

The Hall Lane Community Wildlife Area Project

A wildlife corridor for Holcombe on land off
Hall Lane, Dawlish, EX7 0JP



The Action Climate Teignbridge Wildlife Wardens of Dawlish working together with local Councillors and members of the public are wanting to turn an unused area of unused Devon County Council farmland with wet woodland and a watercourse in it into a new wildlife area to increase nature/biodiversity.

This scheme goes before the the Farms Committee on 20 November 2023.

BRIEF SUMMARY:

The area, owned by Devon County Council Estates, has not been used for farming and has been unused scrub for some considerable time. The area is prone to freshwater flooding and is a rare wet woodland area - which we would like to enhance, adding a wildflower meadow, community education area, storage for maintenance tools/kettle, and agroforestry area - offering nuts and fruit for the community. There are lots of initiatives now currently seeking to encourage the planting of wildflowers to help combat climate change, help wildlife and pollinators and transform our own wellbeing, we feel this area could easily become with a little work an area the local community could be proud of.



It's land which has previously been used as a dumping area of unsifted building waste, and as TDC's Historical drainage records show with the SWW combined sewers under the site - a sizeable volume of water travels under it.

Whenever there are heavy rains in the area it floods (demonstrating the area is unsuitable for housing) and flooded spectacularly in the rains a few weeks ago. The flooding is perfect for what we would like to do with it - we want to highlight the benefit of this feature for wildlife, expanding the wet woodland area it has currently, and highlighting the biodiverse landscape already on the site, hidden under our noses.

On site after one of Dawlish's infamous recent downpours, around standing water there were recorded tracks, droppings, and evidence of various wildlife using the area. We would like to position a motion sensor wildlife camera - safely and hidden from view, to be able to monitor the wildlife using the area.

We have the volunteers, some funding, time and the materials, to quickly develop the area and realise our proposal should the project be green lit by the local community, and have a questionnaire ready to go to gauge the support of the residents, which we feel would be a great asset to DCC as it would be both a carbon sink, and a wild habitat, a haven for wildlife, and provide a wild corridor for existing wildlife.



Flood risk

More info:

For copies of the public consultation leaflet, which Holcombe Residents reacted to well at a recent Residents Association Meeting (with 223 households as members). To learn more about the project please contact: Scott Williams, ACT Wildlife Warden, 8 Millin Way, Dawlish Warren, EX7 0EP email: scott.dawlishww@gmail.com phone: 07751214656

CLlr Alison Foden (Dawlish South West) has set up an online petition - the petition address is: <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/protect-nature-now-a-community-wildlife-area-for-holcombe>



The Plan

Featuring a diverse landscape: Wet woodland, enhanced habitat, agroforestry orchard for of nuts/fruits - including figs and walnuts, wildflower meadow, a bund, wild herbs and borage for pollinators, bat boxes, hibernaculum, wood piles, and bat boxes. Providing a continuation of wildlife access to the biodiverse rich community orchard.

Why is this important?

We all know that we are facing a Nature and Climate emergency, and with the news that the UK is one of the most nature-deprived countries in the world, it is even more urgent that we make and protect space for wildlife in our local communities. Let's campaign with Action on Climate in Teignbridge (ACT) to create a space for nature here in Holcombe.

The area is prone to freshwater flooding and is a rare wet woodland area - which we would like to enhance, adding a wildflower meadow, provide an example of a community education area, potentially include storage for maintenance, and an agroforestry area - offering nuts and fruit for the community.

There are lots of initiatives now currently seeking to encourage the planting of wildflowers to help combat climate change, help wildlife and pollinators and to transform our own wellbeing.

We feel this area could easily become, with a little work, a wildlife area the local community could really be proud about.

I've made contact with the local tenant/farmer, Jack - and he did point out that it floods, which would be perfect to develop the habitat we want to promote - and recently his sheep were grazing on it.

Something we would have no issue with continuing to happen to help with a biodiverse natural management. Grazing, along with agroforestry is part of the ecology we want to showcase. The project would be an asset in terms of nature preservation, and education.



The vision

It is envisioned that a Community Wildlife Area, could it be created here, and might include the following:

- An unsurfaced path looping around the site, giving the public access whilst limiting disturbance to wildlife.
- a small education area with seating - both the surface and stones for the seating have been offered to us.
- Benches.
- a traditional bund.
- A community wildflower garden with agroforestry trees
- Information boards about local wildlife and other signage to promote education and appropriate access. Including all the non native species that have found a home there.
- Encouraging and developing a mosaic of habitats including hedges, and wet woodland (already growing there).
- Installation of reptile hibernaculum, bird and bat boxes to encourage colonisation.
- Managing the Streamside habitat to promote well balanced and diverse populations of flora and fauna
- The inclusion of a lined pond to help manage flooding area.
- Ensure that this trail meets the needs of less mobile people.
- Promote wellbeing - with quiet areas, and sensory areas.
- Potential training area for local wildlife wardens/nature groups to practice bioblitz recordings - revealing and tracking the diverse insect and plant life already interacting with the site.



<https://www.actionclimateteignbridge.org>