity bitesize videos

*Based on 2019 land registry data and 2026 grounds maintenance data **On Warwick District Council land ***Compared to pesticide use in 2024/25



Local Nature Recovery Strategy launched

Warwickshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) was officially launched on 27 May 2026 as part of the 30th anniversary celebrations at Ryton Pools Country Park.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies were introduced under the Environment Act 2021 as part of national efforts to reverse the decline in nature and support nature's recovery.

The LNRS was developed by Warwickshire County Council in close collaboration with the Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Local Nature Partnership (LNP).

Key priorities of the strategy include:

- Creating more nature-rich habitats and supporting the recovery of vulnerable species
- Improving water availability and quality for both wildlife and local communities
- Embedding more 'green and blue' spaces into towns and new developments
- Connecting people to accessible natural places to experience nature's health and wellbeing benefits
- Supporting sustainable, nature-friendly land management led by farmers and landowners through good practice dissemination within the agricultural community
- Tackling challenges such as flooding by working with natural processes and nature-based solutions

The LNRS is web-based and fully interactive. To find out more, visit the [Warwickshire Coventry and Solihull Local Nature Partnership website](#).

Wilder Communities - free trees, hedgerows, wildflowers & bulbs

Warwick District Council has teamed up with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust through the Wilder Communities scheme for a second year running to help schools, town and parish councils, local communities and other landowners create greener, more wildlife-friendly spaces.

The scheme offers the following support:

- Trees, hedgerows, wildflower seeds and bulbs provided
- Expert advice and planning support
- Help choosing suitable planting schemes
- Practical support with planting and sowing activities

Eligible sites include schools, churchyards, parks, village greens, allotments, recreation grounds, community spaces and social housing green spaces.

Last year the scheme supported the planting of around 4,000 trees and 1,000 metres of hedgerow, with many projects involving local volunteers and school children.

To find out more or express your interest, please contact Olivia.williams@wkw.org.uk

Help care for newly planted trees

As part of our Biodiversity Action Plan, we deliver an annual tree planting programme and work with local organisations, farmers and communities to increase tree cover across Warwick District.

But supporting trees is about more than planting them. It's also about helping young trees survive and thrive so they grow into the trees of the future. Trees boost biodiversity, improve air and soil quality, store carbon, and help create a healthier, more resilient environment for people and wildlife.



Newly planted trees need regular watering during their first few years, especially in hot, dry weather when they are most vulnerable. To help with this, we fit watering bags to newly planted standard trees and visit throughout the summer to top them up. Each bag holds around 50 litres of water and slowly releases it into the soil over several hours, helping water reach the roots where it's needed most.

You can help

If you spot a tree with a watering bag near your home or on your regular walk, please feel free to top it up during warm, dry spells. Simply lift the flap at the top and pour in water - every little bit helps.

[Find out more about tree planting in Warwick District.](#)

Plant a tree for the future with CPRE's Centenary Oak Tree Fund

To mark 100 years of protecting and championing the countryside, CPRE Warwickshire is inviting parish councils and community groups to take part in their Centenary Oak Tree Fund. The scheme offers communities the opportunity to plant an oak tree that could still be standing for CPRE's 200-year anniversary.

Oak trees are a lasting symbol of strength, heritage and care for the landscape. Through the fund, parish councils and local communities can plant new oak trees that will benefit future generations, boost biodiversity and create a lasting legacy in villages and green spaces across the county.

To find out more or express an interest, please contact office@cprewarwickshire.org.uk

Help map ancient trees across Warwick district

Ancient and veteran trees are some of the UK's most valuable habitats, supporting a wide range of wildlife as well as providing a living link to our history and landscape.

[The Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory](#) is a national database of the UK's oldest and most important trees. More than 200,000 trees have already been recorded, but many more still need to be mapped and anyone can help.

Summer is a great time to get involved, as trees are easier to identify when fully in leaf. Volunteers can record trees using a smartphone or desktop computer, and no specialist experience is needed as guidance is provided. A volunteer group is already surveying the ancient trees of Newbold Comyn and other locations to help understand and protect them for the future. The oldest tree recorded so far is a pedunculate oak estimated to be around 400 years old.

The group was brought together with support from Warwickshire Wildlife Trust's Community Organiser in Leamington. Further surveys are planned and new volunteers are very welcome.

Please contact Jo Harper at Warwickshire Wildlife Trust if you'd like to get involved – joanne.harper@wkwt.org.uk



Warwickshire's Oldest Sweet Chestnut at The Stoneleigh Deer Park Golf Course, photo by Steven Falk

Support the Children's Forest Project

Achieving Results in Communities (ARC) Children's Forest project helps children develop a lasting connection with nature while learning about biodiversity, climate change, and the benefits of woodlands for mental and physical wellbeing.

Between 2021 and 2023, the project supported more than 300 children and families to plant nearly 3,000 trees in a Children's Forest in Radford Semele near Leamington Spa. Since then, pupils from three local schools have continued to visit and care for the woodland, with around 650 children and families involved so far.

