

Duxford Festival of Nature (20/6): wash-up meeting 15 July 2023

CONCLUSIONS

Objectives met?

1. Raise levels of **local pride, aspiration, and community cohesion** by helping communities to understand, appreciate and enjoy their natural environment. - this was ACHIEVED thanks to stalls from Wildlife Trust, Butterfly Conservation, Action for Swifts, and talks from Wildlife Trust (wildlife gardens), Dick Newall (swifts), Robert Smith (wildlife friendly farming) and Ashley Arbon (botany tours of BF).
2. increase FODGS membership. 2 members signed up, hopefully more will follow.
3. Promote Wildlife gardening. Only a dozen or so signed the pledge book, and maybe 20 listened to the WT talk. But it is considered a good start, to be expanded in future.

Improve: more promotion of pledge book and map, an extra person on the stand

4. Promote swift plight and swift box solutions. Good presence by Action for Swifts with boxes / leaflets, and good talk by Dick Newall. To be followed up.
5. Community to have FUN – a very wide demographic; lots of families with small children turned up with picnics, lots of younger teenagers, pensioners. Weather was 19degC , sunny all day with 15mph wind dropping to zero in the evening, very pleasant.
6. Increase reach to district & county through presence of Cllrs PM and PH – Pippa's enthusiasm and speaking skills are great

Operations

(Ian) Went almost perfectly.

Set-up was on-time, though some stall holders turned up 35' early at 10:10 and others 90' late at 13:30.

Improve: have at least one person dedicated to welcoming and directing stallholders

PA sound didn't carry as far as expected – needed to move off dipping deck and could have benefitted by being even closer to stalls (and away from tug of war)

Improve: Move all talks inside. Would need a reasonable sized marquee, but sound would be better with less distractions, better for speakers, better for listeners,

Team allocation of roles worked extremely well, but was unbalanced.

Improve: Allocate 2 people to MC role – Jen was working non-stop

Power needs were not specified by stall holders, T-Pod required 40A dedicated cable on the day, all others also required power but < 5A each.

Improve: make *absolutely sure* of both power needs and power sources prior to event – avoid stress and save time

Improve: shorten time 1300 to 1700 would be better, get more engagement

Zero First Aid, security, lost persons or emergency incidents.

Improve: need large block/s of ice to keep water cool

Need a dedicated photographer

Hats off to Ian for noting every action – I think the only – minor – omissions were ones that were not written down (e.g. rosettes)

PR

Keep: Fantastic posters and artwork from Sarah – no one else can do this, saved us a fortune

(Ian) Worked fairly well. We had 120 people at peak (14:00-16:00) with an estimated 250 total. Numbers tailed off around 17:00, so we could finish at 17:30 next time.

The Cake competition had 4 entries, so perhaps was not well advertised.

The posy competition had 1 entry, so also was perhaps not well advertised.

(gillian) all were on social media from weeks before, not sure how to get engagement

Improve: have competitions for children only? Seem to be more successful – some options: miniature gardens/ build a bug box/ Sarah's butterfly caterpillar match board

The plant swap did not really work, in that no-one (I think) brought a plant to swap. So again perhaps lack of advertising. But some were sold (don't know how many).

£106.50 cash in bucket at end of day, not sure how much was plants

(gillian) Although we had numerous posts and pulsing timetable was respected on social media (IG, FB, web pages) and we had posters all over the village, still a HUGE number of people in Duxford *did not know it was happening* (I spoke to at least 10 such people on the field in the 3 days running up)

Our target audience is Duxford, so **we must make sure we reach Duxford first**. It is our village that we want to lead this rollout. We are reaching the adjacent villages through our comms with local groups and we must keep those channels open by engaging with them. g is doing this through Eco Whittlesford and the Climate Emergency group, both have a fairly wide reach.

Lessons learned:

1. **Definitely do a doorstep leaflet drop** next time, propose 2 weeks prior, to include ALL details on the leaflet, how to enter competitions, walks, talks, demos, stall holders, celebrities.
2. **Make sure to get front page on the Chatterbox** – needs 3 months notice to be sure of reserving it!
3. Not sure posters had a great impact. Would propose just a few key posters next time. The amount of laminating bothers me – maybe print more paper ones that can just be replaced (eco option?)
4. **Improve social media posts**. Find a 14 year old (!) to do all the social media for us, or to teach someone how to do it well and quickly.

Kids' activities

(Ian) Lots of kids were having fun on Nick's area, and on the Cadet scramble mat. Maybe Nick can add more details here.

It was not clear how many did the Nature Trail – did anyone collect a competition sticker? there were a lot of maps left over. Perhaps needs to be better advertised?

(gillian/Jen) **Lessons learned:**

- main race should have been earlier
- don't forget rosettes! We had them on site...
- buy amazon vouchers
- Comes back to better social media and a leaflet drop – maybe canvas parents with young children what would improve take-up?
- Occasionally the noise was impacting the talks – either move the 2 areas further apart or time them not to coincide (would not be so obvious if talks in marquee...)

Site Plan

(Ian) All the stalls fitted in the area allocated! Just.

Improve:

- **have more stalls (max 4 or 5 more) and use whole area.**
- **Keep alcohol hospitality away from main stalls, (maybe add music?) - site is big enough to make that “adults corner”.**
- **Tea & cakes should be moved to main area of stalls with tables, chairs and a marquee for shade/shelter (need a LONG cable)**

The toilets were well positioned – some people that might otherwise have missed the woodworkers will have seen them when using the loos.

Pledges should have been on the main stalls area – hex shelter was great for display but too far away for people to engage. Easy enough to have a big board on short grass.

Improve: Use hex shelter for posters only next time and bring village map onto stalls area (and share the job).

Improve:

- **Speeches /PA slightly closer to people and inside marquee**
- **More PA reminders for pledges/ woodworkers/ nature trail**

A multiway signpost

Car Parking

(Ian) We had only 11 cars. So the good news is that most people did walk, bike or use public transport, as we wanted.

Some f/back was that they did not know about the Car Park, so parked elsewhere (village street, school, DCC,...).

Perhaps we advertise the car park better.

Joanne and the cadets were really great.

(gillian) Add “FREE” to the car park signs and the publicity

Tinneke and Mike Butler might sell the field in the coming year, so there may not be any additional parking other than the Rec

Team

(Ian) this is a really effective and fun team!

(gillian) absolutely – great experience

Planning

(Ian) [Trello](#) as a project management tool was useful. simple enough but comprehensive, and good for chasing overdue actions with email reminders. Everyone could see the Trello board and most people were able to write to it.

The planning meeting schedule (4 weekly at first, then 2 weekly then 5 days before the event) worked really well. I would do exactly the same again.

Team actions were quite well distributed though Gillian scored highest!

(gillian) Trello was very useful

Money

What	How much £	Date paid	comments
Toilet Hire – Latta Hire – 2 single portaloos	£214.80	15/05/23	
Flyers – Altone Ltd – 250	£45.00	02/05/23	distributed around village hospitality
Rigeon – wood for boards and posts	£36.00		Paul made up the boards – now in cemetery garage
Vistaprint	£20.76	02/05/23	Nature Trail stickers
Plan it Reprographics	£200.40	15/05/23	Large A0 and A1 printing and laminating for Pledge your garden to nature stand – can be reused, in cemetery garage
The Wildlife Trust	£65.00	28/05/23	Iain Webb – speaker fee
Red Graphic	£112.80		Banner for A505 roundabout – can be used again, in cemetery garage
Total	£694.76		

Income – 3 new members (3 x £25 per year) plus a £50 donation

3 more potential volunteers – much needed!

£106.50 cash in bucket