



Bracknell Forest Natural History Society

A society for everyone interested in nature and its conservation

MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER - January 2025

New Committee Members



Since our AGM in September, several changes have been made to the structure of the Society. We are happy to welcome **Ulrike Halmer**, who is taking over the Treasurer's role from Lesley Williams who, after six years on the Committee would like to step down during this coming year.

We also welcome **Paul Adkins** onto the Committee. Paul has agreed to become our Projects Officer. He will oversee all biodiversity recording action which we take part in. He is joint Chair of the Climate Change Biodiversity Action Group and is committed to improving the natural aspects of the Bracknell Forest area. As an environmental group, we have become active members of all the biodiversity measurement and recording activities happening in the area. We now intend to give our Members regular updates on decisions made and practical action needed, regarding all aspects of the environmental measurements with which we have become involved.

Tree Planting in SHP



During October, to commemorate our **50th Anniversary year**, we planted a native Whitebeam tree on the edge of the South lawn at South Hill Park. Plaques are not permitted - but the tree is clearly visible from the terrace and the Recital Room windows - so it will always be a constant reminder of the extent of our history when we look out across the grass.

With best wishes and Happy New Year!
Gill Cheetham, Chairman – January 2025

Constant improvements at Nightingale Triangle



Even after seven years, our hardworking team of Volunteers continues to look after the woodland. This Autumn donated woodchips have been barrowed to even the furthest reaches of the pathways. The spreading of the chips has helped improve the general attractive appearance of the woodland, keeping the paths well covered and springy - and thus encouraging visitors to explore all the paths. The chips eventually become mulch and rot down, in doing so benefitting the soil overall.

The natural English Bluebell bulbs we have planted over the years are now established in most of the areas that have sufficient light to allow them to flourish. It is expected that the wet weather experienced during the second half of last year will improve conditions for the plants. The spring flowers appear from January onwards, peaking in April, before the canopy restricts light and the penetration of rainwater. However, to extend the planted parts and improve the understory, we also added a hazel glade during last year.



On the second Sunday in December we celebrated the highly effective work of our Volunteers, including the local friends group, with Afternoon Tea held at the home of one of our regular and very hospitable Volunteers.

A big Thank You from The Lottery!

We've recently received this message from our contact at The National Lottery, whose generosity we benefitted from a while back:

*I'm emailing from The National Lottery Community Fund - we've been in touch over the last few months in relation to Bracknell Forest Natural History Society being featured in our report celebrating the National Lottery's 30th birthday. **The report is now live!** Here's the link to the webpage:*

[Three decades of making a difference | The National Lottery Community Fund.](#)
*The piece on Bracknell Forest Natural History Society starts on **page 29**.*

Thank you so much for all your help and input – the report was made possible by the reflections and experiences you shared with us. It's been brilliant to be able to bring together and share so many stories and examples of the differences our grant holders are able to make.

*We'll continue to promote the report in the upcoming weeks and months, so please do look out for social media posts, and feel free to get involved with sharing these if you'd like. If you want to share the report yourself, we'd be delighted. **#NationalLottery30** is the 30th Birthday Campaign hashtag, should you wish to use this.*

Climate Change Action Group



You will be pleased to know that we have been asked by the Main Board to submit suggested details and categories for the tasks and outcomes expected of the **Biodiversity Group**. It is expected that the main body will achieve National Heritage Lottery funding to support the pathway towards net zero emissions by 2030. Our input will be included in the back up information supporting the Lottery bid.

The information below is taken from a message recently received from **Cllr Mary Temperton, Leader of Bracknell Forest Council and Cabinet Member for Climate Change**:

*I would be delighted to get feedback from Bracknell Forest Natural History Society on our new **Climate Change Strategy and Delivery plan**. As you know, the Council plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for the impacts of a changing climate.*

So much has changed since our last climate change strategy was published. This updated strategy highlights the needs for preparation against climate change impacts and collaborating with our community.

Achieving these goals will take a collective effort, and we want to hear from as many people as possible. Your feedback will shape how we tackle climate challenges together and make a sustainable future for our Borough.

This consultation is open until the end of Sunday 12th January and individuals can provide feedback in the following ways:

- Online, using our [Climate Change Strategy Consultation Survey](#).
- By joining our online event at 6pm on Monday 13 January to discuss and provide feedback with others. You can request an invite by completing the consultation survey, or use [this Teams link](#) to join directly on the day.
- By picking up a hard copy of the survey at a library and returning it to the librarian or the reception at Time Square.
- By emailing climate.change@bracknell-forest.gov.uk.

You can also find more information on our [climate consultation webpage](#). If you have any accessibility needs, issues or concerns, please email climate.change@bracknellforest.gov.uk for assistance.

Over to you, everyone...!

Our Illustrated Talks – for the coming quarter

7.30pm - In the Recital Room at South Hill Park



Monday 20th January 2025:

AN INTRODUCTION TO TRACKS AND SIGNS – the naturalist's forgotten skill

The ability to accurately identify and interpret tracks and signs relies on a body of traditional knowledge that previous generations of naturalists would have regarded as fundamental. Sadly, this skill is now largely unknown and untaught, but with the upsurge of citizen science it is perhaps more relevant than ever. Expert **Bob**

Cowley from the Oxfordshire Mammal Group will give us some excellent guidelines!

