RNHS
RUTLAND NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

FIELDFARE

APRIL 2026 | ISSUE 355



Male Hairy-footed flower bee.
C. Baxter

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Welcome

Spring again at last! Bees and butterflies abound once again, and there is the thankfully, familiar sight of housemartins circling the skies after their long journey from their wintering sites, although fewer than years gone by. After a very wet early start to the year, our wildlife, spurred on by the lengthening days are back again, right on cue. The little flower bee above is one of the first bees to emerge in our garden, along with the queen bumblebees, all buzzing around the early spring flowers after their long hibernation.

Back in February, Linda and Anthony Biddle and I attended the first Leicestershire and Rutland Recorders Conference for some years. It was hosted by Leicestershire County Council in partnership with Naturespot and The Wildlife Trust (LRWT), and interested parties were invited to showcase their own particular wildlife niche within the local recording community. The "Rutland Nats" had two tables with presentation boards set out with our displays. 130 people came along to what proved to be a very interesting and informative day of talks and workshops headed by Tim Sexton from LRWT. It was such a success that plans are already afoot to have another one next year. The whole conference was based on the new mandatory government initiative to all local councils throughout the country to produce their own Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for their area. Anyone interested in the recovery and recording of our wildlife in Leicestershire and Rutland can read the report on the Leicestershire Council website. If you would like to support this event next year to see what great things are being achieved all over Leicestershire and Rutland, let the committee know. It was a real eye-opener for me.

Inside these pages you will find some useful advice about how to keep on recording with us yourselves. Mobile apps are useful when out on walks, but for those of us who rely on Fieldfare to inform us about how species are doing in and around our county, the only way to know is by sending our sightings to our own recorders - and we mustn't forget our own gardens - a haven for all kinds of wildlife!

DIARY DATES

RNHS Outdoor meetings.

The following events are correct at time of publication but may be changed at short notice. Please book your place with the person who will be leading the walk; phone numbers are beside the listing. Make sure you are wearing appropriate clothing for the time of year and if the weather is bad on the day, please check first by ringing the walk leader. Details of all these events appear in the Annual programme but bookings are arranged many months in advance so dates and venue can change at any time. See round badge on the front page of website at www.rnhs.org.uk for best up-to-date information.

Saturday 2nd May. Dawn Chorus. Please note that we have had to cancel this event for this year.

Saturday 16th May. 10.30am Merry's meadows. Join LRWT officer Sarah Bedford for the first of our walks in memory of Jenny' at her favourite reserve - a great time to see the profusion of Green-winged orchids in flower, and many more unusual spring flowers. Meet: MR SK937157. WTW: rewriting.hardens.ground.

Tuesday 16th June. 10.30am. Seaton Coronation meadows SSSI. We will be joining **Andrew Kearsey** from Plantlife to investigate the flora of one of the last surviving remnants of unimproved flood meadows in Rutland. **Meet: Parking is limited on the roadside verge, so please car share if possible.** MR SP913979. WTW: flushes. sandbags.flamingo

Saturday 20th June. 11.00am. LRWT Wymondham Rough SSSI reserve. The second of our memorial walks led by Sarah Bedford. The mixture of habitats means a whole range of flora and fauna is to be found here - especially butterflies! **Meet:** MR SK831174. WTW: unlisted. pampered.vocab. Park north of the level crossing and remember to close the gate.

Sunday 5th July 10.30am. Grantham canal Stathern with dragonfly expert Ian Merrill. The last time we came here, there was much excitement with dragonflies and damselflies of all sizes and colours. **Meet:** Dove cottage car park. MR SK755324. Postcode LE14 4EX.

RNHS Indoor morning/evening meetings.

Evening meetings are usually on the first Tuesday of the month from January to April and October to December at the Volunteer Training Centre (VTC) LE15 8AD. MR: SK883 083.
Check for day and time for morning meetings in April and November. No need to book. Just turn up. Visitors are asked for a donation of £2.00

Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust

With the Trust celebrating their triple Anniversary this year, there is plenty going on to mark the occasion.
Go to their website: www.lrwt.org.uk to find out how they will be recogizing these amazing milestones.

NOTICES

A Gentle reminder from our Membership secretaryTricia. Thank you to all who have renewed their subscriptions for this year. Subscriptions were due back in January so if you have forgotten to renew your membership and you still wish to continue, would you please pay as soon as possible to avoid this being your last Fieldfare.

Volunteering.

Verge recording is back on track again this year. Verge recording has always been an important part of RNHS conservation monitoring. Anyone who would like to sign up to volunteer to survey any of our special LWS verges this year, please would you contact John Rogers - Botany recorder on: rnhsbotanyrecord@gmail.com or 01572757278.

In partnership with Tim Sexton of LRWT, we will be continuing our **Glowworm recording a**gain this summer between June to early August, If you would like to volunteer, please contact Carolyn Baxter rnhsfieldfare2@gmail.com. I will pass your details to Tim.

WEATHER

RECORDER Roy Lemmon
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January 2026.

Atmospheric pressure and wind. A month of predominantly low pressures and subsequently very unsettled. For the first 10 days, winds were W-N and for the rest of the month SE-SW, an unusually long period with little change of direction. Winds were often gusty and especially so during the 3 named storms which were **Goretti (MeteoFrance**) on the 8th to the 9th, **Ingrid (Portuguese National Weather Service)** on the 22nd and 23rd, and **Chandra (Met Office)** on the 26th and 27th. These all approached from the S-SW and progressed up the west side of the UK, but Goretti gave us gusty winds and over an inch of rain; Ingrid we barely noticed and Chandra had gusts of 23 mph. at 09.00 on the 27th.

Temperature. This was a warm January with a mean of 4.97ºC which places it 3rd warmest in the decade 2017-2026, just ahead of January 2023 at 4.96ºC. There were 6 air frosts all on the first 6 days of the month and the most severe was -3.5ºC on both the 2nd to 3rd and the 5th to 6th. The highest daytime maxima were 11.9ºC 0n the 12th and 12ºC on the 31st.

Precipitation. A wet January with a total of 108.5mm. (4.27 inches) which equates to 214% of my long term mean of 36 years. There were just 8 days on which no precipitation was noted and, on the 2nd, and 4th it fell as snow but amounts were very small and melted rapidly. As stated, above Storm Goretti gave us 27.0mm. on the 9th and the second highest daily amount was 19.9mm. on the 15th. Other wet January's were those of 2014 (111.0mm) and 2021 (110.1mm)

February 2026.

