

Have a Sustainable & Merry Christmas

How much can Christmas hurt our environment?

Also included in this issue:

Greater Horseshoe Bat Rediscovered in Kent | Ancient Woodland Restoration | Living with Tiny Creatures

An Introduction From: Bea Finch

A very warm welcome to our winter edition, just where has this year gone! I heard a brilliant quote once on the radio (so good I had to pull the car over and write it down!), that “time is just nature’s way of making sure everything doesn’t happen at once”. It’s been a year of change at the MoJ Ecology Team, but we are ready and raring for the fresh start and new year. This year included some real highlights including HMP Hewell winning the HMPPS Wildlife Awards, a buzzing Biodiversity Day at MoJ HQ, seasonal BioBlitz’s happening all over the MoJ estate, negotiating with

more wildlife charities to form new partnerships, an Ecology Workshop... I could go on and on!

I would like to thank all our volunteers, supporters, sponsors, and staff without which the MoJ Ecology Team and Green Group would be a whole lot smaller... thank you for all your support throughout this year of change, have a wonderful Christmas break and cracking New Year.

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A Sustainable Christmas

By Paula Cooper

Case Progression Officer, Havant Justice Centre and member of the MoJ Green Group

It started with a strategically placed footprint that marked the remains of Grandpa's favourite homemade teapot. The contrast of a distinct chalky imprint against the slate hearth was clear evidence of a culprit...and so the annual Santa trap began.

In a time that we are inundated with commercialism and concerns of clogging up our world with plastic waste, we need to be reminded that it's the thoughtful memories we create that stick with us.

It's never too late to start a new tradition or encourage family and friends to buy less and opt to be more creative. If the Christmas list is getting too long, consider a homemade 'secret Santa' gift exchange. Best of all, create things together. Look around the house at what has the potential to be upcycled.

Have some extra wood laying around? Build a birdhouse. Lots of unused plates? Break some up and make mosaic coasters. Too many scarves? Use them to wrap up gifts. Buried in the kids' artwork? Trim the paper into gift tags. Have some old retro lunchboxes or cookie tins? Pack some tasty edibles like homemade chocolate turtles (pecans and caramel dipped in chocolate) or mini shampoo bars that don't need plastic bottles. Still set on sending Christmas cards? Send thoughtful messages online or hand deliver plantable seed Christmas cards or postcards less an envelope.

There are thousands of inspirational ideas online. Hopefully (before the next generation arrives), there will be an enormous shift in how Christmas is celebrated and there will be more memories created than waste.



Greater Horseshoe Bat Rediscovered in Kent

The Bat Conservation Trust are excited to announce that the rare greater horseshoe bat has recently been recorded in Kent for the first time in over 100 years. The last known record of this species in Kent dates from 1904.

The first record of this species in Kent for 115 years was made by Laragh Smyth and Emily Cummins of Lloyd Bore Ltd, a Kent-based ecological consultancy, in May 2019 during a commercial bat activity survey visit. A single pass by this bat was recorded at a location on the East Kent coast.

Bakerwell Limited also recorded greater horseshoe bat passes during a bat survey using static detectors at the end of June 2019, within a mile of the initial record. These records were identified by Angela Weaving and confirmed by Donna Popplewell and Fiona Baker. Six passes were recorded over a period of one minute on a single date, further confirming the return of this species to Kent.

Due to the unexpected nature of these records, the sound recordings have been verified, and the species identity confirmed, by Peter Scrimshaw of the Kent Bat Group and by national bat experts Sandie Sowler and Richard Crompton.

The reasons for the presence of this species in Kent are currently unknown. It is possible that an



individual bat was blown off course or has travelled over from France, or that a bat has dispersed across the UK, from strongholds in the west of England or Wales. It is also possible that the species is now able to expand its range into Kent due to climatic changes. The habitats in the area that the recordings were made are not dissimilar to those in its western strongholds, prompting speculation that the records could represent more than just an itinerant bat.

