

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

# Biodiversity Partnership



## Good-bye from Fabiola

It's time for me to say good-bye to the Biodiversity Partnership! The last 5 years and a bit have been a really interesting time, meeting so many people with great commitment to nature conservation and delivering great projects for biodiversity! I am off to pastures new in Germany to work in the area of environmental education, just before the Biodiversity Partnership coordinator post would have come to an end because of the budget situation. I hope that the Partnership will get through these challenging times of financial pressure and spending cuts, and that you will all keep involved with the good work!



## Big changes ahead, new contacts

From June 2011, the Biodiversity Partnership won't have a full-time coordinator any longer. The good news however is that basic partnership functions will be covered by the Wildlife Trust in Cambourne. The Biodiversity Steering Group will use some partnership reserves to buy in time from Wildlife Trust staff to carry on with strategic projects, such as

- Ponds Restoration Project
- Chalk River Project
- The Somersham-Chatteris disused Railway Corridor Enhancement
- The Small Projects Fund to encourage local projects
- The Biodiversity Partnership website
- Enabling discussion and networking amongst partners through Steering- and Projects Group meetings

## The new contacts for the future are:

**Local Biodiversity Partnership work in general:** Laura Watson and Sian Williams, [biodiversitypartnership@wildlifebcnp.org](mailto:biodiversitypartnership@wildlifebcnp.org), 01954 713530

**Biodiversity Steering Group:** Martin Baker, [martin.baker@wildlifebcnp.org](mailto:martin.baker@wildlifebcnp.org), 01954 713508

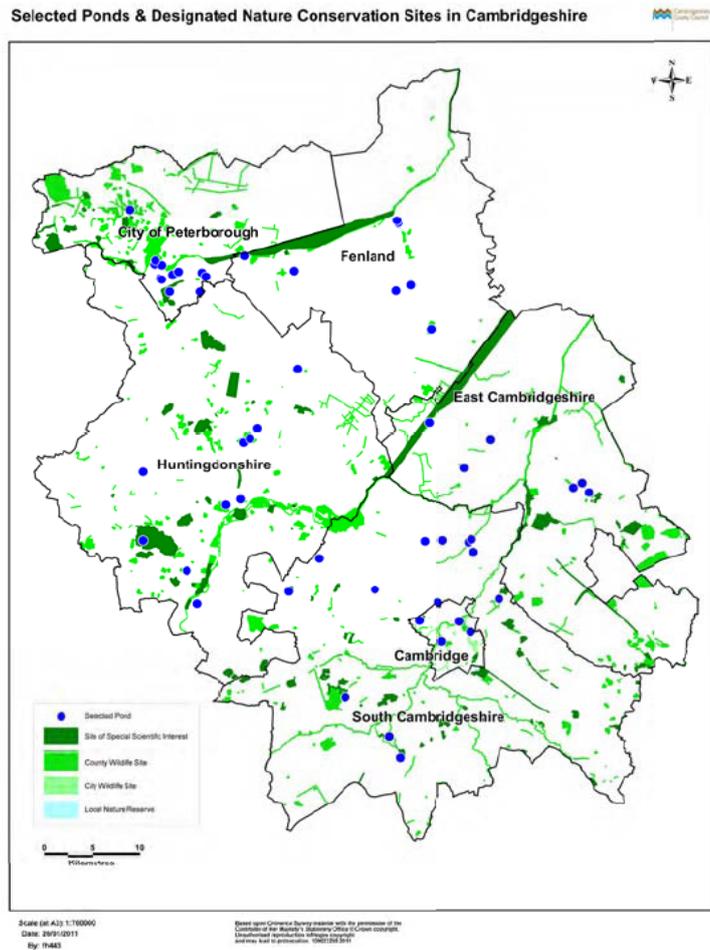
**Traditional Orchards Group:** Sarah McConnachie-Kessel, [sarah.mckessel@mypostoffice.co.uk](mailto:sarah.mckessel@mypostoffice.co.uk)

**Biodiversity Partnership Website:** [www.cpbiodiversity.org.uk](http://www.cpbiodiversity.org.uk)

## Pond Restoration Project Update

The Pond Restoration Project aims to restore 30 ponds over the course of 2 years across all districts in Cambridgeshire/Peterborough and build community and landowner support for the continued management of these restored ponds. 50 ponds have been identified (see blue dots on the map), out of which 40 will be surveyed in more detail, and then 30 restored.