Atmospheric pressure and wind. Another month of predominantly low pressures and as a result a very unsettled picture. The lowest pressure was 985mb. on the 11th and 12th and the highest was 1019mb on the 21st, part of a brief period of higher pressure which went from the 20th to the 26th, Winds were very variable in direction until the 19th and then S-SW until the end of the month, a slightly more settled picture. There were no named storms but at times winds were very gusty.

Temperature. A warm February with a mean of 7.66C which puts it in second place in the decade 2017-2026 after the same month in 2024 at 7.87C. I have no figures for hours of sunshine, but it was obviously a very dull month and rather depressing.

Precipitation. A total here of 102.9mm (4.05 inches) equates to 246% of my long term mean of 36 years. Apart from heavy sleet showers on the 3rd this all fell as rain. After 4 months of well above average rainfall the ground has become saturated and the Welland has brought about standing water in the Stamford meadows, which is after all its flood plain.

March 2026

Atmospheric pressure and wind. This was predominantly a month of high pressure except for a period near the middle, the 11th-16th, when pressures were low, including the lowest of the month- 1002mb. on the 13th. Wind directions at this time were very variable and there were strong gusts. Winds from the 23rd. to the end were mostly NW-N with an obvious cooling effect.

Temperature. The mean for the month was 8.58C which makes it the third warmest March in the decade 2017-2026, just below this month in 2024 at 8.61C. There were 2 air frosts, the lower being minus 1.8C on the night of the 20th-21st and the highest daytime maximum was 20.4C on the 18th.

Precipitation. A total of 19.5mm. (0.77 inches) equates to 51% of my long term mean of 37 years. There were 19 totally dry days, and it all fell as rain except for a hail shower on the afternoon of the 14th., during the unsettled period referred to above. It was during this same period that the daytime maximum for the month fell to 9.6 mm., and this was 49% of the whole.

AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES

RECORDER Dr C H Gallimore
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January, February and March 2026

There was a reasonable spread of records during this quarter, although numbers were not high for any species. Dave Needham's sighting of a **Grass Snake** at Ketton Quarry on 25 February was particularly interesting as it was only the second February record in the forty plus years that I have been recording, the only other February record was on 23 February 2019 in Barrow.

Common Frogs were first reported from Ridlington on 21 February, and spawn was first seen in Barnsdale on 2 March. Thereafter there were records of spawn from Quarry Farm, Horn, Exton, Wing and Ridlington, the last record being on 21 March. **Common Toads** were active in the east of the county, calling in Tunneley Wood on 26 February and they were in amplexus in Quarry Farm on 4 March and there were further reports from Exton on 8 March.

Smooth Newts were first recorded on 21 February in Ridlington and at Fishponds and in Braunston on the

following day. There were further records in March from Langham, Oakham and Lyndon Visitor Centre. There were two records of **Great Crested Newts,** one being found in a wall in Beaumont Chase in early February and another in the pond at Lyndon Visitor Centre on 19 March.

There were only three reptile records in this quarter. A **Viviparous Lizard** was observed at Ketton Quarry on 22 March. **A Grass Snake** was seen also at Ketton Quarry on 25 February, and an **Adder** was seen on 28 March at Ketton Quarry as well.

My thanks to the following who provided records: - D Ball, J Bray, B Fox, A Hill, M Markham, T Mitcham, J Morrell, D Needham, J Nourish, P Robinson, and also to J Rodgers, who forwarded the Naturespot records.

BIRDS

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January 2026.

A mild and wet winter meant a focus on wildfowl and there were good records of visiting White-fronted, Bean and Pink-footed Geese at the reservoirs. Eyebrook attracted good numbers of Scaup and Smew but counts at Rutland Water were well down on what we usually expect. Flooding in the Welland valley at Seaton attracted many Wigeon and Teal but they were not easy to count. Marsh Harriers were regular at Egleton and there was a large Red Kite roost at Exton – well worth checking out if it returns next winter. Wintering Chiffchaffs were present throughout the period, so it is now difficult to know when the first migrants arrive. Not so with the Ospreys, with the first back in mid-March and the redoubtable Maya not far behind. My thanks to the following for their records:-

T.P.Appleton, R.F.Baker, T.Barker, D. Ball, A.& L.Biddle, M.Dixon, B.Fox, Dr. C H Gallimore, G.&J.Griffin, A.H.J.Harrop, LROS., M.Markham, K.Mathers T.Mitcham, B.Moore, J.W.Nourish, C.I.Park, RWNR, P.Scott, S.Woodward,

Highlights. Rutland Water had four Bean Geese (10th), 18 White-fronted Geese (20th – 31st), a Great Northern Diver (to 12th) and a Caspian Gull (1st, 7th). Firecrests were in gardens in Empingham (4th) and Oakham (17th).

Rutland Water. (See Also Wildfowl Count). The count (18th) produced 1399 Wigeon, 247 Gadwall, 1763 Teal, 789 Mallard, 15 Pintail, 50 Shoveler, 31 Pochard, 564 Tufted Ducks, 241 Goldeneye, two Smew and five Goosander. There were also six Little Egrets, 12 Great White Egrets, 123 Little Grebes and 70 Great Crested Grebes. Other wildfowl were 24 Barnacle Geese (31st) and three Scaup (31st). Some wader counts were 1667 Lapwings (18th), 250 Golden Plover (23rd), nine Curlew (23rd), two Ruff (28th), 20 Dunlin (10th), four Green Sandpipers (3rd) and seven Redshank (18th). Marsh Harrier and Peregrine were regular at Egleton, where a Stonechat was at the Centre all month.

Eyebrook Reservoir. (See Also Wildfowl Count). There were three Pink-footed Geese (10th) and up to 16 White-fronted Geese (all month) with up to eight Scaup and nine Smew (both 1st). A Ruddy Duck was seen (11th). There were 108 Lapwings (18th).