Using Forest School approaches, children take part in seasonal visits featuring storytelling, games, creative activities and practical woodland skills, helping them build confidence outdoors and develop a deeper understanding of the natural world.

ARC will be launching a Crowdfunder on Wednesday 10 June 2026 to support the future of the project. All donations will be match funded, and a range of rewards are available for supporters.

Follow ARC on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) or [visit their website](#) to find out more.



The Children's Forest in Radford Semele, photo by ARC

New Green Social Prescribing Network launched

Spending time outdoors offers many benefits for our health and wellbeing, including reducing stress, improving mood, boosting immunity and supporting mental clarity. Green social prescribing connects people with nature-based activities and outdoor wellbeing projects to support their mental and physical health.

A new Green Social Prescribing Network has recently been launched for Coventry and Warwickshire to bring together social prescribers, public sector organisations and groups delivering outdoor wellbeing activities.

The network aims to improve awareness of local services, encourage shared learning, and support best practice across the sector.

People who [join the network](#) will receive quarterly updates on news, events and opportunities linked to green social prescribing across Coventry and Warwickshire.

A [launch event](#) will take place on Thursday 11 June 2026, from 12.30pm to 2.30pm at Foundry Wood. The event will include short talks, nature-based wellbeing activities and opportunities to network and help shape future plans.

Refreshments will be provided, and free parking is available nearby.

Wild bee house and nature trail launched in Warwick



Bee Friendly Warwick has launched a new 'Wild Bee House Nature Trail'. The trail features six bee houses, which can be opened to view wild, non-stinging bees in action and learn about their important role in nature.

There are many types of wild bees in the UK, and only one honeybee. Honeybees live together in hives. Whereas the bee house trail is designed to attract solitary bees that like to nest in cavities.

Solitary Red Mason Bees can be seen from April to July and have already begun nesting in most bee houses. There are about 70 types of solitary bees that nest 'aerially' in cavities they find, like hollow plants; the rest nest in the ground. As well as the Red Mason Bees, we may also see Leafcutter Bees, Orange Vented Mason Bees, or even Blue Mason Bees nesting in the new houses.

When they nest, female Red Masons line the cavities with mud to create individual cells. Other bees can use different materials to line the cell. Leafcutters, for example, line the cells with leaves; orange-vented bees with chewed leaves. All bees will also leave pollen for each baby egg to feed on. She may make 15 trips for pollen. The females have about 40 eggs to lay, so they may fill several tubes.

The full trail takes about two hours to walk the 3.8 miles, although you can choose to shorten the trail by visiting a smaller number of bee houses. For more information, including a downloadable trail leaflet and map, please visit the [Bee Friendly Warwick website](#).

Hoverflies and bee-flies: nature's clever imposters

Across the UK, two clever insects are often mistaken for bees - the bumblebee mimic hoverfly and the dark-edged bee-fly. Both are harmless flies that use disguise and buzzing behaviour to great effect.

The bumblebee mimic hoverfly is a common summer visitor (May - September), often seen along hedgerows and woodland edges feeding on flowers like thistles and brambles. Its fluffy body closely resembles bumblebees, helping to deter predators, though it can be identified by its single pair of wings and large eyes.

Earlier in the year, from March to May, the dark-edged bee-fly appears in sunny spots across gardens, grasslands, and woodlands. It hovers while feeding on spring flowers such as primroses and violets, using its long proboscis, and even produces a convincing bee-like buzz.

Both species are widespread and important pollinators, despite not being true bees. Their remarkable mimicry not only protects them but also makes them a fascinating find for anyone exploring UK nature. Keep an eye out, you may already have these brilliant imposters visiting your local patch!

Bee-fly, Hoverfly, or both?

Next time you're in the garden, keep an eye out for these traits, shared and unique to hoverflies and bee-flies...



Unlike bees, wasps also lack scopa hairs for pollen collection.

Apart from their colour and scopa all the above traits set hoverflies and bee-flies apart from their bee and wasp imitations

Harvest mice found at local nature reserves

Last summer's warm, dry weather appears to have benefitted a number of species across Warwick District Council's local nature reserves, including the tiny but remarkable harvest mouse.

Harvest mice are Britain's smallest rodent and are known for their distinctive woven nests, which are built above ground among tall grasses and reeds. Finding these nests is an important sign that suitable habitat is being maintained for wildlife.

During autumn willow coppicing work at Welches Meadow in Leamington Spa, students from the University of Warwick joined the team from Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and discovered almost 20 harvest mouse nests in the grassland. This was especially encouraging as the species had not previously been recorded at the site.

The discovery highlights the importance of managing local nature reserves to support a wide range of habitats and species across the district.



Harvest mouse nest at Welches Meadow. Photo by Nick Martin, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

Helping prevent wildfires this summer

As the weather gets warmer and vegetation becomes drier, the risk of wildfires in our parks and open spaces increases, especially during dry spells.

Even small sparks can quickly lead to serious damage, putting wildlife, habitats, and public safety at risk.