The British Bat Survey is a new method of monitoring bats that will enable us to see how species like the greater horseshoe bat and others are distributed across the UK. To find out more see:

www.bats.org.uk/our-work/national-bat-monitoring-programme/british-bat-survey

For further information about UK bats see:

www.bats.org.uk

We have eight prisons in Kent as well as many more Courts, Probation buildings, Home Office and Approved Premises. For those of you in Kent... keep your eyes and ears

Bat
Conservation
Trust





Ancient Woodland Restoration

by Jonathan Hulson
(Outreach Adviser, Woodland Trust)

Ancient woodland is the richest land-based habitat for wildlife, supporting more threatened species than any other. It exists in many forms and has been maintained through centuries of management for timber, fuel, forage and fodder for livestock. However, ancient woodland covers only around 2% of the UK's land area and about half of this is planted with non-native conifers. While this planting was carried out with good intentions, to create a strategic timber



reserve, it is now recognised that it has had severe impacts on the ecology of these precious woods, through dense shading, changes to the soil, and the effects of the original operations to fell and replant, such as ploughing and drainage.

The Woodland Trust champions restoration of ancient woods, leading by example on its own estate, and providing advice and support to other landowners. Our support to landowners includes, in the first instance, a free survey and assessment of threatened ancient woods (and wood pasture/parkland) to help guide their future management operations and improve the sustainable management of their woodland estate. Beyond this, the Trust may be able to provide further support to bring sites into active restoration management. We work with a range of different landowners from both private and public sector.

In restoring plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS), based on available evidence, the Woodland Trust advocates a gradual approach to the removal of plantation trees in order to safeguard woodland soils and allow natural regeneration from the remnant seedbed. The Woodland Trust's advisors are able to provide landowners, land managers and local authorities with a free survey and assessment of their ancient woodland site. The restoration of PAWS is a requirement of the UK Woodland Assurance Standard and the Forest Stewardship Standard for the UK. If you would like to know if you are eligible for a free survey and assessment of your ancient wood, please contact Jonathan Hulson - JonathanHulson@woodlandtrust.org.uk



Living with Tiny Creatures

By Paul Comerford, MoJ Senior Safety Practitioner, 102 Petty France London and member of the MoJ Green Group.

When I first moved to my West Sussex home the small back garden looked hoovered, the lawns and flower beds had been beaten into stultifying sterile submission. The damsons and ash tree were devoid of everything but a couple depressed house sparrows and the occasional hopeful wasp.

In 15 years everything has changed. The damsons are big and fruitful, hazels and a holly cuddle the ivy-swaddled ash, and hawthorns have made a bosky grove. I added a very small pond and cut out two wildflower patches. It is now a miniature meadow corner with a bit of mature, mixed hedgerow.

Although I have always considered myself to be an amateur naturalist, it is only in the last decade that my understanding of ecological diversity has improved. So, as my garden bird list hurtles ever upward (even had a buzzard in my birch tree last week), frogs soak in the pond and mammals become ever bolder, it is the invertebrates that have stolen the show.

My favourites have rather lovely characteristics. Hornet mimic hoverflies will use your hand as a perch; hawthorn shield bugs lay little clusters of white eggs on lemon balm; ruby-tailed wasps are like jewels; leaf-cutter bees carry leaves in line with their bodies; tree bumble bees have hairy red waistcoats;



woodlouse spiders are beautiful; hummingbird hawkmoths are rare and stunning. My ultimate garden star is the red admiral butterfly.

Male red admirals love a territory with tallish trees lining a wide-open ride so they can see a defined patch of sky. My garden is perfect. From favourite perches they zoom up to confront any red admiral that flies over. A trespassing male is attacked and sent packing in short order. A female, however, is intercepted and, with the male just above, is coaxed into a spiralling glide to some thick cover for an amorous tryst. In summer my head is often used as a perch if I stay still for a moment. I like to think the resident male becomes fond of my presence.