A bid to WREN's Biodiversity Action Fund was submitted in January 2011, for a project start in January 2012. Since then, we found out that there won't be a full-time coordinator to manage the project. WREN seemed to be open to shifting the hosting and line-management to the Wildlife Trust instead, so we keep the fingers crossed for a positive funding response. We will find out in June 2011. A bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund has been submitted to fund aspects of the project.



## Somersham-Chatteris Railway Corridor Enhancement Project



The Biodiversity Projects Group identified this as a priority project. Its aim is to enhance the disused railway corridor for wildlife and biodiversity, while capturing people's ideas for this work and also engaging and involving people to make more use of the corridor. The corridor covers a range of habitats including grassland, shrub, trees, and some open ground where lots of butterflies could be seen on an exploratory visit. Contact has been made with both parishes, and we got a very positive response for the project.

There will be a joint meeting in July 2011 to explore the next steps. The Wildlife Trust will coordinate this project.



## Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Chalk Rivers Project

This is another project that was prioritised by the Projects Group. It aims to restore and enhance chalk river habitat on the Cambridge Chalk and Peterborough Limestone area, and also to improve access and establish basic river monitoring regimes. Rob Mungovan will coordinate this project with support from Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency and other local partners, and he already identified several quick win local restoration projects, including for example willow pollarding on the river Cam and Granta and narrowing the river channels on the Shep and the Mel. The Steering Group set aside £3000 to kick-start projects in 2011-12. The project will be split in **Phase 1** (2011/2012) and **Phase 2** (beyond 2012): Phase 1 will deliver projects under the umbrella of a Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Chalk River Project, led by local partners, by seeking smaller pots of grant funding for capital work only. Phase 2 will involve the employment of a project officer and more strategic delivery of more projects. At that stage, we should then be able to show to funders what we achieved in 2011/2012. For more information, contact [rob.mungovan@scams.gov.uk](mailto:rob.mungovan@scams.gov.uk), 01954-713402



One of the quick win projects for this year is the **How Moor Enhancement at the River Shep**. The Friends of the River Shep have been successful in an application to our partnership grant. The project is match-funded by South Cambridgeshire Wildlife Enhancement Scheme and will restore 290m of chalk river habitat. The conservation work will happen alongside footpath and access improvements that are funded by the County Council – so that both people and wildlife can better enjoy this habitat.

## Biodiversity Projects Fund

There was a time of uncertainty last year, when we didn't know if we would have enough money to keep the Projects Fund going. It is now up and running again, with £12,000 in the budget for 2011/12. So, if you are thinking about a local project that will deliver Biodiversity Action Plan targets, please get in touch! The application form is available on [www.cpbiodiversity.org.uk/downloads](http://www.cpbiodiversity.org.uk/downloads)

One project that we funded recently is the East Cambridgeshire Planting Parishes project, which is coordinated by East Cambridgeshire District Council and the Woodland Trust. Our funding is helping to plant new woodlands in Lode, Wicken, Mepal and Littleport.

Two more projects secured funding and are about to start: a project finding out more about an extremely rare planthopper (see photo) at Coe Fen, Cambridge, so that the management of the site can be better tailored to its needs, and the Chalk river enhancement project at How Moor, Shepreth, mentioned above.



### Example - East Cambridgeshire Planting Parishes Project



Photo National Trust

The project aim is to increase woodland cover in East Cambridgeshire, which is one of the least wooded districts. Planting has already happened at Lode (see photo), Wicken and Littleport. Further planting is planned for autumn 2011- more at Lode and also at Mepal, where native elms will be used to provide valuable habitat for White Spotted Pinion Moth. The project gained lots of great community involvement. Parishes are bringing in match funding from tree sponsoring and other external grants have been secured, for example a Woodsford

Waste Management grant. More information about Planting Parishes is available on [www.eastcambs.gov.uk/environment/planting-parishes](http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/environment/planting-parishes) .

