

# What is the Plumpton and East Chiltington Wildlife Group?



In this month's article, and in the lead up to our AGM next month, we thought it might be useful to delve into the workings of your PECWG - what we are, why we are, what we do, but also to explore ways of involving interested parishioners more.

Definition time:

Wild: in the natural state, untamed, undomesticated

Life: animated corporeal existence, period between life and death, condition of being a living thing.

Wildlife: the animals, plants and fungi that grow independently of people

Basically we aim to celebrate the flora and fauna of our region and to help shed some light on how much there is here, in this beautiful, fascinating little corner of the world. There may not be any giraffe, elephant or big cats - that would be rather alarming. However, there are still fascinating creatures like badger, hedgehog, birds, bats and perhaps most interesting, and often overlooked, an amazing array of insects, not forgetting the plants and fungi, without which none of us or the above would be here right now.

In summary we aim to:

- *survey, monitor and map wildlife and their habitats in the local area*
- *conserve and manage local habitats for the benefit of wildlife*
- *enthuse and involve local people in wildlife conservation*
- *advise and support local people to create havens for wildlife.*

This is no small undertaking and we are few and all have other occupations, but we do it because we enjoy it and as a way of celebrating where we live. There are some members of the group who are extremely qualified, and we are very lucky to have them.

We recently asked you, the parishioner, for records of hedgehogs via Facebook and the group's website, which resulted in some useful feedback, some of which has been sent to the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre. It is gratifying that many residents are feeding and caring for our hedgehog population but sad that some of the records were of animals killed on the road.

We also regularly send records to the Sussex Botanical Recording Society. We would like to know if anyone is interested in helping with our recording efforts by entering records into spreadsheets or just sending us records of anything wildlife related.

On occasions we have organised trips outside of the parish for example: the visit to Knepp Wildland, bird ringing visits to Beachy Head, as well as events closer to home like the moth trapping, the nightjar and glow-worm evening, the nightingale walk, and the badger and woodland surveys. Of course, there are also the more visible efforts like the station wildflower planting, we will put another call out when the wildflower areas have been cut at the station, as we always need help with the raking and disposal of the cuttings. A call went out earlier this year to help toads across the road at the crucial mating and spawning periods, resulting in many volunteers - we plan to repeat the Toad Patrol next year.

What else would you like the PECWG to do? Are we doing enough to inspire the next generation of naturalists? Is your child/grandchild a budding David Attenborough? Do you/they want to learn how to identify birds, insects, plants and fungi?

We want to hear from you so please take a look at our [website](#) where you can see examples of what we do and will be doing and, hopefully, be encouraged to join us. Use our [Facebook Group](#) to share local wildlife sightings and wildlife-related events and news. If you're not a Facebook user, you can use the Contact Us page on the PECWG website to tell us about wildlife sightings.

Or why not come along to The Annual General Meeting of the PECWG that will be held on Monday 26 November at 7.30 p.m. in All Saints Church Annex. The evening will start with a talk by Jeremy Kerswell, Principal of Plumpton College. He will be talking about the college's new ecological strategy, which was launched in December 2017, and which now governs the management of the college estate. A break for light refreshments will follow before proceeding with the brief business of Annual General Meeting. All are welcome, members or not, and admission is free. If you are thinking of joining but haven't yet got around to it then please do come along and have your say in what we do.

We look forward to meeting you and receiving your suggestions.

On behalf of the PECWG Committee

Ben Drummond

Keen amateur and celebrant