

NEWS FROM BARNFIELDS SANDBEDS April 2018

Spring has definitely arrived down in the Sandbeds! The last few days of hot weather has brought the trees into full leaf and encouraged the wildlife to begin the urgent need to build a home and start a family. Our resident birds already have young in the nest or are busy building in one of our nestboxes, the females doing most of the work whilst the males sits on guard singing to tell others of their species that this is their territory and to keep off. There is quite a volume of sound now on the reserve with a good number of newly arrived chiffchaffs and blackcaps adding their songs to the chorus. We await the longed-for familiar call of a cuckoo.



Queen bumble bees can also be seen bumbling around searching for a suitable nest site. They are such important pollinators for the wild flowers, we have provided bug hotels and log piles for their use. I have also seen comma, holly blue and orange tip butterflies on the wing.

Spring flowers are evident all over the site, the primroses and cowslips are doing particularly well and I was delighted to see a lovely display of wood anemones and fritillaries along the bottom path. Glossy yellow marigolds light up the edge of the pond and, all in all, a gentle stroll round taking in the sights and sounds is really uplifting after such a long and gloomy winter. Our next job is to install a couple of simple benches so that visitors can sit a while and reflect on the wonders around them. The best medicine in the world!

A date for your diary – on Sunday 21st June at 10am, we are hosting a pond-dipping activity led by Sue Shanks, followed by a picnic (bring your own food) on Top Meadow with children's activities afterwards. Do come and join us.

Finally, huge thanks to the gentleman who kindly donated a number of bow saws and loppers from a garage clearance. They will be put to good use.

Joyce Bradley