Tiny creatures can also creep into the house. Cellar spiders lurk in high corners, their delicate look belying the fact they'll eat anything, including huge house spiders. Bees and flies drift in to poke around, and an occasional moth

will drowse the day away on a wall, or painting. To complete this article, I have to salute my new pal, Stanley. He lives in my downstairs loo. He's a male false widow (Steatoda nobilis) earning his crust by consuming the occasional dying wasp from the nest in my roof.



So, to have an ecologically diverse garden, you need to start with the small things, but also learn to live with them – even share your house.

Amphibian Disease Threat in the UK

A prisoner recently asked us: “Could we bring some frogspawn to our new prison pond”? Frogs, toads and newts are a valued addition to ponds within prisons and this article looks at the issues around moving amphibians and their eggs between sites.

The UK supports seven native amphibian species, many of which are in decline. The common toad has declined, on average, by 68% over the past 30 years¹. Threats to amphibians include habitat loss and fragmentation, pollution, climate change and introduction of diseases and invasive species. These last two threats are becoming of increasing concern since they are having negative impacts on the population status of our most common amphibian species. It is estimated that in parts of the UK, common frog populations have declined by up to 80% due to Ranavirus², a highly virulent disease which spreads rapidly through frog populations. Another disease, known as chytrid (Bd), is caused by a microscopic fungus and is of threat to UK frogs and toads, mainly from captive specimens (Figure 1). Recently, a new deadly chytrid fungus (Bsal), has been affecting salamanders. This has wiped out populations of newts and salamanders in The Netherlands³ (Figure 2).

Figure 1. The North American bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*) is a carrier of chytrid and is a common pet. If infected individuals are released into the countryside there is a risk



Figure 1 - Photo credit: Carl D. Howe, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:North-American-bullfrog1.jpg>



Figure 2 - Photo credit: Christian R. Linder, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mesotriton_alepstris_side_view_chrischan.jpeg

of transferring the disease to native amphibian species.

Figure 2. The alpine newt from central Europe is a popular pet but may carry the deadly Bsal fungus. Released captive specimens may potentially infect our native species.

Due to the high risk of disease spread across the UK, the recommendation by Froglife and the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) is to avoid translocating amphibians and their eggs

between sites. This will reduce the likelihood of spreading diseases such as Ranavirus or chytrid, as well as other invasive aquatic plants including Australian stonecrop or parrots feather. Froglife advocates creating and restoring ponds for amphibians. However, since amphibians are likely to find their own way to new ponds, Froglife recommends that amphibians and their eggs are not transported between sites, but rather allow them to colonise naturally. Amphibians are often very quick to colonise new ponds and common frogs may be found in a new pond just months after their creation.

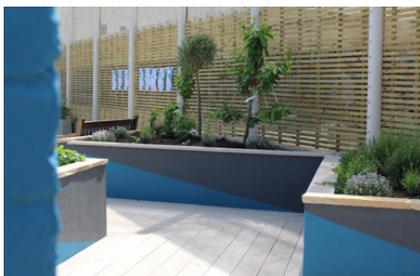
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Unlocking Nature at Wandsworth Prison

In 2016 Ian Bickers, the Governor of HMP Wandsworth at the time suggested that new funds made available to him could help 'green' his prison.

The Conservation Foundation's Tools Shed recycling project had been working in Wandsworth for over 10 years refurbishing garden tools for schools and community gardens and we were invited to submit a project proposal to use some of this new money to improve the environment within the prison's estate.

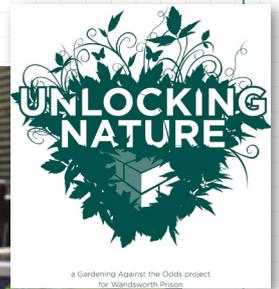


We gathered a number of experts from the community gardening world to produce a plan for Unlocking Nature.

We'd seen a number of green prison projects enter our Gardening Against the Odds Awards and knew of several prisons which had exhibited at flower shows, including Chelsea and Hampton Court.

Very little 'greening' had been done at Wandsworth since it was built in the 1850's. The place was crying out for change, but even so Unlocking Nature was a challenge with many of the project's plans proving easier said than done.

