

## WFGA Newsletter for April

Tuesday 1st April, 7.30-9PM. [Wyre Forest Extinction Rebellion](#) meeting

Wednesday 2nd April 7-9pm at Bewdley Baptist Church, [CARP public meeting](#).

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April – [Volunteer Wildlife Recorders](#) 10 – 4pm Bishops Wood Centre,

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> April – [Conservation Volunteers planting willow](#). – 10 – 2pm - Bishops Wood

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> April [Kidderminster Repair Café](#).

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> April. 8.0 pm [Green Drinks](#) at Bewdley Rowing Club.

Tuesday 8th April, 7.30-9PM. [Wyre Forest Climate Choir](#) Rehearsal

Thursday April 10: 3pm - 4:30pm. ['My Journey as an Eco-Activist'](#)

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2025. [“Step into Stories”](#) Festival.

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April – [Revamp a picnic area/balsam bashing](#). Bishops Wood Centre,

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> April & Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> April 10.30am – 3pm - [Easter Nature Days](#). Bishops Wood

Tuesday 15th April, 7.30-9PM. [Wyre Forest Extinction Rebellion](#) group meeting

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> April. 10.0 – 1.0 [Bewdley Repair Café](#). St Georges Hall, Bewdley.

Tuesday 22nd April, 7.30-9PM. [Wyre Forest Climate Choir](#). Fortnightly rehearsal

Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> April 7:30pm – 8:30pm. [Bat walk](#) at Burlish Bike Park

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> April 10.30 – 3.0 [volunteering on the heathlands](#) at Dropping Well Farm,

Tuesday 29th April, 7.30-9PM. [Wyre Forest Extinction Rebellion](#) group meeting

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May 6.45 [Sustfeast 25!](#)

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May 9.0 – 1.0 [Plant Supports](#). Wyre Community Land Trust,

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## Diary dates.

**Tuesday 1st April, 7.30-9PM. Wyre Forest Extinction Rebellion group meeting at the Quaker Meeting House, Lower Park, Bewdley DY12 2DP.**

All environmentally conscious people welcome to attend our local group meeting. Just come along or contact Dave on 0747 1207181.

**Wednesday 2nd April 7-9pm at Bewdley Baptist Church, 61 High Street, DY12 2DJ Bewdley, CARP public meeting.** Please come along to support Communities against River Pollution and find out what we have achieved and our future plans. CARP has been actively campaigning and testing pollution levels for over 1 year. If you're a local person who cares about nature, is a rower, a wild swimmer or an angler, why not come and find out what we're doing about the pollution. Get involved - or just be curious! Refreshments available.

**Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April – Volunteer Wildlife Recorders 10 – 4pm Bishops Wood Centre, DY13 9SE.** email [volunteers.bw@field-studies-council.org](mailto:volunteers.bw@field-studies-council.org)

**Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> April – Conservation Volunteers – 10 – 2pm - Bishops Wood Centre, DY13 9SE.** planting willow for harvesting. email [volunteers.bw@field-studies-council.org](mailto:volunteers.bw@field-studies-council.org)

**Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> April Kidderminster Repair Café.** at the Youth House, Bromsgrove Street. Our skilled volunteers will be ready to repair your items at our next Repair Cafe of 2025 from 10am till 1pm. Donations only.

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> April. 8.0 pm Green Drinks at Bewdley Rowing Club.** Electric Vehicles, are they the way forward? Electric Vehicles, the myths and lived experiences. EV expert Keith Budden will be joining us to share the latest information.

Do you have an electric vehicle? Come along and share your positives and negatives with others who are wondering whether to change to an electric vehicle. A sceptic about EVs? Come along and air your doubts and concerns.