Monday 17th February 2025:

SOME GOOD NEWS ABOUT SNAILS AND SLUGS

Although some snails and slugs are damaging to our garden plants, the majority do more good than harm. **Dr Tom Walker**, a Member of the Conchological Society, will elucidate on various topics involving molluscs, ranging from conservation, food, archaeology, introductions and extinctions, 'alien' species, art, and more. He will also bring along a selection of shells, ranging from the large to the very small.



**Monday 17th March 2025: REPTILES AND
AMPHIBIANS OF THE NEW FOREST**

The New Forest National Park is home to all six of the UK's native reptile species. Forestry England's **Richard Daponte** works with the New Forest Reptile Centre to help protect rare snakes and lizards and encourage reintroductions across the country. He will talk about the Centre and its work, the reptiles and amphibians indigenous to the forest... and the important conservation going on to save these rare and secretive creatures.

Goat Moth in Bracknell Forest



Seen earlier this year, in a garden in Sandhurst... this mega-sized caterpillar of a Goat Moth. Any further strange, unusual or unexpected sightings for the Newsletter are always gratefully received!



Our visit to TITCHFIELD HAVEN Nature Reserve Sunday 9th February 2025, 10.30am



Our first Members' Visit of 2025 is to the beautiful Titchfield Haven Nature Reserve near Fareham (journey time just under 1.5 hours), where we have arranged for a knowledgeable guide to take us birdwatching in this beautiful and much-admired wetland habitat.

We hope you'll join us – and if you intend to, we need your payment of

the reserve's entry fee (£6.50 for adults, £5.50 for seniors) in advance, to secure your place.

There'll be a sign-up sheet on the Welcome Desk at our January Meeting, and cash payment will be taken then - or you can email our **Events Officer Heather King** at the following email address, to make arrangements to pay by bank transfer and get your name on the list: bfnsprog@gmail.com

Read all about it: [The Rivers Trust's 2023-24 Impact Report](#)



The Rivers Trust's latest **Impact Report**, published earlier this year, will get you up to speed about the work your support can help make possible. Over the course of one

year, The Rivers Trust Movement planted nearly half a million trees, eased, passed or removed 129 barriers to fish passage, and restored or created nearly 900 hectares of wetland.

But these numbers only scratch the surface. From hands-on river restoration to shaping policies that protect our waterways, the **Rivers Trust Movement** is fighting for rivers on all fronts—all of which is made possible with help from many quarters.

The Trust remains steadfast in its mission to demand better for our waterways, working tirelessly towards wild, healthy, natural rivers valued by all.

[Read their 2023-24 Impact Report](#)

The Trust also operates an interactive **Sewage Map** which shows where the sewerage network discharges treated sewage, overflows of untreated sewage and storm water into rivers in England and Wales – and here's your opportunity to check this out too!

[Explore the Sewage Map](#)

As we all know, the overall state of our rivers is in no way to be admired, and this is a huge subject to get to grips with. Where we can, as time goes by we intend to keep our Members informed and updated on this highly important subject.



Wild Bracknell – *“Together we can make our community a better place for both nature and people.”*

Wild Bracknell is a newly formed and slightly different environmental group, whose purpose is to enhance nature in Bracknell Forest and create networking opportunities for residents and supporters. Wild Bracknell organises projects and runs events aimed at improving nature and our wellbeing. On a smaller scale they also make suggestions for gardens.

They would like to hear about any ideas you may have as well - so please share your knowledge, expertise and suggestions – and especially nature-related pictures - on their **Facebook page: Wild Bracknell**.

Or drop them an email at wild.bracknell@gmail.com

This is your Newsletter, so if you have anything you would like included in our next issue, please send it to our Chairman Gill Cheetham at bfmathistsoc@rocketmail.com

And finally, here is a reminder of some nature-orientated websites which may be of interest to you:

www.bracknellforestgetinvolved.org.uk/listing/green-active/

Involve's Green & Active Volunteer Group gives everyone in Bracknell Forest the opportunity to get out and about helping in conservation and biodiversity tasks throughout the area. Check out their huge and varied list of activities in the pipeline for the New Year.



<https://www.hedgehogstreet.org>

<https://bbowt.org.uk>

<https://www.greenpeace.org.uk>

<https://friendsoftheearth.uk>

<https://populationmatters.org>

<https://www.plantlife.org.uk/>

<https://growwild.kew.org/>

<https://www.tverc.org/>

TVERC collects, analyses and shares geodiversity and biodiversity information in Berkshire and Oxfordshire, to help people make sound decisions about how to develop and manage land sustainably and where to direct wildlife conservation work.

Bracknell Forest Natural History Society

Our **Bracknell Forest Natural History Society Facebook** page has been updated, so please like and comment on our postings if you are a user of social media.

Find us on Facebook - www.facebook.com/bfnathistsoc/

Visit our website - www.bfnathistsoc.org.uk