Other Sites. Fort Henry Ponds had a Barnacle Goose (3rd, 11th, 31st), 224 Greylag Geese (11th), 156 Wigeon (11th) and 72 Tufted Ducks (16th) with Water Rails on (4th, 24th). There were five Goosander on Rygate Lake (16th) and a regular Great White Egret. Banthorpe GP had 140 Greylag Geese (16th) and five Shelducks (29th). There were 1200 Lapwings on floods near Seaton (28th) and nine Woodcock in Tunneley Wood (25th) with two Marsh Tits there (4th). 12 Woodcock were at Stoke Dry Wood (24th). 40 Red Kites roosted at Exton Hall (8th). Tawny and Little Owls were at Langham and a Blackcap was in an Uppingham garden (6th). A Marsh Tit was at Walk Farm (9th) and Raven, Jay and Nuthatch were all reported from Pickworth Wood.

February 2026.

Highlights. Rutland Water had 18 White-fronted Geese (1ST), A Red-necked Grebe (4th-28th), a Bittern from (10th) and a Kittiwake (20th-21st). Ten Whooper Swans flew over Great Casterton (18th).
Rutland Water. (See also Wildfowl Count). Other wildfowl were a Slavonian Grebe (15th) and a Black-necked Grebe (8th). Some wader counts were 23 Oystercatchers (22nd), 484 Lapwings (22nd), 24 Curlews (21st) and nine Redshanks (22nd). There were two Caspian Gulls (22nd) and two Yellow-legged Gulls from (27th). Marsh Harriers were regular with four at Egleton (3rd) and there were two Peregrines mobbing a Carrion Crow there (4th). A singing Chiffchaff was at Egleton (27th).
Eyebrook Reservoir – Highlights. There were three Pink-footed Geese (4th – 22nd), three Bean Geese (12th), 19 White-fronted Geese (4th) and an American Wigeon (20th – 28th). Scaup were present all month increasing to 11 by (26th) as were Smew peaking at 12 (16th). A juvenile Whooper Swan was present all month. There were seven Great White Egrets (22nd) and two early Sand Martins (28th).
Other Sites. Fort Henry Ponds had 18 Gadwall (21st), 86 Wigeon (26th) and 48 Tufted Ducks (21st). Four Goosander were on Rygate Lake (21st), where a Great White Egret was present all month. Grey Partridges were at Exton (8th) and Quarry Farm (24th). A Curlew was back at Market Overton/Barrow (24th) and there were two Snipe at Quarry Farm (23rd). Barn Owls were at Exton and Belmesthorpe. Calling Tawny Owls were at Belmesthorpe, Fort Henry, Exton Park and Pickworth Wood and a Little Owl was at Belmesthorpe. Drumming Great Spotted Woodpeckers were noted from (8th) at Tunneley Wood, Quarry Farm and Beaumont Chase Farm. Ravens were at three breeding sites by (9th) A Marsh Tit was in Tunneley Wood (8th) and a Cetti's Warbler remained at Fort Henry to (8th). 30 Fieldfares were at Exton (26th) with Nuthatches there and Pickworth Wood. 24 Meadow Pipits were at Quarry Farm (10th).

March 2026.

Highlights. Rutland Water had nine Whooper Swans (19th), seven Common Scoter (7th), two Red-necked Grebes (3rd -31st), Slavonian Grebe (30th) with the first returning Osprey (15th). There was a Jack Snipe at Egleton (14th) and two Mediterranean Gulls (20th). Eyebrook Reservoir had an American Wigeon (1st –22nd) with three Bean Geese (3rd) and a Mediterranean Gull (3rd).

Rutland Water. (See also Wildfowl Count). Some wader counts were 35 Oystercatchers (24th), eight Avocets (26th), 36 Lapwings (24th), a Ringed Plover (27th), two Little Ringed Plovers (27th), 16 Curlew (21st), Bar-tailed Godwit (29th – 30th), four Dunlin (7th), two Green Sandpipers (21st, 28th) and seven Redshanks (24th). There were three Yellow-legged Gulls (28th).. A Peregrine was seen (28th). There was an early Swallow (27th) and House Martin (28th). 30 Fieldfares were at the dam (26th). A Brambling was at feeders (14th) and a Lesser Redpoll (28th) with 60 Siskins at Egleton (6th).

Eyebrook Reservoir. There were three Pink-footed Geese and a juvenile Whooper Swan all month. Scaup were present all month with a peak of 13 (13TH) and Smew were seen to (15th) with three on (2nd, 4th). There were two Oystercatchers (18th) and five Lapwings (22nd), Little Ringed Plovers (14th, 21st) and a Dunlin (15th). Four Little Gulls were seen (18th). The first Sand Martin was on (15th) and there was a Stonechat (22nd.).

Other Sites. Fort Henry Ponds had 80 Wigeon and 60 Tufted Ducks (both 21st). A pair of Goosander and a Great White Egret were on Rygate Lake (13th). 40 Teal and two Grey Partridges were at Banthorpe GP (15th). Peregrines were at two regular sites and Little Owls were at Edith Weston and Normanton with a Barn Owl at Exton (29th). Woodcock (29th) and Marsh Tit (13th) were in Tunneley Wood and there were 100 Fieldfares in Exton Park (29th).

Wildfowl Counts – Jan. – March 2026

	RW 18.01.	RW 22.02.	RW 24.03.
Canada Goose	415	421	176
Greylag Goose	31	147	111
Mute Swan	190	143	152
Egyptian Goose	5	9	11
Shelduck	1		4
Mandarin Duck			3
Shoveler	50	145	94
Gadwall	247	196	193
Wigeon	1399	903	422
Mallard	789	381	313
Pintail	15	11	8
Teal	1763	273	207
Pochard	31	15	25
Tufted Duck	564	520	665
Goldeneye	241	191	113
Smew	2		
Goosander	5		
Little Grebe	123	56	4
Red-necked Grebe		1	1
Great Crested Grebe	70	81	73
Grey Heron	15	9	17
Great White Egret	12	9	5
Little Egret	6	1	10
Cormorant	89	75	156
Water Rail	3	1	1
Moorhen	32	17	9
Coot	500	442	187
Kingfisher	1		
TOTAL	**6599**	**4047**	**2960**