**Tuesday 8th April, 7.30-9PM. Wyre Forest Climate Choir. Fortnightly rehearsal at Offmore church, Gray Close, Kidderminster DY10 3YE.** Help us make a splash as we rehearse our water themed songs in readiness for our next collaboration with the national Climate Choir. More information from Hilary at [hilarymueller@hotmail.com](mailto:hilarymueller@hotmail.com)

**Thursday April 10<sup>th</sup> 3.0 pm - 4:30pm. St Anne's Church, Bewdley.**

**'My Journey as an Eco-Activist' a talk by Claire Fauset.**

Claire has campaigned for 25 years across the globe. She will share the insights she has gained. All are most welcome.

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2025. “Step into Stories” Festival.** 16 events in 7 venues in and around Bewdley throughout the day. <https://stepintostories.org.uk/> Book early to avoid disappointment.

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April – Revamp a picnic area/balsam bashing. Bishops Wood Centre, DY13 9SE.** email [volunteers.bw@field-studies-council.org](mailto:volunteers.bw@field-studies-council.org)

**Monday 14<sup>th</sup> April and Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> April – 10.30am – 3pm -Easter Nature Days. Bishops Wood Centre, DY13 9SE** £5 per person. Join in the trail to discover the hidden bird, see if you can spot birds and heard their calls. Dip the pond for the creatures that lie beneath, create fun crafts and build shelters. [book online](#) for the nature days.

**Tuesday 15th April, 7.30-9PM. Wyre Forest Extinction Rebellion group meeting at the Quaker Meeting House, Lower Park, Bewdley DY12 2DP.** All environmentally conscious people welcome to attend our local group meeting. Just come along or contact Dave on 0747 1207181.

**Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> April. 10.0 – 1.0 Bewdley Repair Café. St Georges Hall, Bewdley.** Our volunteers will help repair and sharpen your items. Our garment repairers also love to repair soft toys! If bringing a bike email [john.rhymer50@gmail.com](mailto:john.rhymer50@gmail.com)

**Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 7.30-9PM. Wyre Forest Climate Choir. Fortnightly rehearsal at Offmore church, Gray Close, Kidderminster DY10 3YE.** Help us make a splash as we rehearse our water themed songs in readiness for our next collaboration with the national Climate Choir. More information from Hilary at [hilarymueller@hotmail.com](mailto:hilarymueller@hotmail.com).

**Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> April 7:30pm – 8:30pm. Bat walk at Burlish Bike Park with Worcestershire Wildlife Trust.**

Last year we held a bat box making event at Burlish Bike Park to help the bike park achieve their biodiversity action plan. With these boxes now up around the park, we are leading a bat walk, to see how the new resident bats are getting along! Come and be bat detectives for an evening using our bat detectors to see if you can hear the different bat species residing in the bike park.

Booking essential via Eventbrite: [bit.ly/bat-walk](https://bit.ly/bat-walk)

Email [beccy@worcestershirowildlifetrust.org](mailto:beccy@worcestershirowildlifetrust.org) for any questions

**Friday 25<sup>th</sup> April 10.30 – 3.0 volunteering on the heathlands at Dropping Well Farm, The Devil's Spittleful and Blackstone Farm Fields.** If you would like to join these work parties or would like more information before you do, please email [volunteer@worcestershirowildlifetrust.org](mailto:volunteer@worcestershirowildlifetrust.org).

**Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> April, 7.30-9PM. Wyre Forest Extinction Rebellion group meeting at the Quaker Meeting House, Lower Park, Bewdley DY12 2DP.** All environmentally conscious people welcome to attend our local group meeting. Just come along or contact Dave on 0747 1207181

## May dates for your diary.

**Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May 6.45 Sustfeast 25!**

Put the date in your diary. 9th May 2025 at 6:45 at St Michael's and All Saints Church, Stourport. (see article below)

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May 9.0 – 1.0 Plant Supports. Venue: Wyre Community Land Trust, St George's Farm, Tanners Hill, Bewdley, Worcs DY12 2LS**

Make your own plant supports for the garden before it gets out of hand! Several ideas will be considered and you will make a hazel wigwam for climbing beans or sweet peas! Cost **£45**

See [www.wyreclt.org.uk/courses](http://www.wyreclt.org.uk/courses) or phone 01299 488083 or email [events@wyreclt.org.uk](mailto:events@wyreclt.org.uk) to book.