Over the months the various parts of Unlocking Nature proved to be positive and worthwhile and the gardens created continue to blossom and grow.



Many of the men involved gained much from the project.

People tend to consider prison conditions just for the inmates and forget those who work there – many spending far more of their lives inside than many offenders. That is why one major part of Unlocking Nature involved an area created beside a staff canteen. Tables and chairs set amongst raised flower beds with noticeboards with details of the plants growing in them provided staff with a completely new way of spending their lunch breaks and provided wellbeing escapes for them.

More and more is being learned about the benefits of gardening to both physical and mental health. The gardens at Wandsworth were designed to make a major difference to the appearance of the place. However, they have provided much more as a practical health-giving opportunity for men to become involved in a project which has brought them opportunities to learn new skills of gardening and plant maintenance plus social and communications skills. They've learned



some with the basics of horticultural knowledge and experience which could lead onto employment outside where there is a major shortage of experienced gardeners.

Since Unlocking Nature began the world has seen a major increase in environmental awareness. The project has enabled HMP Wandsworth to share in this change and has enabled those inside to keep pace and prepare them for this new awareness for the care of biodiversity and to appreciate the importance of nature and gardening to everyone's wellbeing.

The Foundation is keen to use the experience gained from this project and would welcome the opportunity to create similar projects for other prisons to improve both environmental and wellbeing qualities for everyone working and living there, as well as the biodiversity. Please get in touch if you would like to discuss this with us.

info@conservationfoundation.co.uk

Coventry University's evaluation of Unlocking Nature can be downloaded from The Conservation Foundation website at:

<https://conservationfoundation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Unlocking-Nature-DIGITAL2.pdf>

Bumblebee Identification Training at HMP Foston Hall

Did you know there are 24 species of bumblebees and over 200 species of solitary bees and just one honey bee in the UK? Well three members of staff and fifteen inmates at HMP Foston Hall do know these facts and lots more as they have been busy learning and identifying bumblebees with the Bumblebee Conservation Trust (BBCT).

Earlier in the year BBCT staff Sally Cuckney, Project Manager and Rhodri Green, Community Engagement Officer had already visited in HMP Foston Hall to give advice on how they could improve the grounds for bumblebees. The inmates had already been involved with creating meadow areas from our suggestions and so it was good to continue to work with them.

Sally and Rhodri were excited to have been invited back and couldn't



stop smiling about the positive action and the many improvements the staff and inmates had already made in the grounds of the prison specifically for bumblebees.

The gardens rich in flowers at HMP Foston Hall were the perfect location to run an identification course. However on a rainy day in July it was a worry whether there would be any bumblebees to identify as the weather was a bit miserable as bumblebees generally prefer drier days.

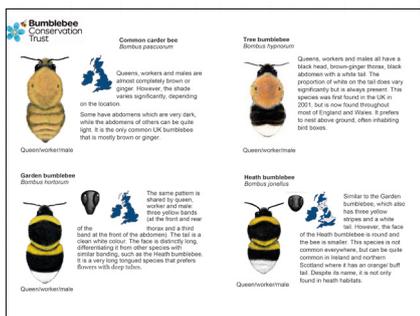
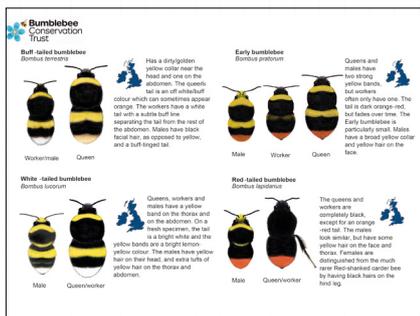
The session started in the garden classroom and staff and inmates learnt the best tips on how to identify bumblebees. The women asked some amazing questions and their enthusiasm was infectious. After a short break the inmates went in to the garden with nets, bug pots and identification sheets. Luckily the sun had come out and there were lots of bumblebees and the inmates got straight into catching bumblebees like they had always done it.

