

SAXILBY NATURE PROJECT – activities in the past 12 months

Last autumn we pollarded several hawthorn and willow trees in **Saxilby Community Wood**, to allow more light into the woodland and encourage a lower storey of shrubs to grow. We used the cut branches to construct a dead-hedge around the Old Road, to protect the wildflowers from being strimmed by mistake. The larger logs were taken to Hardwick Scrub and used to build log piles.

We dug two shallow ephemeral pools on **Hardwick Scrub**, which will hold water in the winter and dry out in the summer. This is excellent wildlife habitat, and we hope they will allow children to pond dip safely, and the pools will retain water long enough to enable amphibians to breed. The exposed sandy clay soil will encourage flora to flourish that is absent elsewhere in the field, increasing biodiversity. The construction work was financed by the funds we received when we won the 2022 Lincolnshire Environmental Awards.

We have dug five small ponds on **Ingleby Clay**, which we are calling 'newt ponds'. These are designed with amphibians in mind, but they will be of benefit to all the wildlife which visits the field. These will also dry out in summers of low rainfall, but this is unimportant. They will quickly develop their own ecosystems.

Also on **Ingleby Clay**, we planted four small copses of alder trees, to attract seed-eating birds such as Siskins and Redpolls. And a third Barn Owl nest box has been installed. The two long-standing boxes have been used by Barn Owls, Kestrels and Jackdaws.

We have created two **deer exclusion zones**, one on each of the Sykes Lane community nature sites, by constructing our own version of deer fencing. We wish to see how trees grow when completely protected from deer, and without tree guards.

We are carrying out regular **moth trap sessions**. We leave the moth traps out overnight, with a light bulb illuminated. This entices the moths into a tub, where they hide among torn up egg boxes. In the morning we document the moths and release them unharmed. Moths are what we call good habitat indicators. The number of moths indicate the value of the habitat to wildlife in general.

Virtually all our land management work is carried out by members of the Saxilby Nature Project group, however, ecology students from Lincoln University have been involved in recent activities. The local community are always very welcome to join us. Greater community involvement is one of our chief objectives for the coming year.