

Our first year – AGM 2009



Reports on the surveys of the parish's roadside verges and ponds, an update on the swift nest- box project and an illustrated talk on bats followed the business meeting for those who attended the Plumpton Wildlife & Habitat Group's first AGM on 25th November 2009.

Roadside verges were found to be quite rich in wild flowers – 125 species were recorded in total – although often these were in danger of being crowded out by coarse grasses and invading shrubs. Four verges, two in the north and two in the south, were identified as being most promising for improvement and the next step will explore ways to achieve this.

A total of 93 ponds in the parish were surveyed this summer and the results sent to the Sussex Wildlife Trust, which is organising a county-wide survey of parish ponds. We are the first parish to have completed the survey and we are now investigating the possibility of restoring some ponds and creating new ones, particularly to provide good habitat for crested newts, of which we have four centres of populations, as well as to benefit other wildlife. Only six ponds are good for wildlife at present, many dry out in summer, others are silted up or too shaded, and others have ducks or fish that eliminate invertebrates and vegetation.

Swifts once nested in All Saints church tower and in a bid to attract them to return we have installed specially designed swift boxes, providing 36 potential nesting chambers.

And finally, if you would like to learn to identify trees in winter and help record some ancient trees, why not join a walk on Markstakes Common on Sunday 24th January – meet in Setfords Field, at the end of Green Lane, off Markstakes Lane, South Chailey at 10am.

The Big Garden Birdwatch, organized by the RSPB, takes place on 30th and 31st January – details of how to do it are on: <http://www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch/getready/>.

If you do take part then we would be interested in having a copy of your records so that we can build up a picture of Plumpton's garden birds. So as well as sending your records to the RSPB please also send them to Tony at hutson.t@btinternet.com.

Jacqui Hutson
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