As the end of the year is heading towards us at an alarming pace it’s time for me to thank you all on behalf of the Wiltshire wildlife Trust and the Swindon Borough Council for all your hard work and dedication to making Swindon and the surrounding areas a better place to live and enjoy. The New Year will see us doing everything we can to green up the Swindon area which will include planting thousands of trees by March 2025. (provided by Trees for Climate) [Trees for climate - England's Community Forests (englandscommunityforests.org.uk)](https://englandscommunityforests.org.uk/trees-for-climate/) The sessions found below will show you where you can help plant trees.

**“These trees which he plants, and under whose shade he shall never sit, he loves them for themselves, and for the sake of his children and his children’s children,** who are to sit beneath the shadow of their spreading boughs” (Alger, 1868).

**As promised, I will include the how and why of the projects you are working on but before that I will start form the very beginning (as its all new to me).**

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (WWT) has been active in Swindon Borough since its formation in 1962. The Trust manages five nature reserves within the Borough (soon to be six) and has been widely involved with several partnership projects such as Swindon Forest Meadows.

Swindon Forest Meadows Project is a three-year partnership between Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. Initially targeting 12 sites within Swindon Borough, the project seeks to create, restore, enhance, and better manage up to 170 hectares of meadows and grasslands and associated habitats within the Great Western Community Forest.

An example of the achievements of the Swindon Forest Meadows Project are the 15 hectares of scrub land at Mouldon Hill which have been successfully managed to create a matrix of woodland, scrub and grassland thriving with wildlife and wildflowers.

Mouldon Hill is a publically accessible country park serving the North-West of Swindon and wider communities across the town. The Park is and managed by Swindon Borough Council

Volunteers have recently been braving the poor weather to clear pathways.

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We have entered the season of checking for Harvest mice and Brown Hairstreak butterflies, and we have sessions where we will be looking for signs of their presence.

The Brown Hairstreak butterfly is locally distributed across southern Britain and has suffered a huge decline as result of loss of and, poor management of hedgerows. They lay their eggs on blackthorn which is where we will be looking for them in the surveys. To find out more information about them visit [Brown Hairstreak | Butterfly Conservation (butterfly-conservation.org)](https://butterfly-conservation.org/butterflies/brown-hairstreak)



Photo: Ian Leach

Harvest mice are another species in decline due to changes in agricultural practices and management of the land so with the correct management on our sites we can help reverse the decline. This starts with the surveys for the empty nests. For more information please check out [Species – Harvest Mouse – The Mammal Society](https://www.mammal.org.uk/species-hub/full-species-hub/discover-mammals/species-harvest-mouse/)



Photo Darin Smith

**Volunteer celebration**

We would like to congratulate Simon Wicks ‘Volunteer Task Leader of the year’ (alongside Trudy Lewis) and Tyron Holmes ‘Young volunteer of the year’ from the Lagoons and Rivermead group for their hard work and dedication. It was very much deserved.

A person and person standing next to each other

Description automatically generatedA person and person standing next to each other

Description automatically generated

*CEO Jo Lewis handed out awards at the ceremony*

**Tadpole Butterfly transect.**

For the past two years volunteer Trevor Stinton has been walking a butterfly transect every month from March to October. Please see some of the raw results below. It is interesting to see how numbers and species change from year to year e.g. Meadow Browns most numerous in 2022 with 230 individual and Gatekeeper in 2023 with 149 individuals seen. Thanks Trevor. If anybody would be interested in undertaking similar transect walks, please let us know.



