



Readstone
Environment
Group

Newsletter March 2026

“The environment is where we all meet, where we all have a mutual interest. It is the one thing all of us share”. Lady Bird Johnson.

“We don’t inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children”. David Bower.

“**You can’t conserve what you haven’t got**”. M.S. Douglas.

The last two quotes are extremely insightful and sadly true. There is a real need ponder what we are leaving behind for future generations and for us to decide to act.

Already locally we can see that there were less swallows, less screaming sand martins last year. I heard the very occasional curlew when I first moved here but their call can no longer be heard along with some other garden birds. The audible joys of spring are slowly disappearing. The UK breeding population of many native species has declined by at least 50% over the last 25 years alone. (Source: Birdspot)

From our website.

“In the UK the news is not good: Scientists estimated in 2023, due to human activity, the UK has lost around half of its biodiversity since the Industrial Revolution. This is based on abundance and species richness.

Highlights from the State of Nature Report Study include: 16% (or one in six) of 10,000 species assessed are at risk of being lost from the UK. **We are already classified as one of the world’s most nature depleted countries – in the lowest 12% of global countries and territories.**

(rewildingbritain.org.uk). Worse than China and most of Europe.

Overall global biodiversity intactness is rated at 75% somewhat short of the 90% average considered to be a safe limit before tipping into ecological recession. The UK reading was 53% which is most disconcerting.

Before monitoring began in 1970 our biodiversity in the UK had been highly depleted by centuries of habitat loss, unsustainable farming practices, necessary and perhaps some unnecessary development, persecution, invasive alien species, overexploitation of the natural environment and pollution.

According to Stedman-Evans (1997) socio economic causes are at the heart of biodiversity loss. It is thought that ecological meltdown goes hand in hand with increasing pollution, habitat loss and ever rising CO₂ emissions.

Some other direct human drivers, such as changes in local land use and land cover, introduction or removal of species, agricultural practices eg harvesting, fertilising, air and water pollution (Climate, 2005), are not always in the hands of individuals but of landowners, councils and the government.

Endangered Species in the UK are **hedgehogs**, red squirrels, water voles, beavers, Scottish wildcats, hazel dormice, grey long eared bats, cicadas, turtle doves, lesser spotted woodpeckers, wart biter crickets, natterjack toads and the smooth snake.

Do you know?

There is currently a Red list for endangered birds of about 70 species. **In 1996 this stood at 36!** The list included skylark, linnet, nightingale, curlew, swifts, house martins and the house and tree sparrows. The Black list contains species that have not bred in the UK since 2009, now standing at 9 including the golden oriole.

Do you also know?

Two spoonfuls of Neonicotinoids – a pesticide, can kill 2.5 billion insects – no wonder the bird population is in free fall! Nicotinoids are widely used globally in agriculture, urban areas, gardens and for pet treatments. I never thought seeing the car windscreen being covered in insects would be a welcome sight!

If we do not act individually and collectively then at some point some of our natural species will not return. We may not be able to experience the joy of seeing the first primroses, cowslips or bluebells in spring because their habitat has been destroyed by Himalayan Balsam.

By altering our daily habits we may be able to “hang on to what we got” (Four Seasons 1965) for example reducing the use of plastics (in all its forms) all the chemicals that disappear down our plug holes, air and water pollution and our carbon footprint. By managing our own and our households needs – not our wants - we can help to slow down or stop the loss of biodiversity. Of course industry and governments need to play their part too but it starts with us.

Maybe this Spring we can all recalibrate and see if there is more we can do to help the environment. We all know what to do so please **JUST DO IT!** Make the milkman happy to know you!

REG

Kings Award for Voluntary Groups

We were lucky to be put forward by people in the community for this distinguished award. Apparently this is equivalent to the MBE, so we were really pleased that it was thought our work merited such an accolade.

An assessor came to see us and then we filled in a questionnaire which was returned to the assessor who then writes a citation, this goes forward to the North West panel and if chosen the group goes forward to the national panel. We will not hear any more at all until October and then only if we are chosen for an award.

It has however been a very steep learning curve, we had less than a week to submit the questionnaire. We know now we need to keep a good record of various images and track ‘unseen’ hours. This process also made me realise what a strong group of people we are, all bringing ourselves and skills and a good dollop of humour – which makes it a good team to join and to be in... and I for one am very pleased to be part of such a good team.

Another strength is that for such a small group of people – 9 on the committee and another 7 litter pickers we do an awful lot of work. We really appreciated the support local residents, Read Parish councillors, our local councillor and the schools gave us, we had some very positive and indeed glowing comments about our work to back up our application.

Litter Picking

The numbers involved are picking up now the weather is more settled. On Saturday March 28th we are aiming to tackle a grot spot maybe by the river or along Whalley Rd wood past the caravan park that we picked a couple of years ago. We will let you know further nearer the time.

Gardening

Spring flowers are popping up along Worthall's Rd. and other areas and the gardening team are getting to grips with things again. Time to check on the primroses and cowslips planted last year. Fingers crossed.

Thermal Imaging Survey

The weather is warming up so if you or someone you know wishes us to carry out a survey, now is the time to book it in. Just drop us an email, its free and we can go out of our area. **You will be saving money on energy bills and reducing your carbon footprint at the same time.**

What's On...

March 19th. We have had to postpone the talk....Talking to the Bees and will keep you informed.

Gentle Reminder

Thankyou to the people who support us by their subscriptions. It's very much appreciated. If you haven't already sent yours in, there is still time.

UK and Global Environmental days for your diaries

March

3rd World Wildlife day.

6-7th Global Day of Unplugging.

6th-22nd Trees are the Key.

9th – 13th Food Waste Action Week

13th-29th Great British Spring Clean.

18th Global Recycling Day.

21st International Day of Forest.

22nd World Water Day.

28th Earth Hour.

30th International Day of Zero Waste.

There is surely something here for everyone - where we can start to help the environment.

And looking ahead to April...

7th World Health Day.

19th National Hanging Out D. (save electricity by hanging your washing out)

22nd International Mother Earth D.

24th-30th. The Big River Watch.

25th Mend in Public Day.

29th Stop Food Waste Day.

A calendar will be sent out later this month.

Gayle Wray

5th March 2026.

Primroses. Anne Burgess