## CARP

1. CARP now has a FB page. [Facebookhttps://m.facebook.comCARP Group - Communities Against River Pollution](https://m.facebook.com/CARP-Group-Communities-Against-River-Pollution) Please visit, like, comment, follow and repost. We would like to get our information about polluted rivers out there as much as possible.
2. CARP is participating in this year's Wyre Forest Green Alliance's SustFest. We are organising a procession and memorial service for our river in Bewdley **on June 15<sup>th</sup>** (around 2pm) It would be wonderful for you and your friends and family to come along and show your love for our dying river by joining in. More details coming soon. If you have any time to help with the organisation of this event, please get in touch.
3. If you would like to get more involved with monitoring the River Severn, but just haven't got the time to regularly test the water, there are a couple of national initiatives coming up soon that might be of interest. These are: <https://earthwatch.org.uk/greatukwaterblitz/#> Organised by Earthwatch Europe, but with the involvement of The Rivers Trust, this initiative asks volunteers to take simple chemical measurements. The first one in 2025 takes place between **25-28<sup>th</sup> of**

**April.** Sign up for this begins online on **4th March** The organisation will provide a simple water testing kit for nitrates and phosphate, provided we sign up as an organisation. And

<https://theriverstrust.org/take-action/the-big-river-watch>

This initiative works via an app, and gets participants to spend 15 minutes by their river reporting what they see. This spring's watch overlaps in time with the Blitz. It runs from **Apr.25th to May 1st.**

**We hope that you can get involved in some of these activities and events.**

*Dee Edwards On behalf of CARP*

### **Sustfeast 25!**

Put the date in your diary 9th May 2025 at 6:45 at St Michael's and All Saints Church, Stourport. Come and have a lovely vegetarian meal with likeminded people whilst fundraising for this year's Wyre Forest Sustainability Festival. BYO drinks, buffet style supper

Entertainment provided by **Rebel & the Banned** and the new improved **Climate Choir!**

Test your knowledge with our sustainability quiz.

Tickets £15 per person from [balbircurrie@gmail.com](mailto:balbircurrie@gmail.com)

ALL OFFERS OF HELP WITH PROVIDING FOOD &/OR RAFFLE PRIZES WILL BE GRATEFULLY RECEIVED ~ please contact Hilary at [hilarymueller@hotmail.com](mailto:hilarymueller@hotmail.com) .

### **Recycle Blister Packs from tablets and pills**

Until recently the nearest place that you could take the blister packs from medication to be recycled was "Superdrug" in Worcester. We are delighted to hear that Boots in Kidderminster is now able to accept them for recycling. You can get points on your "Boots Card" too!

### **Conservation in the churchyard at St Leonard's Ribbesford**

Following the success of the first 'Rake and Cake' get together in the churchyard last year, we hope to establish a quarterly event, with the objective of involving the wider community in a seasonal conservation activity in this precious location. The next gathering will be on Saturday 22 March, from 10 - 12, or actually, any time that day that suits folk. All are welcome to help with chopping, raking, general tidying, or simply to enjoy companionship, offer encouragement and share cake! There will be a follow-up event on the Susfest 'Fringe' on Sunday, 6 July, 2 - 4 pm.

For over 5 years, Ribbesford Churchyard has been actively promoting biodiversity by managing parts of the churchyard as meadow, leaving grasses and wildflowers to grow freely until late summer, then scything and collecting the hay to allow a greater diversity of species to flourish. We have planted native deciduous trees and native bulbs, and installed bird and bat boxes and 'hibernacula'. The results have been delightful and we are proud to be participating in the Natural Networks programme and to work in partnership with Caring for God's Acre.