	FHP and Exton Park 16.01.	FHP and Exton Park 21.02.	FHP and Exton Park 21.03.	Banthorpe GP 16.01.	Banthorpe GP 23.02.	Banthorpe GP 20.03
Canada Goose					6	7
Greylag Goose		12	29	140	11	4
Mute Swan	11	9	8	5	5	
Shoveler	5		2			
Gadwall	28	29	23			
Wigeon	120	67	84			
Mallard	60	52	29	12	12	12
Teal	7	20	5	16	51	30
Tufted Duck	76	59	61			
Goosander	5	4				
Little Grebe	8	1				
Grey Heron	1	2	1	1	1	
Great White Egret	1	1				
Little Egret	1	1	1		3	
Cormorant	1				2	
Moorhen	8	8	10	1		2
Coot	124	38	34	1	1	1
TOTAL	**456**	**304**	**287**	**176**	**95**	**56**

	Eyebrook Reservoir 18.01.	Eyebrook Reservoir 22.02.
Canada Goose	120	52
Greylag Goose	54	92
Pink-footed Goose		3
Mute Swan	67	66
Whooper Swan	1	
Egyptian Goose	1	
Mandarin Duck	1	
Shoveler	19	10
Gadwall	70	21
Wigeon	951	702
Mallard	187	175
Teal	988	720
Pochard	120	11
Tufted Duck	386	196
Scaup	1	11
Goldeneye	37	33
Smew	2	9
Goosander	1	
Little Grebe	4	2
Great Crested Grebe	13	18
Grey Heron	4	
Great White Egret	5	
Little Egret	3	3
Cormorant	15	9
Moorhen	2	
Coot	119	2
TOTAL	**3171**	**2135**

There was no count at Eyebrook Reservoir in March.



Pair of Great crested grebe's. Lyndon. Photo P. Scott



Red necked grebe. Rutland Water. Photo P. Scott

BOTANY

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April 2026

The white blossoms of **Blackthorn**, *Prunus Spinosa,* and **Cherry Plum,** *Prunus cerasifera,* announces the coming of Spring, lining the roads across the county. A further white strip along many of the verges is formed by **Danish Scurvygrass,** *Cochlearia Danica,* which thrives on the salt left over from the winter. There's plenty of yellow too; new **Dandelions**, *Taraxacum agg,* and the occasional group of **Primrose**, *Primula vulgaris*, as on Oakham bypass. **Lesser Celandine**, *Ficaria verna,* which came earlier, is more or less over by the beginning of April.

The first record of **Bluebell,** *Hyacinthoides non-scripts,* was from Wardley Woods on the 20th March by Carolyn Baxter. No doubt those in Hambleton and Barnsdale woods



Coltsfoot
C. Baxter

are blooming too. **Coltsfoot**, *Tussilago farfara,* another early flower, was reported from Wing allotments by Tim Caldecott on the 24th of February and from Pickworth wood on March 4th by Linda Biddle. **Red Campion,** *Silène dioica,* was in flower at Martinsthorpe on the 24th of March. There seems to be a lot of **Common Whitlowgrass,** *Draba verna,* appearing, in Oakham, Essendine and Barleythorpe, reported by Marian Markham whilst **Sweet Violets**, *Viola odorata,* can be found in several places around Oakham, in Ketton Quarry and in Langham.



Common whitlow grass. C Baxter

It's the start of a new botany year. There will be lots of old friends to find, and, I hope, some new arrivals too. Please send in records of what you find on your walks, all are important in keeping track of the changes in biodiversity in the county. Don't forget No Mow May too.

Records were received from C Baxter, L Biddle, T Caldicott, M Markham. Thank you for these.

FUNGI

RECORDER K Fortune Jones
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Jan – March 2026

The overall picture for the winter months was a wet and mild season – which generally proved beneficial for the fungi, with the usual winter stalwarts, being larger in size, more profuse and lasting much longer into the season. The lovely violet **Wood Blewits,** *Lepista nuda* being particularly long lasting with the latest report being recounted to me on the 10th April! Quite extraordinary. These late bloomers have mostly come in as records from people's own gardens. A reminder that it's always worth having a poke around your compost heaps or shady lawn areas in the wintry months. Whilst the wet season did encourage the fungi somewhat, it had the reverse effect on recorders, as often it was too unpleasant walking in heavy rain, plus paths and woodland tracks were very muddy and sometimes unpassable. So I would say that records have been down this year.

January and February saw large numbers of the jelly fungi, ranging in colour from the brightest yellow and amber, though to a translucent white, to reddish orange and shiny black. These included the familiar **Yellow Jelly Brain** – *Tremella mesenterica* and the identical **Tremellla aurantia** which is parasitic on Hairy Curtain Crust. The curious **Crystal Brain,** *Exidia truncata* and the pale amber **Beech Jelly Disc,** *Neobulgaria pura* kept company with **Lemon Disco**, *Bisporella citrina* and **Purple Jellydisc**, *Ascocoryne sarcoides*.There were huge numbers of the familiar reddy brown **Jelly Ears,** *Auriculae judea* recorded, plus the dark globular blobs of **Witches Butter,** *Exidia glandulosa* and **Warlocks Butter**, *Exidia plana* were also plentiful - fantastic names as well as fascinating in form and texture. These jelly type fungi were the most frequently recorded over the three months, and clearly flourished in the wet weather. At Ketton I also found **White Brain** *Exidia thuretiana*, a less common jelly, looking more like an opaque white form of Crystal Brain. On the same walk I encountered an extraordinary expanse of **Silver Leaf Fungus** *Chondrostereum pupureum* smothering the lower trunk of an ailing Beech tree. There were plenty of cup fungi around during these months, including the tiny turquoise **Green Elfcup,** *Chlorociboria aegruginascens,* sprouting from its stained substrate and a whole party of submerged **Scarlet Elfcups,** *Sarcoscypha austriaca* under water in a flooded ditch, looking none the worse for wear. **Oysters** and **Velvet Shank** *Flammulina velutipes* were recorded around the county – the latter benefitting from the milder temperatures.

An interesting find was a cluster of robust orangey-red capped mushrooms at the base of a tree, growing in a wood just south of Rutland which had me quite stumped. I took a specimen home and spore printed it to reveal a dark purpley-brown print revealing its identity as the less common relative of Sulphur Tuft, the **Brick Tuft,** *Hypholoma lateritium.*

Last winter's stars -the **Willow Blister Fungus** *Cryptomyces maximus* and the **Cobalt Crust fungus** Terana coerulea made appearances again around Rutland Water.

Thank you to all who sent in records.



White brain. K Fortune Jones



Beech jelly disc. K Fortune Jones



Brick tuft. K Fortune Jones



Brick tuft sporeprint. K Fortune Jones

Recording for RNHS

What makes up a wildlife record?

