

FEB 2024

RADFORD FORGE NEWS

FREE Donations Welcome

Occasional Newsletter of the Friends of Radford's Green Environment

CANAL SCHOOL NATURE PROJECT

Radford Primary School 'Forest School' has news of an exciting collaboration with the Canal and River Trust; Julia Finn, Radford School teacher and Forest School lead, contacted us to let us know all the details:

"We have adopted an area of the canal, just by the bridge on Offchurch Lane - if you walk down there, you will see a new flower bed. The year 4 children have planted 150 spring bulbs; there is also a hedgehog house, bird boxes, bug hotels and bat boxes. This area will be the school's responsibility to maintain. Close to this area are the bins which are behind a fenced area. The Canal & River Trust has supplied marine ply-wood and the children will then paint their designs on it to brighten up the whole area. We very much hope that the whole community can get on board with this - enjoy the area and help pick out a few weeds if ever passing by! We will continue to visit the canal during Forest School sessions to learn about the flora and fauna and to maintain the area we have adopted."



Julia would like to thank the Canal & River Trust for all their support with this amazing project; it will be great to watch how this beautiful 'space for nature' develops during the coming months and years as we all walk along the canal (and don't forget to take a weed or two home with you!).

Josie Sanderson



GREEN ENERGY TALK - You missed a treat

Despite a line of up two energy experts and three local speakers, only 12 people attended our talk on 19 October. But those who didn't come missed a treat. The talks from Bruno Gardner, Climate Change strategist and Jason Savidge of Stratford Energy were inspiring and informative. Attendees went away with a much better idea of how they could 'green' their homes using a combination of solar panels and battery technology and how this investment might reduce their energy bills but also their personal impact on climate change. After these expert talks the audience heard from Julia Cooley and Dave Steele about their different experiences of installing and using solar water heating followed by Gary Stocker's personal engagement with green issues in his illustrated talk 'My low carbon journey'.

So why didn't more people come to this event? Was it the timing or location or are people just not interested in the subject matter? What would make you attend more talks? If weekday evenings are a problem, would daytime talks at weekends be more attractive? Is the Parish Church too remote for most people? Should we offer talks online? It would help us if you would complete this brief survey: www.bit.ly/FoRGE-Talks



FORGE TALK by Pauline Pears - Organic Gardening Expert

A HEALTHY GARDEN WITHOUT PESTICIDES Do you know your insect friends?

With Bring & Buy Houseplant Sale

THURS 7 MARCH 7.30PM Baptist Church Hall, Lewis Road Radford Semele FREE ENTRY - Suggested Donation £5

www.radfordforge.co.uk

facebook.com/groups/radfordforge

Hedgehogs in danger and how to help

Mrs Tiggywinkle, Sonic, even Mr Pricklepants; you can spot that these are famous character names for hedgehogs but can you spot them out in the wild?

In fact, it's becoming rarer and rarer to spot a hedgehog, as according to the People's Trust for Endangered Species, there are estimated to be less than a million of our prickly friends left in the wild.

So, what are you meant to do when you spot a hog out and about in the daytime? A sighting in the day is cause for concern as these humble hogs should be tucked up in bed although even on mild winter nights they may wake up and pop out for a snack.

It is easier than you think. If you see a hedgehog out in the daytime, pick them up gently (preferably with gloves or your hands covered as they can have fleas) and transport them to a warm temporary shelter. A box, a tub or even a pet carrier will do with dry clean towels or warm bedding with access to water and food, ideally high-quality cat or dog food.

When I found a hog in broad daylight in Hamilton Road I called The Hedgehog Preservation Society website who put me in touch with Ken, who lives locally, and was able to pick up my lonely hog within 2 hours. He rang to give me updates about my hedgehog, including identifying its sex, weight and whether he had any health issues and required medication. Ultimately my call helped to save that hedgehog's life. So if you want to help a hedgehog that should be sleeping you can refer to The Hedgehog Preservation Society website at www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk for rescuing tips or call to seek advice.



Hedgehog rescued by Sophie Filipuik

Bright future for butterflies

In February 2023 FoRGE put on a talk by Mike Slater from Butterfly Conservation and as a result he agreed to take a walk around the village and give us some advice on how we could encourage butterflies in Radford Semele.

We looked at road-side verges and community buildings including the Baptist Church, the Playing Field and St Nicholas Church and we shared Mike's report with them.

We're delighted that the Baptist Church is already planning to implement some of Mike's ideas.

'The survey highlighted that we could do something to make a difference,' says Baptist Church Minister Katherine Pickford. 'We looked at the space we have available and decided to set some of it aside for wildflower planting to encourage butterflies and other insects – and we are open to any advice people may have. We realise that the wildflowers may take a year or two to establish.'

FoRGE will continue to monitor both the hedge and the wildflower meadow in the playing field and keep you updated - we're looking forward to welcoming back all the stunning wildflowers next spring.