### **Free logs for next winter?**

Do you, or anyone you know, want some free logs for next winter? A large beech has been blown down at the top of the churchyard. It has been cut up into cords, and there is an ample supply, free to anyone who wishes to take it away. We do draw attention, however to the churchyard steps, which might prove a challenge for some.

## Beavers

Extract from The "Imagine" Newsletter. <https://theconversationuk.cmail20.com/t/r-l-thtilrkl-bdjwuddut-d/> Beavers, those iron-toothed rodents with a talent for hydraulic engineering, can legally return to English river catchments after an absence of 500 years.

*Castor fiber* has been on the way back for the last two decades thanks to unauthorised reintroductions. But until a few weeks ago, an enclosure was the only home these semi-aquatic mammals could legally find in the UK. Successive governments have hesitated to issue release licenses for beavers, given their ability to transform the environment in unpredictable ways. When it comes to mitigating and adapting to climate change, however, that's their biggest asset.

<https://www.google.com/url?q=https://theconversationuk.cmail20.com/t/r-l-thtilrkl-bdjwuddut-n/&source=gmail&ust=1741886899068000&usq=AOvVaw0jYIJbhSOZSYrdFgHHNUaC>

Where beavers really shine is in their knack for soothing damaged landscapes. "Renowned engineers, beavers seem able to dam any stream, building structures with logs and mud that can flood large areas," Hatch says.

"As climate change causes extreme storms in some areas and intense drought in others, scientists are finding that beavers' small-scale natural interventions are valuable. "The changes beavers make can help land hold onto water and release it slowly, which eases flooding and stalls drought. Compare this with human design innovations like tarmac, which radiates heat and allows storm water to slough off in torrents.

While the concrete dams that people construct bar the way for migratory freshwater fish, some of Earth's most threatened animals, beaver dams present no such obstacle. "One reason may be that the fish can rest in slow pools and cool pond complexes after navigating the tallest parts of the dams," Hatch says.

### **Do you chew plastic?**

Did you know that chewing gum is a single-use plastic? In fact, every single piece of chewing gum contains a drinking straw's worth of hidden plastic ingredients!

Yes, that piece of gum in your mouth is actually made from the same plastics found in carrier bags, shampoo bottles, and even car tyres.

. Hidden behind the ambiguous term "gum base" are synthetic polymers such as polyethylene (commonly used in plastic bags), polyvinyl acetate (found in PVA glue), and butadiene-styrene rubber (which is used in car tyres). Consumers deserve to be fully informed about the products they are consuming, and they are entitled to better alternatives.

In the UK, approximately four billion pieces of plastic gum are consumed annually. This is equivalent to four billion plastic straws. Each day, Brits collectively chew and discard the equivalent of a bus full of plastic gum.

Microplastics have been found in human blood, brains, and even breast milk. Plastic toxins have been linked to some of our most concerning health issues, including cancer, diabetes, and infertility. Given this, it is troubling to think that the vast majority of consumers are unknowingly chewing plastic.

Furthermore, 87% of UK pavements are littered with plastic gum, which costs taxpayers £60 million every year to clean up. Even when disposed of responsibly, gum is either sent to landfill, incinerated or ends up contaminating our waterways. It is time to take action to protect both public health and the environment.

Innovative companies have demonstrated that chewing gum can be made from plant-based, biodegradable, and plastic-free ingredients. These alternatives offer a healthy and sustainable solution to plastic chewing gum.



Plastic chewing gum creates a huge environmental problem, ending up in landfill, waterways and sticking around to pollute our planet forever. That's why City to Sea and Nuud are calling on the Government to ban on plastic chewing gum for good - and encouraging people to choose plastic-free chewing gum alternatives! [Link to petition](#)

## **Wyre Forest Cycle Forum**

### **Creating safer routes for local people**

#### **Spring into cycling: top tips for getting your bike going again**

Not everyone keeps cycling through the winter. If you've got a bike that's been resting for a few months, as long as it has been somewhere dry, it will probably be mostly good to go. But there are a few key items to check that really make a difference. Here's the ABC list to check before riding:

#### **A Air in your tyres – the key to comfort and grip**

Check that your tyres are OK - good tread and not cracked – and that they're within a safe range of air pressure. On the side of each tyre look closely to find the minimum and maximum pressure. Towards the lower end of the range it will be more comfortable to ride and a bit grippier but with a slightly higher chance of getting a puncture. There are a range of bike pumps available with a gauge. An unhelpfully named 'track pump' - easy to use with a clear gauge so you can see the tyre pressure you are setting - can be useful at home.