A wildlife record pinpoints a species to a specific location, date and recorder. There are 4 basic components – WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHO. **What** is the organism you want to record? **Where** did you see it?(Grid ref or What Three Words) **When** was the date? And **Who** was the person who recorded it? This is all you need to build a record that will inform how local species are faring. There are useful apps that can make it easier to do this. To generate a Grid ref there are quite a few free apps available now. Download them free from Google appstore.

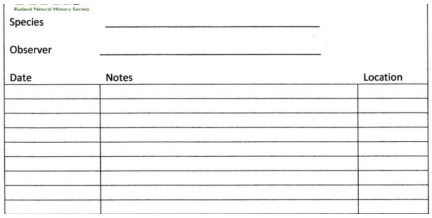
OS locate and

Grid reference OS

Ways to record: RNHS Recorders take records from members in various ways:

1. **Recording section on RNHS Website.** (Click top right) You can download and print off:

a) ***paper recording cards*** to either post to recorders or to leave at indoor meetings. (October - April)


Species _____

Observer _____

Date	Notes	Location

b) ***Wildlife recording submission form.*** Fill in form on the website remembering to select the recording department you want to use and press “send”. This will then email to official RNHS recorder. (Really easy option).

c) ***Download excel files***. (Scroll right down) Email your completed excel file as an attachment, to the recorders email address listed in the file. (There is a "further guidance" sheet here)



Amphibians and reptiles



Butterflies



Botany



Moths

2. Email record's directly to recorder. Remember the What, When,Where,Who guidance. Emails are in Fieldfare next to the recorder’s reports.

RNHS recorders put their own and members monthly records onto an excel sheet and either send to their chosen records centre (ie Butterfly conservation etc) or to the Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC). This is preferable for our local records as many ecologists’ needing information as part of an ecological survey, i. e. for planning applications ask for records from LRERC and they have RNHS records going back many years.

3.Naturespot. You need to be registered on the Naturespot website to add records and preferably good photos too.

a) Go on to www.naturespot.org.uk and register or log in.
b) At the top – click on “Record”. In dropdown, click on “Submit record”.
c) Left hand side click on “Select a project”.
d) In dropdown select "**Rutland Natural History Society”.**
e) Fill in your sighting in the boxes provided, including identifying photos (up to 3 images) and click “save”. Your records will then be saved to the RNHS project where John Rodgers will download to send to recorders before current issue of Fieldfare. If you have difficulty filling in the boxes, Naturespot has a “Guide to submitting records”.

4. Mobile phone apps. Many people now use apps to record species found on walks or other pursuits such as “I record”, "Merlin" “Obsidentify” etc. They can be useful if you are not sure which beetle for example, you are trying to identify, **BUT be careful -** they can be way off the mark and it is always best to verify your record by confirming in a book. If you are using this method to identify a species on the app first, use your phone to send additional photos from as many angles as possible and send to the relevant recorder who will either verify and add to their records or forward to County recorders to verify. Make sure you add the "What, Where, When and Why details to the email with the photo's.





Where do our records end up?

Wildlife records are verified with experts and then passed on to local environmental records centres (LERC's). Ours go to Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre or to other recording schemes and then on to the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) or national recording schemes like BRC (Biodiversity Records Centre).





Why are they so important?

They are crucial for tracking species data, informing conservation efforts and understanding environmental changes over time. They help researchers, policymakers and conservationists make informed decisions. This data informs conservation strategies, policy decisions and even local planning. Plus, they engage the public in citizen science, boosting awareness and participation in biodiversity conservation efforts.
NBN data helps identify areas needing protection, track invasive species and monitor endangered species recovery. Local groups use it to plan habitat restoration projects or argue for environmental protections. It is used in planning decisions like assessing environmental impacts of new developments. Researchers use it for studies on climate change effects, species migration patterns and ecosystem health. It even helps with biosecurity planning, like tracking disease spread in wildlife.





Recording our wildlife is a powerful tool for making a difference!

INSECTS & INVERTEBRATES

RECORDER : VACANT

Jan/Feb/March 2026.

January and February saw very little in the way of invertebrates, either flying or crawling above the ground, as many become dormant and hide in leaf litter or under bark at this time of the year. When the sun did peer through the gloom for any length of time, the odd queen bumblebee, woken up by the warmth and braving the cold, could be seen weaving at ground level, looking either for a suitable nesting site or for her first meal of the year. The ground was sodden everywhere.

A sunny day on 22nd February when the temperature reached a heady 13 degrees, a sudden flurry of queen **Buff-tailed bumblebees** and an assortment of flies, all emerged, taking advantage of the first flowers blooming. My first sighting of the year on this day, was a **Yellow Dung fly** covered in snowdrop pollen in my back garden. Being quite hairy like the bumblebees, they are able to withstand quite cool temperatures. Very common, they can be found anywhere, not just on cow pats! Jayne Walker found a queen **Red-tailed bumble bee** in her garden at Exton.



Red-tailed bumblebee J Walker



Female Yellow dung fly. C Baxter

Spring arrived in March and with a bit more sun and lengthening days, the butterflies and bees were emerging properly to start their yearly cycle all over again. On the morning of 18th March in Uppingham, the early sun brought out the male **Hairy-footed flower bees** to a large patch of Creeping comfrey in a sheltered spot in the garden. The flowers always appear quite early, and these charming little bees are especially attracted to the long tubular shaped flowers. The males are quite distinctive with their yellow moustaches and stumpy ginger bodies, and they are usually seen chasing each other around, presumably to keep territory as I see them well before the females arrive. I saw two female Hairy-footed flower bees a few days later, down the other end of the garden near fruit bushes. They are also easy to spot, looking like little blackcurrants with wings – no waist. The Creeping comfrey in this sheltered spot is a magnet for the bees, attracting more queen Buff-tailed bumblebees and **Honeybees.** Amongst the buzzing, a **Dock bug** was spotted sitting quietly on one of the comfrey leaves sunning itself in the sunshine. By the afternoon, the temperature in Langham had reached 16 degrees in the sunshine and the blossom on the trees in Mundays close had enticed some Bee flies, hovering over the flowers with their long tongues probing deeply for nectar. These were the more common species, *Bombylius major* – the **Dark edged bee fly**. Keep your eye out for the less common Bombylius discolour or Dotted bee fly as it is now becoming more frequent in our area. Of course, where there are flowers, there are honeybees and there were plenty landing with their pollen baskets full to brimming. Many **7-spot ladybirds** were emerging from their torpor to warm up in the foliage everywhere. A large queen **Wasp** appeared to be looking down on me from an ivy clad hedge near the entrance to the close as I walked out. I wasn't inclined to try and photograph a close up of it's face to determine which of the three species of wasp it may have been.