One inmate came running up to Sally with a bumblebee in a pot. She said, "I think this is a red tail?" Sally replied, "You are absolutely right." There were then lots of excited shouts, "I've caught a tree bumblebee I've got a buff tail.....what's this one?"

Obviously one of the most important parts of the training after identifying the bumblebees is to release them safely and unharmed which everyone did with a smile on their face.

One inmate stated, "Thank you, I have loved it! It has been such a different day and I want to write a diary about the bees I see."

The prison staff were very positive in how the training had gone. Sally and Rhodri took the staff with lots of resources so they can continue their training.



Bee ID Guide



Volunteering with MOJ's Green Group: Fantastic company and a glorious setting

by Hadeya Zaman, Head of Central Intelligence, Operational and System Assurance Group, HMPPS

On Friday 8th November 2019, I joined a group of volunteers to spend the day wildflower seed sowing at East Sutton Park Prison. This was a fantastic opportunity for me to get out from behind my desk and computer, don some wellies (hiking boots in my case), and be surrounded by nature with the glorious South Downs on one side and the rolling countryside of Kent on the other.

I met with fantastic colleagues across MOJ, in the middle of a muddy field and spent the day volunteering (we are entitled to 5 volunteer days a year,

don't forget!), rotovating a couple of areas, casting and sealing in seeds. All the tools were provided and we were under close supervision!

Wildflower seeds need to be in the ground in the autumn and we were really lucky with the weather – it was a gloriously sunny November day, which made the work even more enjoyable for a newbie like me! I was extremely happy with our work. We had initially set aside another date in November as a back-up to continue the seeding, but our group were so efficient and productive on the day that all the planting got done on the 8th! I'm sure the fantastic company, the warm winter sunshine and the glorious setting all had a part to play.



Wildflower seeds need to be in the ground in the autumn

I would encourage others to volunteer with the Green Group, it's an opportunity to meet with like-minded colleagues across our MOJ family and an effortless way to contribute to the conservation of our wildlife and planet, in a small but impactful way.



'How To' Guides

By Greg Kellman, MoJ Ecology Team

Are you getting bored over winter, in need of a project or two to work on? How about making your own Bee B&B, Bee House, or even Bee hotel? Even if it's out of season, they'd be a great project to prepare for the on-coming spring. A great way to help biodiversity at home or locally.



HMP Maidstone's Eco Harvest Event

By Jay Kendall, Head of Reducing Reoffending, HMP Maidstone



- Can you be 'greener'?
- Can you reduce waste by upcycling or recycling materials?
- Can you get involved in community events and give back to the community?
- Are you aware of the Agencies Sustainable Operations Framework?

On Saturday 21 September HMP Maidstone in Kent took part in an external community 'Eco Harvest' event on the local Heath.

Head of Reducing Reoffending Jay Kendall reports he was approached by a local charitable organisation who prompted us to think about how we could become involved in the Eco Event, joining local churches, schools, businesses.

Jay, guided by the agencies sustainable operations framework and waste management hierarchy engaged the wider RR Team who generated lots of ideas to be promoted in the community.

Governor Judith Feline said it was great to be able to show the public just how 'green' a large 200 year old prison can be!



You can see from the photos, our main talking points were:

- Well developed Waste Management Unit
- Wildlife habitats
- Upcycling job offcuts in our Print Shop into note pads and books - saving money on our stationery bill!
- Award winning gardens
- Educating others through Horticulture qualifications
- We encourage other sites to be greener and reuse materials where possible.
- If you would like more information, please contact jay.kendall@justice.gov.uk

Bat Walk for National Mammal Week

Staff from the HMCTS Fines Enforcement call centre in Cwmbran held a walk along the nearby Monmouthshire & Brecon canal in search of bats, in support of National Mammal week. Family, friends and pets accompanied staff, and both Daubenton's and Soprano Pipistrelle bats were seen and heard. Use of a hand-held bat detector meant people were able to hear the bats calling, hear

'feeding buzzes', and observe bats chasing insects over the water. A good night was had until a sudden downpour

brought things to an end. My thanks to those who attended for their positive feedback about the event.