Josie Sanderson

Road Safety Improvements

The Parish Council has been working for road safety improvements in the village since 2015 and their persistence has paid off with work starting as we go to press:

- Pedestrian refuges to be installed at the Kingshurst and Lewis Road A425 junctions.
- 20mph speed limit will be introduced on School Lane and Lewis Road and all the roads therefrom.
- 3 main bus stops will gain improved bus boarding points reducing the gap to pavement as well as resurfacing, remarking and soft landscaping.
- Southam-bound bus stop, opposite Lewis Road, will be extended into the road serving to slow traffic and a footpath will be created from the bus stop near Church Lane to the Kingshurst crossing point.
- Dropped kerbs with tactile paving, to be installed at Church Lane and Hallfields.
- Bollards on the corner of Lewis Road to discourage parking
- New village gateway past the new housing development and adding a small gateway on the right hand side as you enter the village and moving the Radford Semele village sign.
- 30/40 speed limit signs to be replaced with clearer signage, with vegetation trimmed to aid visibility
- Remove overgrowth from footpaths.

These works are part of a joint WCC/Parish Council Traffic Management Plan financed by Bovis and Ricardo, S106 Highway Infrastructure Contributions. The Parish Council's request for a crossing point near the Bovis development has been rejected.

Stan Sabin, Chair, Radford Semele Parish Council

Working For Biodiversity In Radford Semele

FoRGE is working to help develop diverse habitats to encourage our wildlife by providing them with the food, water and shelter they need.

We, of course, cooperate with Radford Semele Parish Council to help achieve these goals. We also work with charities such as Butterfly Conservation and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and several others to facilitate biodiversity.

This could feed into the Warwickshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan, the details of which can be found at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/biodiversity 'Action for Wildlife'. Everyone has a role to play in the fight to save our wildlife, however small the contribution may seem.

BIODIVERSITY

Gives us many of the essentials of life
- water, oxygen, food, clothing, medicines and so contributes to our economy.



INTERDEPENDENCE and food-webs

All organisms depend on others. If one organism in a food web dies out, others may follow, which is why it is so important to support a wide range of habitats.

SUSTAINABILITY

We try to encourage sustainable practices in the village, encouraging the use of biological control or organic pesticides to develop rich and varied wildlife.



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

School - planting hedges, putting up nest and bat boxes.

Forge Activities - planting trees, hedges and wild flower meadow on the playing field.

Managing the pond and its surroundings.

Arranging talks on topics like gardening for wildlife, bees, bats, etc.

Churchyard

Management to encourage wildlife.



Actions for Wildlife



FoRGE

Encourages management practices to support wildlife, such as avoiding cutting hedges during the breeding season and mowing roadside verge at the appropriate times of year.

We are keen to support sustainable practices in farming, such as leaving field margins to develop wildlife, a practice which can allow helpful predators to proliferate and attack pests, thus reducing the need for pesticides.



Everybody...

Can help by making hedgehog highways, growing insect friendly flowers, avoiding damaging pesticides, no-mow May, reducing light pollution and much more.

Barbara Wyatt

Foster trees

My thanks to everyone who has helped look after the baby trees and has returned them to me.

Some have been planted out and I hope the rest will be, soon.

As you can see from the photo, most have grown on very well, so must have been well cared for!

Appeal for any trees that have not been returned.

I have one problem: since people who returned the trees did not usually leave their names, I am not sure of all those who have returned them, so please, if you still have saplings, let me know, or return them. So far, I have had 19 returned out of 30. Some died and I was notified, but if there are any out there, it would be great to know.



Barbara Wyatt

ForGE Plant Sale 2024

Advance notice that this year's Plant Sale will take place on Saturday 11 May at Radford Semele Baptist Church. 11am-1pm.

Canal Access Go Ahead

Thank you to Radford Semele residents who submitted 23 letters of support for the Planning Application for the A425 footpath canal footpath access ramp. Permission was granted on Tuesday 30 Jan.

James Dennison of Canal and River Trust said that he had rarely seen such a public response.

We have requested a timetable for the works which we hope can now be completed this summer.

Defibrillator update

Great news from the Parish Council - Radford Semele now has three defibrillators in the village. It was noticed during regular maintenance checks that one of the defibrillators, based at the White Lion pub, needed replacing; this has now been done, and an extra machine was purchased at a greatly reduced rate at the same time, which will be installed outside the Community Hall. The defibrillator situated outside the village shop has also been refurbished so it's great to know that the village is well prepared in the event of a cardiac emergency. The PC is in the process of organising training for anyone who would like to know more about defibrillators and how to use them; details of the training will follow on the PC's website and Facebook.

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a community supported agriculture scheme for Warwick Area

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Love fresh food?**

- weekly box of fresh, organic seasonal food
- collect from the farm or Leamington.
- volunteer to help to grow it
- attend work days and social events

canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk
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best-one SHOP

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