Dark edged bee fly. C. Baxter



Honeybee. C Baxter

The hedges along Manor Lane in Langham are almost completely ivy bound and if it is sunny, these hedges are a good place to find early bees and flies. On the 19th it was cooler than the day before and a bit blustery but the hedges here were covered in 7-spot ladybirds. I didn't see one Harlequin ladybird among them although I did spot a little black and red **Pine ladybird**. These little beetles are only around 3mm to 4mm with a black head and a rim around



the bottom of the wing cases. A variation of the 2-spot ladybird can look very similar but the red spots at the front are not comma shaped. Some coloured Harlequins can also have the same pattern but they are much bigger and have two white spots behind the head.

MAMMALS

RECORDER Linda Biddle
21 Waverley Gardens, Stamford PE9 1BH.
Tel: 01780 762108 Email: abiddle21@talktalk.net

Jan- March 2026

Our first mammal report for 2026, and though it has been a quiet season several of you have sent me some records to forward to our Vice County 55 mammal recorder Helen o'Brien. It is lovely to see the countryside waking up in the springtime after what was a very dark, grey and damp, not to say wet, winter!

I'm pleased to report that our hedgehog, far from being removed by the local badger which visited last autumn, has survived the winter, and has been joined by at least one other! We have noted dead hedgehogs on roads around Stamford, so I'm sure there are more than people think – we would never have known about ours if we hadn't put out our trail camera. Please do have a try if you can get a camera or borrow one from a neighbour!! It would be good to have lots of hedgehog reports this summer from all over the county. (I know this is a mammal report, but we also have a blackcap and chiff chaff singing at the bottom of the garden, and they've been joined by a thrush for the first time here for about 5 years, so even though this is an ordinary suburban garden there's lots of wildlife)

One other **hedgehog** has been seen on the trail camera at Langham by Marian Markham, first appearing on 3rd March and has been a regular since then. In our garden we have also seen various minibeasts, probably field (wood) mice, but voles too, again we would have been unaware of them without the camera. At Langham, mice were reported on camera in January and March, and another was seen at Cottesmore.

I'm also thrilled to report that Dr Gallimore spotted a **Water vole** at Wader Scrape hide at Rutland water in February, as it swam across in front of the hide, our first report from a member (apart from myself!) for some time.

A single **Mole** record has been received, reporting lots of activity at Barrow and Cottesmore. They have also been active at Horn Mill near Exton, and at RWNR. There are possibly more moles present in Rutland than any other mammal, but they are very infrequently recorded – maybe you could let us know where they are active!

Badgers visited the Langham camera on 3 occasions in January and February, and In March they were regular visitors. One was also seen at the entrance to Barrow village. Badger road casualties were spotted at Braunston, Lyddington and between Cottesmore and Ashwell.



Baby squirrel, one of a pair in Jacky Morrells garden Photo J Morrell

A **fox** turned up on camera at Langham in the small hours, twice during January, but has not been around since.

Brown Hares have been seen in ones and twos at Walk farm Pickworth on a regular basis. At both Exton and Fort Henry, seven were seen at one time, possibly due to the lack of a hare shoot being held this winter, and others were reported from Little Casterton, Pickworth, RWNR, Cottesmore, Teigh and Brooke. **Grey squirrels** also appeared on camera, both in Langham and in our own garden, where they have become a nuisance, frequently knocking off the peanut bird feeder and raiding its contents from the ground, commonly also seen in Pickworth wood, RWNR, and in Barrow in the garden of the Willows.

Rabbits are seen very regularly, both at Quarry farm Great Casterton, and closer to Little Casterton, where often we see large numbers running to their holes as we approach with the dog. There is a large warren in the hedgerow to the w of Little Casterton Road, and another in the hedge that runs down toward the Guash between Little Casterton and Ryhall.

Live Muntjac were seen at Tickencote, Great Casterton, Gunthorpe, Barrow, Barnsdale and Brooke and at Langham, six times during the 3-month period Jan – March.

Fallow were only seen at Exton, Tunnely wood, and Little Casterton, though prints are very common along the farm track at Walk farm, and in Pickworth Great Wood.

Roe Deer were seen on two occasions at Martinsthorpe, a single in February, and three together in March.

A **weasel r**an across the Barrow Road at Cottesmore in January, and a **stoat** was observed at Rutland water Egleton reserve in February.

Our mammal camera trapping survey has continued during the winter, and we have been looking for small mammals at Cherry Wood, the wooded area of the reserve, which is south of the Hambleton Road, compartment by compartment. We have had numerous **field mice** and **short tailed field voles,** together with a few **rats,** one weasel, squirrels, and an assortment of birds, robins, great tits, dunnock and one marsh tit! We are about to complete this area and will then move on to the Egleton reserve.

Thank you to all of you who have sent me your records. Please continue to do so and encourage your neighbours and friends to do the same. Enjoy the summer months of nature watching!

Duncan and Jane Ball, A Biddle, Tim Caldicott, Charles Gallimore. Marian Markham, Jacky Morrell, Terry Mitcham and S Smalley.

FIELD TRIPS

Sunday January 25th. A winter walk at the Eyebrook reservoir led by Craig Howat

A small group from the Rutland Natural History Society visited the Leicestershire side of Eyebrook Reservoir on a winter morning characterised by low cloud, misty conditions and intermittent light rain. While visibility was reduced at times, it was generally sufficient to scan much of the reservoir, with birds often appearing gradually out of the haze as conditions subtly shifted.

Despite the unpromising weather, the reservoir was holding substantial numbers of wintering wildfowl. Dabbling ducks were particularly well represented, with large flocks of **Eurasian Wigeon** and **Gadwall** forming the dominant presence on the water. **Mallard, Teal** and **Northern Shoveler** were also widespread, with smaller numbers of **Pintail** and **Pochard** noted. Diving ducks included good numbers of **Tufted Duck** and scattered **Common Goldeneye.**

Eurasian Coot were present in large numbers, and the surrounding fields and margins held sizeable flocks of **Northern Lapwing,** which periodically lifted and resettled as the group moved around the site. **European Golden Plover** were also recorded, reinforcing the importance of Eyebrook as a wintering area for waders.

