Knighton Wild Annual Report 2024-2025

Although the financial year runs to 31st March, it has been our custom to report on the year up to the AGM, and this report continues that approach. After COVID our AGM was delayed to later in the year, and we are in the process of gradually moving the AGM forward each year until it is back in May as it used to be.

Meetings

We have organised three talks during the year.

At our AGM last year Russell Parry talked about the urban flora of Leicester. His interest in this arose from realising how depleted some rural areas were in terms of flora, and that as he walked around the city he saw all kinds of flowering plants springing up.

In November we broke from our usual pattern of evening meetings and held a session on a Saturday afternoon, with The Skull Index, a local organisation that has a large collection of skulls and exists to promote educational awareness about vertebrate anatomy. This was well attended with a lot of families with children, and several people bringing along skulls they had found for identification.

In April Bev Hart gave a talk about Hedgehogs and the work of Leicester Hedgehog Rescue. This included what to do if you find a hedgehog and Bev's experience as a hedgehog rescuer. Always a popular subject.

Projects

It's been another busy year on Knighton Green and in St Mary Magdalen Churchyard. Working sessions have been held during the year to cut the grass in the churchyard in the autumn and to sow seeds in the areas of the Green set aside for wild flowers and pollinator-friendly species.

We have continued to work closely with the group of volunteers who maintain the triangle at the junction of Knighton Church Road and Carisbrooke Road, and who held a successful fundraising event in mid August.

We were contacted last year by a staff member at Overdale School for advice and help with the school's wildlife pond. We spent a Saturday morning in February organised by the school, working with staff, parents and children to clear out the pond and improve some of the surrounding area.

All these pieces of work contribute to our submission to the Royal Horticultural Society's It's Your Neighbourhood scheme. Last year we achieved Outstanding for the sixth year running. We entered again this year for the ninth year running, though we don't have the results yet.

The Otter Monitoring Group has been surveying, most recently in July, and found spraints under bridges along the course of the brook in Knighton, including the one under the Ring Road by Overdale School. We were contacted last year by two people, one of whom had seen an otter crossing Meadvale Road, and the other, a twelve year-old, who had got video of an otter in his garden that backs onto the Washbrook.

In April we took part in the Great UK WaterBlitz for the first time. This involved sampling the water in the brook and testing for Phosphates and Nitrates. The results showed better water quality above the sewage works in Oadby, and similar results in the Park, Knighton Green and Washbrook Nature Reserve – all between 5.0 and 10.0 mg/L of N-NO3 and between 0.2 and 0.5 mg/L of P-PO4.

Publicity

We have continued to use the website to publicise and report on our activities. We had a stall at St Guthlac's Spring Fayre, which brought us new members and volunteers for practical work.

Simon Bennett, for the Committee
21st August 2025