

BREDFIELD WILDLIFE FRIENDLY VILLAGE: REPORT - 2021/22



Bredfield Wildlife Friendly Village (BWFV) was launched in March 2021. Our project was enabled by a grant of £1,500 from East Suffolk Council, and by encouragement and support from Bredfield Parish Council. The project was launched during restrictions imposed by the Covid 19 pandemic and, inevitably, this hampered the extent of our intended activities. Nevertheless, we managed to carry out several key activities successfully and we have built a broad base of support. An unexpected, but welcome, outcome has been the extent to which we have networked effectively with other villages and organisations; providing both an inspiration for others and a base for advice. This report provides: details of our activities; a critical assessment of our achievements; details of spending; and an indication of what we intend to achieve over the next year or two.

Activities and achievements

The launch of our BWFV project happened on 12th March 2021, intentionally coinciding with the day our [website](#) went live. Two weeks later, we began our [Facebook Group](#) page. We were unable to launch our initiative with a meeting of residents in Bredfield Village Hall, as we would have liked, and so the presence of these virtual means of communication proved to be a lifeline. The website drew praise from several quarters, including East Suffolk's Cabinet Member for Environment, James Mallinder. Apparently against the odds, our Facebook Group page proved to be a success. There are 140 or so households in our village, with a demographic profile non-typical for Facebook users. Nevertheless, we managed to recruit over 50 members.

One of first activities was to arrange for, then dig and plant, a wildflower patch in the church grounds. We are grateful to Bredfield Parochial Church Council for allowing this. A group of residents - young and old - volunteered, and the prepared patch was sown with wildflower seeds. This was a highly symbolic start to our wildlife-friendly village campaign.

Two other notable events took place later: an instructive wildflower walk at Bredfield Jubilee Meadow and Orchard, led by Laurie Forsyth from the Suffolk Flora Preservation Society; and an evening meeting at Bredfield Village Hall, led by Cathy Smith from Suffolk Wildlife Trust, on the subject of Wildlife-friendly Gardening.



Our Wildflower walk at Bredfield Meadow and Orchard



Volunteers digging the church ground's wildflower patch



Wildlife-friendly gardening talk in the village hall

As a consequence of our Village Hall meeting, and through discussion on our website and Facebook group page, we expect that changes in gardening habits - large and small - are happening locally, in a wildlife-friendly direction. Discussions among members of our community support this. We have a strong voice on Bredfield Parish Council and have helped shaped its Climate Emergency Policy and engagement with the Queen's Jubilee Green Canopy campaign.

The mission of Bredfield Wildlife Friendly Village includes the statement that *"We will join with other villages and organisations to share practices and help create a network of wildlife-friendly havens"*. This wider, networking element of our mission has perhaps been one of our greatest achievements. We have met and talked with other 'green' groups in the East Suffolk area: Snape, Felixstowe, Waldringfield, Martlesham and Campsea Ash. Indeed, the group in the latter village - [Wild About Campsea](#) - have cited us as an 'inspiration' for the setting up of their group. We have joined in discussions with several other groups on the East Suffolk Community Partnership forum. More widely, we are a leading member of the national 'Wildlife Friendly Communities' organisation and have provided advice to several other groups in Suffolk and beyond. We have provided two articles for East Suffolk's [Greenprint Forum magazine](#), and we have received several requests to share material from our website, including from Natural England.

The mission of Bredfield Wildlife Friendly Village also contains an aspiration to promote, what we called 'wildlife friendly learning'. Our intention was to use Bredfield Jubilee Meadow and Orchard as a learning resource for local schools. Linked to this, we developed and provided access to learning resources on our website. We approached three local schools: Farlingaye High School, Charsfield Primary School, and St Mary's Primary School. Respectively, the responses were: a willingness to engage; an expression of interest; and no response. The over-riding problem we faced was the effect of Covid restrictions which deterred any schools from arranging field trips. Added to this, was the relatively short window of opportunity to study the distinctive flora of Bredfield's ancient meadow. We have not given up on this learning aspect of our mission, but we intend to subsume it within a broader guiding concept of 'nature engagement' (see final section).

Spending

Our spending this year was:

Date	Details	Amount
March 2021	Development and launch of website, in conjunction with Community Action Suffolk	£900.00
April 2021	Seeds and fencing for wildflower patch in the church grounds	£95.87
Oct 2021	Hire of Bredfield Village Hall for SWT Wildlife-friendly Gardening Event	£30.00
Feb 2022	Renewal of Community Action Suffolk's hosting of website for 2022/23	£113.50
	TOTAL	£1,339.37

Plans and aspirations

A large part of our plans is to continue with what has worked well during the first year of our activities: continue with our Facebook group page; continue with the development of blogs, news and feature our website; continue to encourage and provide advice on wildlife friendly gardening; do further wildflower planting in Bredfield's green spaces; hold further meetings and events linked to our mission; and arrange field events promoting nature engagement (e.g. 'moth mornings' and 'wildlife walks' around the village).

Several Bredfield residents have mentioned that information boards and signs would be welcome. To pick two examples, these would provide information on: what is happening with our wildflower patch in the churchyard; and what flora and fauna they will encounter in Bredfield Meadow and Orchard. As we start new projects in Bredfield's green spaces, there will be additional need. Also, we will require general direction signs, and signs about such things as dog waste. All of this will require additional funding.

We will also continue to help build a network of wildlife-friendly communities, both in the East Suffolk area and nationally. We will exchange information with other villages and towns, provide advice, and learn from the best practice of others.

A slight change of direction will occur as we shift from the narrower focus of school learning, to the broader perspective of nature engagement. (For a more detailed discussion of this, please read the [feature on our website](#).) Whilst this will still include the learning and engagement of school children, we will now look to engage all age groups in learning and engaging with nature. Our position is that engagement with nature is not only a pre-requisite to pro-nature behaviours; it is also something that can help bring well-being to individuals and families. This latter benefit means that our promotion of nature engagement fits well with broader initiatives such as social prescribing and building communities. We will facilitate engagement with nature directly, through local nature walks and organised visits to Bredfield Meadow and Orchard; and vicariously, through our website and Facebook page. A salient aspect of our plans is an endeavour to engage older members of local communities.

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