### Otter holt footage on YouTube!

We are pleased to report that the otter holts in the Fenland Drainage Ditch system - built with the support of a SITA grant and additional funding from the partnership, Natural England and the Environment Agency – started to get used. The funding enabled 70 holts to be built in total, and infrared video footage has been captured already at 3 holts. This is the first Biodiversity Partnership funded project that has made it on to YouTube where Cliff Carson, Environmental Officer with the Middle Level, keeps uploading clips of the various species using the holts. It's not only otters, but also foxes, wood mice, spiders and mink (caught on camera mating). Check out the clips on [www.youtube.com/user/CarsonCliff?feature=mhum](http://www.youtube.com/user/CarsonCliff?feature=mhum)



### New community orchards – training courses bear fruit!

The Biodiversity Partnership had organised a series of orchard workshops in 2009 and 2010, and since then several participants have put the learning into practice by starting a community orchard.



**Cambridge Midsummer Common community orchard** (see photos) has over 30 heritage trees of local provenance, plus a new hedge, raspberries, fruit bushes and wildflowers. If you want to find out more, check out [www.midsummercommon.org.uk/index.html](http://www.midsummercommon.org.uk/index.html) (scroll to bottom)



In **Manea**, a group keen on a community orchard teamed up with the Manea Pit group and secured about £7,700 from the Heritage Lottery for joint work on planting an orchard, hedgerows, a wildflower meadow and getting interpretation boards, leaflets and engaging local people to use the whole area including Manea Pit County Wildlife Site and the new plantings. The wildflower meadow has been sown, and the orchard tree planting will start in autumn 2011.

## News from the Cambridgeshire Orchard Group



The information from the Phase 2 Orchard Survey was used to designate 3 more orchards as County Wildlife Sites, in Somersham, Wisbech and Rampton, and we have several more sites earmarked for potential future designations. The Phase 3 Survey report is progressing well and will be available by the end of the year. We will also aim to produce a leaflet for orchard owners with the key findings of the surveys, so that management can be tailored to suit the wildlife species that are present.

The **new contact for the future coordination of the orchard group** is Sarah McConnachie-Kessel, [sarah.mcckessel@mypostoffice.co.uk](mailto:sarah.mcckessel@mypostoffice.co.uk)

## Biodiversity Partnership website

Some of you might have noticed that our relatively new partnership website [www.cpbiodiversitypartnership.org.uk](http://www.cpbiodiversitypartnership.org.uk) had been down for a while. This has now been fixed, and you can check out what the Partnership has been doing. You will also find all the Biodiversity Action plans and other partnership reports and publications for download.



## Regional update on the Fens Integrated Biodiversity Delivery Area

The East of England Biodiversity Forum had organised a very successful stakeholder meeting in December 2010, and since then a lot of work has progressed in subgroups. Three groups of projects are being taken forward under the following headings:

- **Wider Ouse Washes** project, led by Cambridgeshire ACRE, including aspects such as archeology, nature conservation and awareness raising
- **Fenland Ditch Surveys**, looking at the value of drainage ditches as connecting corridors between big conservation sites in Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Lincolnshire; the projects will include volunteer training and surveys by expert contractors
- **River Wissey** project in Norfolk

More information is available from Catherine Weightman, Regional Advisor with Natural England, [Catherine.Weightman@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:Catherine.Weightman@naturalengland.org.uk)

## From the Year of Biodiversity to the Decade of Biodiversity!

Building on the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010, the UN declared 2011-2020 the Decade of Biodiversity to keep raising more public awareness about biodiversity and to encourage countries all over the world to take action to save the variety of life on earth.

2011 is also the International Year of the Bat and the Year of Forests.

For more information see [www.decadeonbiodiversity.net](http://www.decadeonbiodiversity.net), [www.yearofthebat.org](http://www.yearofthebat.org) and [www.un.org/en/events/iyof2011](http://www.un.org/en/events/iyof2011) (Forests)



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Working in Partnership with Buglife, Butterfly Conservation, Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge City Council, Environment Agency, East Cambridgeshire District Council, East of England Apples and Orchards Project, Fenland District Council, Forestry Commission, Froglife, Huntingdonshire District Council, Natural England, Peterborough City Council, Plantlife, RSPB, South Cambridgeshire District Council, Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough ... and more partners involved in biodiversity action!