**Volunteer opportunities and events.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Time** | **Where** | **Brief details** | **Difficulty** | **Meeting Points** |
| Tues 2nd | 10am | Mouldon Hill | clearing scrub from paths | Moderate | Meeting Point. Grid Reference SU1184187854. What 3Words: taped.engineers.jungle. Good access on foot, bike (National cycle route 45). Public transport Swindon Bus15 to Taw Hill or Swindon Bus 16 and StageCoach 4 to Akers Way. Dedicated car park. |
| Thu 4th | 09:30 | River Mead Community Nature Reserve | Regular Thursday Group | Moderate | PLEASE NOTE CYCLE ROUTE 45 IS CLOSED UNTIL JULY 2024. Meeting point (essential to be on time as this is a gated site). Access only via Shaw Forest park . Grid reference SU1242285936. What3 Words: pies.joke.often. Walking and cycling access possible follow diversions - bikes can be secured inside the locked gates. Parking available at Shaw Forest Park. |
| Fri 5th | 10am | Mouldon Hill | Harvest Mouse / Brown Hair streak egg Survey | Moderate | Meeting Point. Grid Reference SU1184187854. What 3Words: taped.engineers.jungle. Good access on foot, bike (National cycle route 45). Public transport Swindon Bus15 to Taw Hill or Swindon Bus 16 and StageCoach 4 to Akers Way. Dedicated car park. |
| Sun 7th | 10am | Clouts wood | Wiltshire Wildlife Conservation Volunteers (WWCV) task. | Moderate | WWCV, woodland Management. PLEASE DO NOT BOOK HERE please visit http://www.wwcv.co.uk/index.html for information and how to book. |
| Tue 9th | 10:00 | Mouldon | clearing planting area and creating scallops | Moderate | Meeting Point. Grid Reference SU1184187854. What 3Words: taped.engineers.jungle. Good access on foot, bike (National cycle route 45). Public transport Swindon Bus15 to Taw Hill or Swindon Bus 16 and StageCoach 4 to Akers Way. Dedicated car park. |
| Thu 11th | 09:30 | Swindon Lagoons | Regular Thursday Group | Moderate | PLEASE NOTE CYCLE ROUTE 45 IS CLOSED UNTIL JULY 2024. Meeting point (essential to be on time as this is a gated site). Access only via Shaw Forest park . Grid reference SU1242285936. What3 Words: pies.joke.often. Walking and cycling access possible follow diversions - bikes can be secured inside the locked gates. Parking available at Shaw Forest Park. |
| Fri 12th | 10:00 | Mouldon hill | We do have a small number of trees available to plant and then we will create scallops if we have time. | Moderate | Meeting Point. Grid Reference SU1184187854. What 3Words: taped.engineers.jungle. Good access on foot, bike (National cycle route 45). Public transport Swindon Bus15 to Taw Hill or Swindon Bus 16 and StageCoach 4 to Akers Way. Dedicated car park. |
| Tue 16th | 10:00 | Westcott Community Forest Garden. | Clearing in preparation for creating forest garden and possible tree planting. | Moderate | Nearest postcode SN1 4NJ. W3W them.museum.tribe  SU 13943 84124. There is a small car park but we can park in the allotment if needed. The entrance is the same turning of the main road as for the bowls green. |
| Thu 18th | 09:30 | Swindon Lagoons | Regular Thursday Group | Moderate | PLEASE NOTE CYCLE ROUTE 45 IS CLOSED UNTIL JULY 2024. Meeting point (essential to be on time as this is a gated site). Access only via Shaw Forest park . Grid reference SU1242285936. What3 Words: pies.joke.often. Walking and cycling access possible follow diversions - bikes can be secured inside the locked gates. Parking available at Shaw Forest Park. |
| Fri 19th | 10:00 | Tadpole nature reserve | Harvest Mouse / Brown Hair streak egg Survey | Moderate | Meeting Point - Layby on Tadpole Lane. Nearest Postcode. SN25 2HL. Grid Reference SU1171489596. What 3words Profile.ridiculed.decays. Reasonable walking and cycling access via Stagecoach bus 4 stops in Tadpole Garden Village. Car parking in the layby (can be limited). |
| Tue 23rd | 10:00 | Moredon Meadows. (changed from Highworth golf course). | Harvest Mouse / Brown Hair streak egg Survey | Moderate | Meeting point just off Akers Way. Nearest post code. SN2 2NE. Grid reference SU 1297286994. What3Words: note.quench.atomic. Good access on foot and bike. Swindon Buses 15 and 16 pass along Akers Way. Limited parking at the meeting point some on road parking available along Akers Way. |
| Thu 25th | 09:30 | River Mead Community Nature Reserve | Regular Thursday Group | Moderate | PLEASE NOTE CYCLE ROUTE 45 IS CLOSED UNTIL JULY 2024. Meeting point (essential to be on time as this is a gated site). Access only via Shaw Forest park. Grid reference SU1242285936. What3 Words: pies.joke.often. Walking and cycling access possible follow diversions - bikes can be secured inside the locked gates. Parking available at Shaw Forest Park. |
| Fri 26th | 10:00 | St Julian's community nature reserve | Hedge laying | Moderate | Meeting Point. Nearest Postcode: SN3 4AH. Grid Reference: SU1910187788. What3Words: quicksand.fiction.desk. Walking/cycling - After crossing the A419 there is no direct off-road route through South Marston to St Julians, access is via main roads. Bike racks are provided on site. Stagecoach bus 7 runs to South Marston. By Car - Car parking available in a dedicated car park. |
| Tue 30th | 10:00 | Westcott Community Forest Garden. | clearing in preparation for creating forest garden. | Moderate | Nearest postcode SN1 4NJ. W3W them.museum.tribe SU 13943 84124. There is a small car park but we can park in the allotment if needed. The entrance is the same turning of the main road as for the bowls green. |