Gulls were active both on the water and overhead, with **Common Gull** particularly numerous, accompanied by **Black-headed Gull** and smaller numbers of **Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls.** Four **Great Crested Grebes** were seen on the open water.

The damp, grey conditions suited herons and egrets well, with **Grey Heron, Little Egret** and three **Great White Egrets** recorded, often standing motionless along the margins. Raptors added interest, with a **Red Kite** drifting through low cloud, alongside sightings of **Common Buzzard** and **Common Kestrel.**

Away from the water, bird activity was quieter but included typical winter species such as **Redwing, Robin, Dunnock, Goldcrest** and small numbers of tits. Corvids were present around the reservoir edge, whilst 2 **Skylark** was noted singing and flying over despite the weather.

In total, the group recorded 43 species and approximately 2,750 individual birds during the visit. Although the mist and low cloud muted both colours and distant views, the trip clearly demonstrated Eyebrook Reservoir's continued value as a key winter site for wildfowl, waders and wetland birds.

Saturday March 7th. Egleton birdwatching with Terry Mitchum

A singing **Chiffchaff** greeted members as they assembled in the Egleton reserve carpark on a cool, overcast morning. There were other signs of spring – the cawing of nest-building **Rooks** by the Centre and singing **Chaffinches** and **Greenfinches.** The walk up to lagoon four was enlivened by more singing Chiffchaffs and **Robins**, a yaffling **Green Woodpecker** and the deafening song of a **Cetti's Warbler** close by the service track. It was sad to note the demise of the Ash trees at the back of lagoon two due to Ash dieback – several have already been felled.



Chaffinch. C Baxter

From Sandpiper hide on lagoon four we could see that the water level was very high, submerging most of the islands and leaving little room for the **Lapwings** and **Redshanks** present. Despite this, Lapwings were optimistically displaying over the limited space available. Three **Oystercatchers** were seen – very striking with their pied plumage and red bills. Wildfowl were mostly paired, the males in smart breeding plumage, and there were good views of **Wigeon, Teal, Shoveler, Pintail, Gadwall** and **Tufted Ducks.** A pair of **Yellow-legged Gulls**, perched near the Osprey nest pole seemed ready to take over the nest from a very vocal **Egyptian Goose.**
Moving on to Shoveler hide on lagoon three there were more close views of wildfowl, this time including **Goldeneye** plus **Great White and Little Egrets.** Two **Snipe** were greatly admired as they probed for invertebrates on one of the islands, well camouflaged with their streaked brown and buff plumage. Walking back, we stopped off at Grebe hide on lagoon two with brief views for some of a **Curlew.** There were more Goldeneye here and, best of all, a flock of twenty **Pochard,** now quite a scarce visitor to Rutland Water. As we had also seen on lagoon three, the nesting platforms in the water were occupied by many raucous Black-headed Gulls - a further sign of the advent of spring.



Curlew. P Scott

OTHER NEWS

Continuing to re-wild Munday's close. An update from Marian Markham

Marian gave an excellent talk to the Society last autumn about how residents of Langham came together in 1997 to plan a strategy for rewilding some old disused allotments in the village.
“We dug the hole as a stepped shape during 2024 by hand, with the deepest bit in the middle at 1 metre and two benched horizons. The 1mm thick Butyl liner was placed and the pond filled in November 2024. The surface is 3metres by 3.5 metres. We added native pond plants in





baskets of pond soil from Naturescape, beautiful purple Welsh Slates for the landscaped edges and a bag of Water Cress from the supermarket! The soil, subsoil and the bits of Rutland limestone from the hole are placed as the raised bed next to the pond to ensure no waste generated. The pond area is surrounded by a dead hedge of branches from Munday's Close to keep toddlers from harm whilst also being a wildlife habitat. There is a rabbit burrow in the log pile at the back of the pond, so all the plants have to be rabbit-proof and Muntjac proof!
The duckweed, blanket weed and mosquito larvae moved themselves straight in of course in 2025! However, this then formed a good resting place and food for the dragonfly nymphs, so I am looking forward to seeing these aerial dragons as adults in summer 2026 there. Perhaps some amphibians will find the pond too.”

****

Bloody Oaks and Ketton Quarry. Peter Scott

Butterflies started to emerge, my first Dingy Skipper of the year, Peacock, Orange Tip and Brimstone.
Garden Warblers and Blackcaps competing for attention, saw both so confident of ID. Kites and Buzzards calling and 2 Roe Deer in adjacent field.



Dingy skipper.
P Scott

As it had warmed up considerably went to Ketton. No Skippers but found Green Hairstreak, plenty of Holly Blues, Brimstones plus a very vocal Green Woodpecker.



Left: Green hairstreak.
P Scott



Right: Male Holly blue.
P Scott

****

An alarming article came to my attention in the March issue of the RHS Garden magazine that warned of a potentially invasive species of a cultivated Asian Oyster mushroom (see far left) being found growing in the wild. Imported for the home growing kit market, this non-native Golden Oyster mushroom is a fast, aggressive grower which outcompetes native mushrooms, as seen in recent years in the US. It has unfortunately been found in 3 sites in northern England and in the Midlands. **Do report it if you see it.**

Kate Fortune Jones.



