

# Raynhams' Newsletter - January 2021

## Happy New Year!!!

We hope all of you had an enjoyable Christmas and New Year despite the restrictions. The next couple of months look to be difficult again, but we have to believe things will get better so we will be able meet up with family and friends and do things together. Looking ahead we have an outline of the social events being planned so far for The Raynhams (page 2) and if you have any suggestions or ideas to add, then do get in touch.

*Paresh Shah & Judy Pell*

## Solar Farm Committee

The following applications have been approved by The Solar Farm Committee:

- 1) Alan Forsyth for an Interpretation Board at St Margaret's Churchyard
- 2) Andrew Buck for bird feeders and food for garden birds which will be distributed - look out for further details
- 3) Joy Forman for a Barn Owl carving to be situated on the Village Green
- 4) Melvin Forman for a free 'Fish & Chip Supper' as soon as the pandemic allows
- 5) Harriet Mundy for a new dog waste bin near the Village playground
- 6) Helen Brooke for bird nesting boxes which will be distributed- look out for further details
- 7) David Stubbs for continuation of the St Margaret's Churchyard Wildlife Conservation Project
- 8) Colette Mudd for a defibrillator situated at The Orchard.

## Raynhams 2021 Calendars

We still have calendars in stock so if you would like to buy one please contact Judy or Paresh, either by email to [westray.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:westray.newsletter@gmail.com) or phone 01582 756495.

## Friends of the Village Hall

Please donate any Xmas baubles no longer needed or the bottom parts of any broken baubles - these are required for a 2021 project!! Also keeping positive, please donate any unwanted gifts for tombola and raffle prizes for Easter and summer events. Donations can be left in the Reading Room which is checked daily.

*Monica Fitzjohn*

## Newsletter contact details

- Deadline for articles or notices is the 28<sup>th</sup> of each month
- [westray.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:westray.newsletter@gmail.com) subscribe or unsubscribe from the newsletter or submit photos and articles
- <https://www.raynhampc.info/documents> view and download past newsletters
- [westraynham.vhc@gmail.com](mailto:westraynham.vhc@gmail.com) book the village hall for an event

## Dates for your diary

Despite the current restrictions due to Covid-19, we hope to start our social and community activities by Easter and more details on the following events will be given closer to the time:

- Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> April - Easter coffee morning in village hall and/or outdoors
- Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> June - Open Gardens
- Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> May - Sid's quiz night
- Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> June - Village Day
- Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December - Xmas coffee morning

## Pottering in the greenhouse and garden - Bridget Stanley

There is still a bit of life going on in the greenhouse at the moment: wild rocket, lettuces



and a pot of parsley all providing some fresh leaves. The last of the pumpkins is still sound, and will provide lovely colour to add to soups and curries in January. The purple sprouting broccoli is providing lots of little heads which are delicious.

Another little job for the garden to get ahead with now is drying your egg shells. Crush the egg shells and sprinkle around your strawberries, dahlias etc. in the spring to act as a deterrent against slugs. Finally, everything outside has been touched by frost with some pretty touches here and there.



## Happy New Year from Raynham Estate!

By the time you read this, our rather muted Christmas celebrations will be over, and we hope that you were able to have contact with your friends and family, if only via a video link. Like all of you, we're certainly looking forward to putting 2020 behind us and welcoming you back to some exciting events in 2021. Don't forget, if you'd like to hear more about what we're up to, you can connect to us through any of the following:

- Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/RaynhamNorfolk>
- Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/raynhamnorfolk/>
- Newsletter - subscribe by visiting [www.raynham.co.uk/get-in-touch/](http://www.raynham.co.uk/get-in-touch/)

*Jo Bosch*

## Nature Notes for December 2020 - David Stubbs

This strangest of years has at least afforded me more time to explore our local area and observe more wildlife close to home. In fact, there has been quite a trend on social media about 'low-carbon birding', or 'patch birding' with more and more people discovering the pleasures of finding wildlife at or close to home.