You can help reduce the risk by following a few simple steps when enjoying local green spaces:

- **No BBQs or campfires** – even a small flame can ignite dry grass. Bring a picnic instead and enjoy the outdoors safely
- **Take your litter home** – Glass bottles and cans can focus sunlight and start fires
- **Don't drop cigarettes** – Always fully extinguish smoking materials and dispose of them safely
- **Report fires immediately** – If you see a fire, call 999 and ask for the fire service

You'll see 'No BBQ or Campfire' signs across many of our parks and nature reserves - please help us by following these simple rules and encouraging others to do the same.

Our green spaces are home to important wildlife and are enjoyed by thousands of people each year. By taking care, we can all help to keep them safe this summer.

The People's Emergency Briefing

Last year (November 2025), the [National Emergency Briefing](#) brought together leading experts to present the latest evidence on the climate and nature crisis to politicians and other influential people in Westminster.

The next steps now include taking this message across the UK, bringing together people from across local communities to hear the evidence and discuss how to respond. [A People's Emergency Briefing \(PEB\) film](#) has been launched with screenings already taking place across Warwick District.

The next screening will be held at All Saints Parish Church in Leamington Spa on Tuesday 7 July 2026 at 7.15pm. [Book your free space](#) to attend this screening.

Ways you can help nature at home this Spring



Summer is the perfect time to enjoy the outdoors and give a helping hand to the wildlife around us. Here are some easy things you can do at home to support nature:

Let your lawn grow: Give your mower a break! Leaving your grass to grow longer, even just in patches, helps bees, butterflies, and other insects find food and shelter.

Plant for pollinators: Add a few wildflowers or nectar-rich plants to your garden, balcony, or window box. Bees love lavender, foxgloves, catmint, cosmos and lots more.

Create a wildlife corner: Leave a small area of your garden a bit messy – piles of leaves, logs, or stones provide homes for frogs, hedgehogs, and insects.

Put out water: A shallow bowl of water helps birds, bees, and other animals stay cool and hydrated. Remember to clean it regularly and add a few stones so insects can land safely.

Avoid using pesticides: Try to avoid chemical sprays in your garden. They can harm bees, butterflies, and other helpful bugs. Natural pest control options work just as well.

Reduce light pollution: Turn off outdoor lights when you don't need them. Many insects, bats, and birds rely on natural darkness to feed and rest.

Collect rainwater: Use a water butt to collect rain for watering your garden. It saves water and is better for plants and wildlife.

Build a bug hotel: Use old bits of wood, bamboo canes, or bricks to build a bug hotel. It's a fun summer activity and gives insects a safe place to live.

Talk about it: Share what you're doing with friends and neighbours and add your efforts to the [#TeamWilder map](#). The more people who help, the better for our local wildlife!

Summer events and activities

[Achieving Results in Communities \(ARC\) events and activities](#), throughout summer 2026

[Bee Wild](#), Sunday 14 June 2026, 11am – 4pm, Hill Close Gardens, Warwick, CV34 6HF

[Coventry and Warwickshire RSPB group events](#), throughout summer 2026

EcoFest, Saturday 5 September 2026, 10am - 5pm, Pump Room Gardens, Leamington Spa

[Foundry Wood events and activities](#), Princes Drive, Leamington Spa, throughout summer 2026

[Friends of Abbey Fields nature walks and activities](#), throughout summer 2026

[Lyttleton Community Gardening Sessions](#), 10am – 12noon every Friday, community garden entrance between 33 and 35 Lyttleton Road, Warwick, CV34 5EW

[Peregrine Watch 2026](#), Saturday 6 and 13 June, 10am – 3pm, the green at Regent Grove, Leamington Spa, CV32 4AT

[Ramblers Wellbeing Walks in Warwick District](#) - throughout summer 2026

[The Crest Community Gardening Sessions](#), 10am – 12noon every Wednesday, meet by Southorn Court, Lillington, Leamington Spa, CV32 7PU

[The Packmores Garden Gang](#), 10am – 12noon, first Saturday of the month, meet outside The Packmores Community Centre just before 10am, Lyttleton Road, Warwick, CV34 5EP

[The Wildlife Trusts' #30DaysWild challenge](#), throughout June 2026

[Volunteering opportunities with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust](#)

[Warwick Natural History Society Winter 2025/26 indoor programme and summer field visits 2025/26](#), Friends' Meeting House, High Street, Warwick, CV34 4AX

[Warwickshire Bat Group events and activities](#), throughout summer 2026

[Warwickshire Country Parks events and activities](#), throughout summer 2026

[Warwickshire Wildlife Trust's Creature Count](#), 12 to 14 June 2026

[Warwickshire Wildlife Trust events](#), throughout summer 2026

If you have nature events and activities happening in Warwick District that you'd like included in future editions of this newsletter please [get in touch](#).



Warwick District Council has no control over the nature, content and availability of the external sites linked to within this newsletter and is merely signposting to well-known organisations. The inclusion of any links does not necessarily imply a recommendation or endorsement of the views expressed within them.

The Media Team - Warwick District Council