Staff from the HMCTS Fines Enforcement call centre in Cwmbran

New Volunteer Recruited!

By Michael Kilner, Contact Centre Operator,
HMCTS Enforcement Contact Centre

I'm a new member of the MoJ Ecology volunteers group. I'm based in a rather unpromising office, on the second floor of a concrete building in a town centre, with no grounds, no pond, no trees, not even a balcony. Not much chance of wildlife you might think. And yet...



.. I was sat at my desk, on the telephone, and looked out of the window. The usual pigeons and gulls were lined up on the rooftop of the building opposite. As I watched, the suddenly all took off, and a peregrine falcon shot past, in hot pursuit of a pigeon that was dodging for all it was worth.

I didn't see the outcome of the chase, but it got me thinking. I didn't know there were peregrines in the town centre here, though they are known to do well in urban areas, treating buildings like cliffs, and urban pigeons as an abundant food source. I then remembered a few weeks ago parking my car in the nearby multi storey, and seeing squirrels and brown rats (well, they still count as wildlife) running

on the grass below. The subway that I walk through to get to the office is full of spiders busily trapping insects that are attracted to the light (I'm fond of spiders). There are probably bats around after dark.

The point is that it doesn't matter where you are, if you look around you will see plants and animals, and will probably learn something about the environment around you. If we celebrate even the common wildlife, the daisies, the pigeons, the squirrels, the spiders, then our day is a little bit brighter.

A Badger Sighting

By Elaine Khan, OPG Casework Support
and member of the MoJ Green Group

My sister and I have always lived close to the centre of Nottingham, a large city and after watching a programme on TV about British wildlife, both of us commented that we had never seen a live badger.

Recently I was driving home from a day out in the countryside we were nearing home passing a large park and what should trot across the road a little way in front of us – a juvenile badger.

We were very excited as it shows that even badgers only need a small corridor to thrive- this one was crossing from a park to a small wooded slope – impossible to build on, which then opens through to the school playing fields and back gardens.

We have a fox that ranges through our garden and regards us as the interlopers as well as a hedgehog in a neighbours garden. Although we have fences all round we have purposely left holes for small wildlife to make their way through.



Barn Owl Boxes made and put up @ HMP Whitemoor

By Andy Wood, HMP Whitemoor



Our carpenters have built from scratch 2 owl boxes that have been erected in our Nature Reserve here at Whitemoor, with the help of our Gardens Team, they were erected at the end of October 2019. Hopefully they will get some owl action in the new year!



HMP Guys Marsh News

By Wayne Walters, Gardens Team



Here at HMP Guys Marsh located in North Dorset we are hoping to achieve a new green area in what was a large un-used piece of green land. Our plans are to turn this area into a rugby pitch and have alongside an area that we are hoping will attract wildlife. We aim to have areas for wild flowers to

encourage all kinds of wild insects into this area. We have some great plans for later in the year that includes looking at setting up our very own bee hives. We are very lucky that we have our own workshops that help produce some of the bird/bug boxes. The big push for 2018 was to focus on bird and bug boxes for around the establishment. This not only encouraged more wildlife,



With Support from Steve Robinson (Deputy Governor) and Tracy Harrison (Reducing re-offending) we are well on track to not only make this a better area for the wildlife, but also to make it a better place for staff.

Our aim is to have this area fully functional by mid-2020 and to then use the green land to teach and train the men in all aspects of wildlife. This is something new for Guys Marsh, but something that we are very much looking forward to and extremely proud of.



but has helped to employ some of our men in the workshops. We have found that this has given the men a sense of pride in what they have done and helped them focus on positives whilst they stay here at Guys Marsh.



Planting the Seeds of a Turtle Dove Revival

By Amy Anderson, MoJ

Alarmingly, turtle doves have declined by 94 percent in this country since 1995. Migratory birds, they eat entirely seed but due to changing agriculture practises are now struggling to find food when they arrive in England to breed.

