

Long Sutton Nature Reserve visit

Sue Sellick, Steve Polden, and I visited the above site in September 2026, Sue made the arrangements via her Butterfly Survey contacts.

The background is that the field is owned by Long Sutton PC.

2 years ago the PC allowed the group (must admit I didn't go into the arrangements as we were there about the management processes). We were shown around by David, who is a Long Sutton Councillor.

There seems to be a central group such as David who organise & do things and, on the occasions, when they need volunteers for larger tasks, they just ask for them on a FB page and good numbers have turned up.

The area is "large field", did not ask the area and it is interesting that various people / groups have been able to undertake individual projects such as a Cornish Hedge (dry stone wall) to provide habitat, "hibernaculum" homes for snakes and others, dead fences, hazel Coppice and several others.

The local school also visits regularly for classes.

They have also created a pond on a site identified as an historic pond from ancient maps, sponsored by FWAG and also created a dew pond in another corner of the field.

This is end of year 2 and given the dry weather it was not possible to see much evidence of results in terms of wildflowers, David gave some examples (Sue might recall which) he confirmed they had little success trying to sow wildflowers despite doing all the right things and I think they we're learning that nature will do what it wants / fits best if they create the environment.

The only management routines were cutting and **removing** the years growth, (David admitted this was a challenge) they are also removing thistles by hand, (we should check which any variety we have before doing so ourselves as not all are invasive).

The best evidence of success that we saw was an abundance of butterflies who were, in particular, loving the Fleabane a drought resistant yellow plant, we saw Small Blue, Clouded Yellow, Red Admiral, Green Veined White, Sue can probably add more names.

So, I think they confirmed much of what we expected, patience required but it does work, be led by nature, try lots of things.....

With regard to Shapwick's wild areas, firstly for consistency of naming, the area by the allotments/bee bank is **The Wildflower Area** and the area west of the path to the school and before the stream is **The Wild Area**.

The first task whatever the outcome of the council's decision on the future of the wild areas is to cut and remove this year's "crops" asap.

With regard to The Wildflower area, I can see no use for the crop and suggest that I strim asap as it will be easy to handle when dry, bag it up into "dumpy/tote" bags and take it to local recycling centres as domestic garden waste.

With regard to The Wild Area the grass area has I think something that nearly equates to standing hay, but will get Tracey's view, as it would only be of value to non-commercial livestock units "maybe". It is only a very light crop and can be easily strimmed whilst dry.

There is a large patch of thistles which we could invite "friends of the meadow" to help rogue them?

More seriously I think we need to test the response to a request for volunteers, but we need to have a clear "vision/message to describe what we are trying to achieve.

There is also a patch of brambles which we should probably retain but keep under control by strimming.