**Notices and information on signing up to team kinetic.**

* Please feedback if there are any obvious mistakes regarding dates or locations etc in the calendar.
* If people would like to claim for millage to and from volunteering sessions, then please contact us on swindonforestmeadows@wiltshirewildlife.org.
* If there is a session in the table but you cannot find it on the volunteer data base, then it would have been removed later due to unforeseen changes.
* If you have signed up for sessions and it must be cancelled, you will be informed via mail as soon as possible.

Volunteer opportunities and events.

Below you will find instructions on how to sign up on team kinetic for SESSIONS and events planned in the Swindon area.

The sessions are set out in:

* **Date order:**
* **Start times:** Please note these vary from one SESSION to the next. We do not generally supply finish times (most sessions finish within 4 hours)
* **Where:** A brief description of the site
* **Brief Details:** A general description of the SESSION.
* **Activity Level:**
  + Easy – On level ground. Easy physical activity
  + Moderate – Gentle slopes and reasonable walking distance. Physical work.
  + Hard – Long walk. Steep slopes. Hard physical work.
* **Meeting Points:** Please note that Grid Reference and What3Words are the most accurate way to detail meeting points. Postcodes, although requested by many are very inaccurate and may only take you to the nearest group of houses.

It is not possible to display all of the information above in the Kinetic booking system.

This is displayed in the general format.

* **Site Name: Brief description of SESSION: Important Information**
* **Date**
* **Start time and suggested duration.**

For example

* Kings Farm Wood: Boardwalk replacement. Please book via the OPPORTUNITY, Roving group for North Wiltshire
* Friday 14 July 2023
* Starts at 10:00 for 5 hrs, till 15:00

Please note in this case, **Important Information** asks you to visit the OPPORTUNITY, Roving Group for North Wiltshire to book and for more information. In this case the number of open places will be limited to one.

(This update can be found under the Swindon Forest Meadows within the OPPORTUNITY DOCUMENTS tab).

We supply all tools, equipment materials and any necessary PPE. We cover aspects such as risk assessments, insurance, first aid provision and wellbeing.

We can offer to reimburse for all out-of-pocket expenses. This can include travel to and from sites (within a reasonable distance). We are not able to reimburse money for refreshments as this is classified as a regular cost that expense that you would have bear even if not volunteering.

No two days are the same and there is always something to find and explore. The social side of volunteering is very much encouraged.

* Please bring sanitisers and face masks to all tasks.
* No experience necessary. Please wear old clothes suitable for the weather conditions (long sleeves and trousers are recommended).
* Please bring a packed lunch and plenty of liquid.

We look forward to meeting you on site making a difference for wildlife and people.

Anybody wishing to receive the Swindon Forest Meadow email update each month, without registering as a volunteer, please send a an email to [swindonforestmeadows@wiltshirewildlife.org](mailto:swindonforestmeadows@wiltshirewildlife.org) quoting in the email subject box. “Sign up to monthly email”. Your email will be held in a password protected spread sheet and used to send out the monthly update only. You can request that your email be removed at any time.

Neil Pullen   
Conservation Lead Swindon  
swindonforestmeadows@wiltshirewildlife.org. Please use this email for further information.