Nicole Khan, RSPB Conservation Advisor, is working with the team at the prison – an open prison and young offender institute in Maidstone



for women aged 18 and over - and oversaw the seeding.

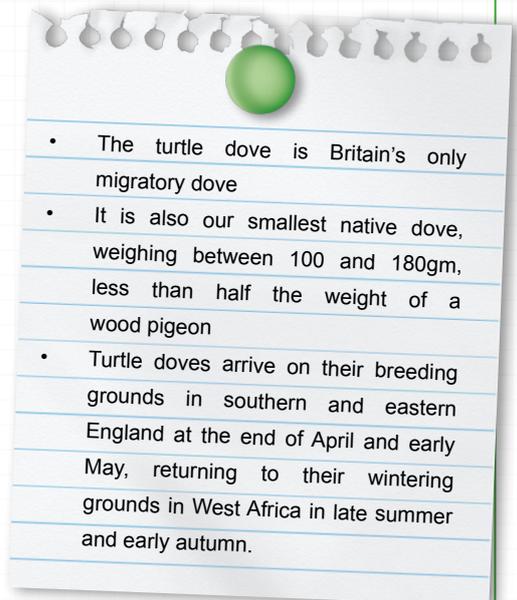
She explained: “The prison sits just outside a turtle dove hot spot, which makes it an excellent location for this project. Thanks to the volunteers work, the plot will probably bear seed in June and will be a source of food for turtle doves for years to come.”

To bridge the gap next year in April, before the plot is quite ready, the RSPB is working with local farmers and community groups to provide supplementary feeding.

It's also planned that the prison's residents will help with the feeding

from next year onwards as part of their rehabilitative activities.

Mario Kreissig, Case Administrator, National Probation Service Sussex, said: “This gave me the chance to get out there and do something important for the environment. It was great to meet so many friendly and interesting volunteers and we all got on very well. We even managed to do the work and have fun at the same time! It was a really interesting and rewarding day.”



amphibian and reptile conservation

Amphibian and Reptile Conservation are looking for new volunteers to help them find frogs and locate lizards. There are opportunities to get involved with regional and national monitoring schemes. Regional projects with volunteering opportunities include Snakes in the Heather in southern England and Connecting the Dragons in south Wales, both of which were recently funded by the National Heritage

Lottery Fund. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer surveyor with Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, register your interest now by going to:

www.arc-trust.org/forms/arc-volunteer-registration-form



E-news' New Design Style

My name is Kingsley. I have been a designer for over 20 years and have had various jobs, roles and clients. As a service user at Preston NPS, my probation officer (Alison Rea) identified my passion for creativity and design in order to help with my self esteem and self worth. I did several small successful projects for the charity User Voice and the NHS associated with NPS Preston. This included flyers, information leaflets and posters, pop-up stands and vinyl logos.

I used my skills to help my way through my time at HMP Risley, by designing their new establishment logo, wellbeing artwork and helping to redesign their whole application system. My passion for creativity has given me the drive for me to set up my own graphic design company, 47 Creative, where I hope to do more work such as this newsletter, tender documents, corporate identity and other large scale contracts.

I would not have had this opportunity to design this newsletter if it was not for the help and encouragement of Alison Rea and Beatrice Finch.

Thank you both so much.



2020 Calendar

Event / Day	Date	Links
Veganuary	All of January	www.veganuary.com
Big Garden Birdwatch	26-28 th January 2020	www.rspb.org.uk
World Wetlands Day	2 nd February 2020	www.worldwetlandsday.org
National Nest Box Week	14th - 21st February	www.bto.org
World Wildlife Day	3rd March 2020	www.wildlifeday.org
Event/Day - North East Land Manager Adder Networking Day, Scarborough	20th March 2020	Organised by ARG UK, please contact Angela Julian angela.julian@arguk.org if interested

**Hope you enjoyed this December Issue
Have a Merry Christmas Everyone!**