#### **B Brakes – good brakes give confidence that you can react to the unexpected safely**

You really need these to work well. Try pushing the bike forwards with the front brake on, then backwards with the back brake on. Each brake should easily stop the bike. If it does not, the brakes will need adjusting. This may be as simple as turning an adjuster. If not, you may need to adjust the brakes/change pads - if not sure, seek help from someone who is.

#### **C Chain and Controls – a well-oiled chain can pass on 97% or more of your energy**

Almost all bikes still use a flexible chain to connect pedal power to the back wheel. Although the chain is old technology it can work well. A clean, non-rusty, smooth-running chain is extremely efficient. If needed, an (old) toothbrush or similar followed by oil can help a lot. You don't need to use harmful PTFE based products - greener, biodegradable oil is available. Make sure there are no rattles and check that all the fixings are securely attached (but not over-tightened).

If a bicycle has been left outside for months it may well need rebuilding...

If in doubt get it serviced or checked over by someone who knows about bikes. One option here is Bewdley Repair Cafe: 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month at St George's Hall you can get your bike fixed – it's free though you're invited to give a donation.

#### **Why not join us?**

Wyre Forest Cycle Forum works to improve cycling infrastructure across Wyre Forest district. The next Wyre Forest Cycle Forum Meeting is on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2025 2pm Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way DY11 7WF

We hope to have the Wyre Forest 3 Towns Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan by then. To find out more - or to raise any issue you want bringing up at the Worcestershire County Council Active Travel Stakeholder Group on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April - please email: [info@wyreforestcycling.co.uk](mailto:info@wyreforestcycling.co.uk)

## Spotlight on Swifts



### Red listed Swift visitors need our help

Most people equate the sound of swifts with summer arriving but how sad would it be if we lost them?

Problems swifts face are climate change, a loss of nest sites and the decline of insect populations (a swift's diet). Swifts are now a red listed species; swift numbers have declined by more than 50% in 20 years. They need our help.



### A few brief facts about swifts;

- Swifts spend almost all their time in the air, they eat, drink, sleep and mate on the wing
- they are here for about 12 weeks each summer arriving around May time to raise one or two chicks and then return to Africa, a round trip of 14,000 miles
- Swifts mate for life and meet each other at the same nest site each year
- They are insectivorous birds catching vast numbers of small insects for themselves and their chicks

### Ways you can help:

- Preserve existing nests
- Consideration with building works
- Comment on local planning applications asking for swift provision
- Put up swift boxes
- Wildlife friendly gardening
- Don't use pesticides
- Join swift groups or even set up your own swift group in your local area
- Record your sightings on Swift conservations 'Swift Mapper'

### What to do if you find a grounded swift:

Put the swift in a closed ventilated box and contact a specialist swift carer, seek advice from <http://actionforswifts.blogspot.com/p/grounded-swift> or on Facebook Swift & Swallow SOS group. You can also contact Swift Friends Wyre Forest via Facebook. We have some 'swift taxi' volunteers who may be able to assist with transport. Our nearest Specialist Swift Carers are Cuan Wildlife Hospital and Vale Wildlife Hospital.

### Some other sources of further information:

[actionforswifts.blogspot.com](http://actionforswifts.blogspot.com)

[swift-conservation.org](http://swift-conservation.org)

If you would like to join Swift Friends Wyre Forest look for us on Facebook, thank you for taking the time to read this article.

*Clair Amos. Swift Friends Wyre Forest*