

Environment and Biodiversity Newsletter

Summer Newsletter 2024

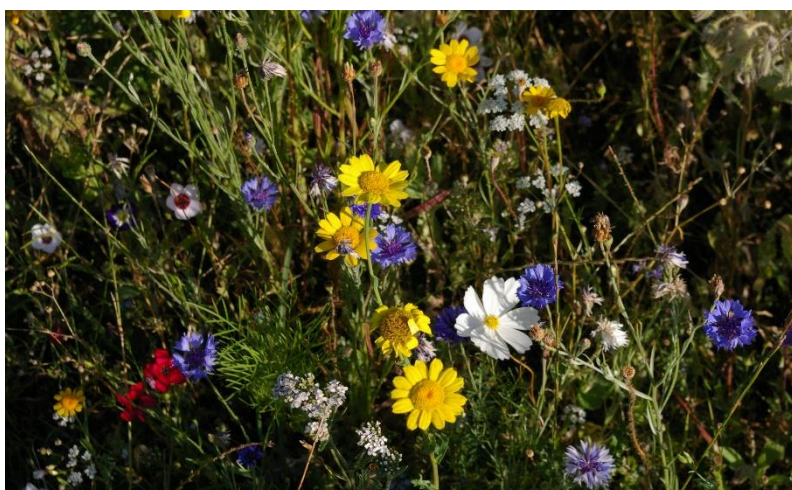
Sometimes we forget what a wonderful place we live in for wildlife and biodiversity. Global warming and particularly this year's weather consisting of a very wet winter and a very long but dry summer has provided its challenges not just for the town but also the natural environment.

It was with this in mind I took a walk around Hunstanton in the summer, looking at the town in terms of its environment. While there are many things that need doing or can be improved, one thing that really struck me was the wonderful seemingly untouched areas, that could be found around the town that enhance wildlife and biodiversity. I walked along the clifftop with its areas of long grass filled with wildflowers and insects. Areas such as these provide wildlife corridors throughout the town and in the summer their full splendour and beauty can really be appreciated. These areas were originally a project by our ex town Councillor and Mayor Adrian Winnington (with valued help from the Town Resort team) which now form a major part of 'In Bloom'. While talking about this, I would like to say congratulations to all involved with In Bloom in Hunstanton on achieving a Gold award again this year.



Wildflower and Grass verges along Oasis Way

But it's not just the clifftop, it is the grass verges, along the routes coming into Hunstanton, the pitch and putt, cemetery, community orchard and the Sheep Field. Living close to the cemetery and Sheep



A Close up of some of the Wild Flowers in all their summer glory

Field I see the nature in these areas regularly and can give you more of an insight into what wildlife areas such as this support. When I started looking I was amazed, there were Hedgehogs, bats (pipistrelles and possibly long eared), deer, ducks, at night you can also hear, and if you are very lucky, see a tawny owl swooping across the field. My neighbour has also shown me some of the wide range of moths that are

present near the cemetery, from humming bird and elephant hawk moths and even a privet hawk moth the size of which has to be seen to be believed and some of these species are nationally important. This is before you consider the rich diversity of trees, plant life and other birds, animals and insect life these areas harbour.



The avenue of trees in Hunstanton Cemetery

I managed to take a few pictures of the plants in these areas that many of us just think of as long grass (or even weeds) and they accompany this article.

So, in this first newsletter, let's stop and think, a bit about the wider issues about biodiversity and the wonderful area we live in

The Wash is part of one of the most internationally recognised and important areas for wildlife and birds in western Europe (sites such as these are known as Ramsar sites). It has extensive Mudflats and saltmarshes, that provide crucial breeding and feeding grounds for a wide range of birds, including ducks, geese, gulls and waders. It has habitats for rare and endangered species and it is a very important stopover point for millions of migratory birds.

The land surrounding Hunstanton has been designated as an area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB), and provides habitats for a wide range of wildlife. Not just the coastal habitats but marshes, heaths, woodlands, which support a diversity of wildlife, that is special to this area. This wildlife rich habitat we find around Hunstanton is important to the country and contributes to the world as a whole.

Tourism is an essential part of North west Norfolk's economy and while some people come just for a leisurely day trip to the sea, enjoying the beach, ice creams, and the myriad of activities on offer a major reason for tourists to come is the rich diversity of wildlife Hunstanton and the surrounding areas support.

We live in a time of change, there is the pressure from development. Hunstanton has seen over 500 houses built in



The Sheep Field at it's most beautiful best in the height of summer

the last 5 years. Go back only a few more years and you can add several hundred more, an increase of size of the town by well over a third. But if you watch the news you will see the pressure to build houses is not just a local issue but also a national issue. Many of the constraints imposed on house building in the past are being removed by the current government.

When we look at global warming, there are concerns on flooding and erosion. The saltmarshes we have play a crucial role in mitigating coastal erosion and flooding, they will build up as water levels rise and provide a safe haven for wildlife during extreme weather events.



Another close up showing the beauty of the wildflowers

And finally, my photography skills are not great, but if you have pictures of nature in Hunstanton you are prepared to share we will try to add a few to the next newsletter and/or our council Facebook page.

We have some gems of biodiversity in Hunstanton, which we need to protect but also aim to improve our environment, for the future of all creatures great and small. All need food water and a place to live, the more we can live beside and not against nature, the better it will be

for the future. Please tell us how you are helping, at home, work school or leisure, I would love to know.

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(This newsletter reflects my personal view and does not necessary review the views of all members of Hunstanton Town Council)