



Wild About Barrow

April/May 2023

That glorious time of year is here again: our village is filled with beautiful blossom and our green spaces are scattered with dandelion flowers like golden pennies from heaven. It must indeed seem heaven sent for our early pollinators who emerge hungry from their cocoons. Bumblebees, solitary bees and honeybees all visit dandelions for food, along with hoverflies, beetles, and butterflies such as the peacock and holly blue. Goldfinches and house sparrows eat the seed.

Good news from near and far

Wild About Barrow has been busy sowing wildflower seeds and plants on the Cotes Road verge. We repeated this in the newly created bed at the entrance to the Millennium Park and also added a mix of spring flowering bulbs: winter aconites, snowdrops and English bluebells. Very many thanks to the volunteers who helped. We had fun and fresh air as well as doing something for nature.

The seeds are a mix of annuals and perennials so the beds should be bursting with colour later in the summer and more to come next year.

We are also growing on some perennial plug plants. When they are ready for the big wild world we'll need volunteers to help plant them so do let us know if you'd like to help at Wildaboutbarrow@gmail.com.

English Heritage have announced plans to create or enhance wildflower meadows at 100 of their sites over the next 10 years in celebration of the King's coronation. Six sites in the East Midlands have been chosen including Chichele College, Northants and Mattersey Priory, Notts so they will be worth visiting in a few years time both for us and the insects that depend on them.

John Watkins, English Heritage's head of gardens, said the scale of meadow loss across the whole UK was startling. "The one shocking figure is that 97% of meadows that were recorded in the 1930s had been lost by the mid-1980s. That's not just a biological disaster, it's a cultural disaster."

As a spokesperson for the Wildlife Trusts said, 'Everyone should have access to a healthy, natural environment where wildlife can thrive. To achieve this, we must bring nature back to the heart of our communities.' We hope to achieve that here in Barrow as part of a nationwide effort from many communities up and down the country. Together, we can make a difference!

Wild Celebration



Long tailed tit
(*Aegithalos caudatus*)



Common brimstone
(*Gonepteryx rhamni*)



Cherry blossom
(*Prunus* sp)



Comma butterfly on muscari
(*Polytonia c-album*)



Marsh marigold
(*Caltha palustris*)



Dandelion with fly
(*Taraxacum officinalis*)

Have you spotted any nature delights around the village? Send your photos to Wildaboutbarrow@gmail.com or just let us know where you saw it and we'll take a snap.

Although the **long-tailed tit** is a green listed bird (of least concern) it is the first time I have spotted one visiting my garden. It is easily recognisable with its distinctive colouring and tail longer than its body. Has anyone else seen this little fella? Do send in your photos.

On the other hand, the **common brimstone butterflies** are never very common, but widespread. This one was visiting flowers on the Willow Road bank.

The **comma butterfly** was confined to an area around the Welsh Marches in the mid 1800s probably due to the decline in hop farming. But it adapted to use nettles instead as its larval food and so extended its range. In the last 40 years the once rare butterfly has shown a remarkable comeback possibly due to climate change.

Barrow Greener Living

Following an introductory meeting at the library in March, a new group was created with the aim of discussing greener living initiatives and projects. It encompasses a wide range of topics that will help us move towards a healthier, more sustainable planet. **Wild About Barrow** wholeheartedly supports this and liaises with the group. You may have come across their stall at the recent village fete.

If you have any suggestions or would like to get involved please contact Bob Johnson on Mob: 0757 2188616

Look out for articles in Barrow Voice in the coming months.

What to See

1. Visit our beautiful, stunning bluebells in the Outwoods.

What to do

There are plenty of ideas for us to take part in over the coming weeks.

1. **No Mow May:** This is a no-brainer!
 - a. Leave the lawn mower in store and let the flowers grow
 - b. Less work for more enjoyment of nature on your doorstep
 - c. More carbon stored by plants, less fuel used by lawnmowers
 - d. More food and shelter for invertebrates so more food for their predators such as the hungry chicks about to hatch
 - e. Send your photos to Wildaboutbarrow@gmail.com

2. **Let it Bloom in June:** carry on the good work from No Mow May

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3. **30 Days Wild**

This is The Wildlife Trusts' annual challenge where they ask everyone to do one wild thing a day throughout the month of June. There are lots of great ideas online. Just Google 30 days wild or go to : <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/30dayswild>

4. If you can't wait for June, **make a Bugingham Palace or start a bug hotel empire**, like this young lady, Scarlett, on a school strike day. I'm sure the invertebrates and everything further up the food chain will thank her and will thank you too, if you make one.

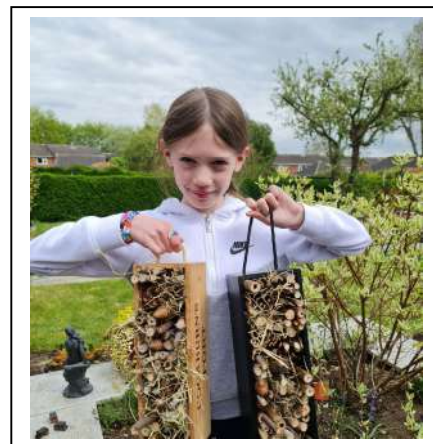


Photo: Bob Johnson

Think global: act local

All unnamed photographs by A. Rushton