Chairmans report 2026. AGM 3rd February 7.30pm

The aim last year as always, has been about getting together and sharing our passion for the natural world. We had a full programme and a busy year of outdoor and indoor events for 2025. Early in the year we went to see the winter waterfowl at **Egleton Bird Watching Centre** and also at **Fort Henry.** The "willow blister" crust fungus found by Tim Sexton at Egleton and subsequently viewed by us all, was identified as one of the top 100 rarest species in the world! We went to see another rarity just outside the Rutland border at **Barnack** in April - the Pasqueflower - a beautiful purple flower with bright yellow stamens, still being recorded in Rutland in 1966. Members explored more local spots as well, enjoying the highlights of the dawn chorus in **Priors coppice,** orchids in **Cribbs meadow** and butterflies at **Glapthorn.** Our stroll along the beautiful **Eyebrook valley** one evening in June, felt just like an idyllic step back in time, and we have Joe Nourish, our host for that evening to thank for this lovely memory. At the height of the summer, the land was parched and desiccated, denying our butterfly and moth caterpillars their food plants and our pollinators their food source. When we visited **Frampton Marsh** in September, to quote the walk leader Craig Howat, "much of the reserve had shrunk to cracked mudflats with a few residual pools". The weather did eventually break and the year ended with plenty of rain, ideal conditions for a fungal foray into **Wakerley woods** and a visit to **Deeping lakes.**

Our indoor talks were equally informative, and in preparation for the gardening year ahead, our speakers gave expert advice on "how to encourage wildlife into your gardens and ponds, your wild spaces and your nestboxes. Marian Markham talked about "How to rewild a Rutland village" and in November our friend Henry Stanier was back with an update on the Great Fen Project.

In partnership with the Wildlife Trust, we spent 8 weeks in the long summer evenings, counting a record number of glowworms around the county. We had a bioblitz in Hebe's wood with Alan Cann, the Naturespot spider recorder, although again, the hot weather took its toll. Recorders organised a summer holiday Bug hunt at Ketton Quarry and we held our 60th anniversary lunch in Wing in September. I end this report with heartfelt thanks to those who continue to keep the wheels of the society turning. Thank you to Donnie, Steve and Alan for providing refreshments for our talks, to our Recorders - the backbone of our society, who turn our records into reports for Fieldfare. Our thanks to all the members of the committee, to John, Joe, Dave, Tricia and Tim who give up their time to make sense of what we try to achieve. We mustn't forget those who are not on the committee but have important roles in the running of the society – Nick Gibson for looking after our website and keeping us informed, Jacky Morrell who organises the distribution of newsletter to our members. I would like to especially thank Linda Biddle and Peter Scott for stepping in to compile the Annual programme for this year and the annual accounts for last year. Their help and support has been invaluable as we continue to hope for a new secretary and Treasurer for the Society. Thank you to Tim Mackrill our Vice President for opening and presiding over this 61st AGM and to remember our President Phil Rudkin, who couldn't be with us today.

I cannot finish this report without taking a minute to remember our friend Jenny. She was a familiar face at all our meetings, a valuable member on the committee for many years and sadly, now missed by us all.

Treasurers Report for Accounts 31 December 2025

This report has been prepared by Peter Scott who stood in for Craig Howat who resigned as Treasurer at the end of November 2025.

The spreadsheet on file was updated from the entries on Lloyds Bank statements and from entries in the Melton Mowbray Passbook.

A copy of the Income and Expenditure statement was presented to the AGM on the 3rd March 2026 and was accepted by the meeting.

A copy of Craig's handover statement from November 2025 has been made available to include on Dropbox together with a printed copy to go with the formal minutes of the meeting.

There was very little activity through the accounts during the year.

The majority of income coming from Subscriptions which were slightly down on 2024 reflecting the small drop in membership numbers. Craig had not submitted a claim for Gift Aid, this however can be claimed through a backdated claim when a new treasurer is appointed.

Expenditure has increased in line with the general inflation and the costs of the Anniversary Meal which was not entirely covered by the income.

Taking into account £202 of 2025 Subscriptions paid in 2024 there was a deficit of approx. £500.00, not a major issue allowing for the reserves currently held at Lloyds and Melton Mowbray Building Society. Also there could still be approx. £300 to claim back for Gift Aid.

These accounts will need to be posted to the Charities Commission file to ensure the Society complies with its legal requirements.

3rd March 2026

Rutland Natural History Society
Income and Expenditure Account for year ended 31/12/25

2024		2025
	Income	
2,125	Subscriptions for Year	1,665
202	Subs paid early for 2025	0
355	Gift Aid tax refund	0
61	Donations	0
36	Calendar/Card sales	11
94	Events	388
0	Other	170
52	Interest Received	258
2,925	**Total Income**	**2,491**
	Expenditure	
450	Hall hire & refreshments	450
380	Speakers & visit leaders	425
0	On Line events (Zoom)	0
896	Fieldfare printing	984
198	Publications Postage	167
27	Sundry Publication Costs	0
25	Duplicate Subs Refunded	0
344	Website	324
55	Membership Fees	55
127	Sundry Expenditure	661
232	Insurance	131
2,734	**Total expenditure**	**3,198**
191	**Surplus/Deficit**	-706
	Reserves	
10,965	Balance brought forward	11,156
191	Surplus for year	-706
11,156	**Balance carried forward**	10,450
	(includes £2000 Insurance Reserve)	

Reserves include £145 (£245 - 2022) from legacy received
to be utilised for ornithological lectures over time £100.00 to Gary Prescott in 2023

5,821	Melton Mowbray Building Society	6,079
5,324	Lloyds Bank current account	4,360
11	Petty Cash	11
	Less Subs received in advance	
11,156	**Total**	10,449

Peter Scott
Date
31/12/2025

Vacancies on the committee

Secretary

1. Takes minutes of meetings and AGM. Send to Chair and add to dropbox files to be shared.
2. Discuss agenda for upcoming committee meetings and approve.
3. Point of contact between society and outside world i.e. comments from the website.
4. Responds to correspondence as appropriate.
5. Receive requests from various society members and to message ALL members. Full list of members on Dropbox.

T To be shared and then send these out as emails.

6. Work with programme secretary.

Treasurer

1. Pays bills and updates the accounts spreadsheet
2. Prepares end of year accounts to AGM
3. Liaise on issues re. Charities commission and HMRC Gift aid.
4. Maintain up-to-date information with Lloyd's bank and Melton building society.

Vice chair

Role in its own right. Does not have to be attached to any other.

Publicity

1. Keep up-to date information on our social media platforms i.e. Facebook.
2. Advertise events on Rutland and Stamford sound.
3. Write occasional publicity in free magasines and Stamford Mercury (local paper).
4. Make posters for events.
5. Liaise with web co-ordinator to advertise latest event on website
6. Distribute back copies and leaflets around libraries etc
7. Send events to Naturespot and Roxanne LRWT

These are only the main guidelines for each role but the tasks are adaptable and can be split up. Helping with just one or two of the points listed would be hugely valuable to the committee. If there is anything you can help with, you can contact any of the committee or Carolyn by email or phone. (Numbers below).

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