My rule of thumb has been to keep entirely within walking distance of home, effectively meaning within a 5km radius of West Raynham. Within this area in 2020 I have observed 111 species of birds. The only bird I know I missed was the bearded vulture I wrote about last month, so that makes 112 for the local area this year.

It's hard to pick out highlights, as there are so many, but I will give top spot for 2020 to the five waxwings I saw one day in March. They were at the top of one of the lime trees along the avenue out of the village - an exciting find because they are such irregular and elusive winter visitors to this country, difficult to find at the best of times and amazing birds to boot. Of course, if I had seen the vulture...

Altogether, in the five years I have been in West Raynham the local bird list (including reports from others) amounts to 122 species. That is really impressive and testifies to the good range of habitats we have, especially along the river corridor, with its marshy vegetation, wet woodlands and the Raynham Hall Lakes. Away from the river corridor, the next best area is up by the airfield. The hedgerows, rough grassland and adjacent fields along by the solar farm are good places to find lesser whitethroat, little owl, grey partridge and various waders, as well as a wide range of passage migrants.

Inevitably, as each year goes by, I get to know the area better and several of those I only saw for the first time this year - such as wheatear and ring ouzel - are likely to be regular passage migrants. There are others, which I have seen every year, but are clearly more frequent now than five years ago. These include little egret and red kite. I didn't come across Cetti's warblers until 2018, but they are clearly well established along the Wensum and I suspect they are also increasing in numbers.

I do not have sufficient of a baseline to tell if some birds are getting rarer locally, but I fear we won't be seeing many more turtle doves. They are certainly much rarer than they used to be (that's true nationally as well as locally) and the same can be said for spotted flycatcher, although 2020 was a better year for them than the last few. Again, that may be bias due to extra time spent in the field this year.

Broken down into seasons, I estimate we have in excess of 70 species breeding in our area. Among these, probably the most significant - and apparent - are the swifts, swallows and house martins that nest in good numbers throughout West Raynham. We also have good numbers of house sparrows and starlings. These might seem 'common' species for being noteworthy, but nationally all of these have shown sharp population declines, so it is heartening that West Raynham (and Helhoughton) is still such a stronghold for them.

From my less frequent observations around East and South Raynham, I cannot say for sure, but I have not seen evidence of swifts nesting. I would love to receive some

information from people living in the Orchards and Kiptons, so we get a fuller picture for the whole Raynham area.



The River Wensum and riparian marshes and wet woodland provide excellent wildlife habitat throughout the year.

Turning to other wildlife we have four species of deer in our area. The diminutive muntjacs are the most obvious and are often seen in the open throughout the day. Roe deer are pretty common too, while we also have a small number of the impressive red deer, but these are shy and mostly nocturnal round here. Their large hoof prints are a good giveaway though. Fallow deer are the least common but a few occur mostly in the area between Helhoughton and East Rudham.

Our most notable mammal is the otter. Seldom seen, but I have heard enough reports from people who walk along the riverside to be sure that they are a regular presence along the Wensum.

Also seldom seen, but I believe we have good numbers of stoats and weasels. This last year I had brief glimpses of stoat about 4 or 5 times and one of weasel scuttling across the road. We also have many bats but, unfortunately, I don't have the detector equipment, so I cannot say which species they are.

Looking ahead to 2021, Paresh Shah and I are hoping to organise some moth trapping sessions in St Margaret's churchyard during the spring and summer. Moths are a fascinating and very varied group of insects and we would love to know more about which species are found here.

We will of course continue with the grassland management at the churchyard, which will be the fourth season of this project. It will be interesting to see how well the wildflower plugs we planted last October come through. Volunteers to help with the grass cutting and raking are always welcome. Of course, everything will be dependent on the Covid-19 situation, but let's hope we will be able to do some community activities by the spring/summer.

If you have any unusual nature observations please let me know:  
David Stubbs: [davidstubbs1@btinternet.com](mailto:davidstubbs1@btinternet.com) or WhatsApp me on 07974922197