



West is Best Volunteer Spotlight

Introducing Our Family of Volunteers

A Big Thank You

West Swindon Parish has a wonderful group of volunteers who work determinedly to keep West Swindon clean and green all year round. Many of the volunteers participate in multiple groups, helping each other out and give their time freely so that others can benefit from their hard work.

Volunteers extend the reach of the work that the Parish Team is able to achieve. From planting to litter picking, this small army of local people is an amazing resource that we appreciate. From reading the stories it is great to see people enjoying making a difference where they live.

On behalf of West Swindon Parish Council, I thank everyone who gives their time to their local area.

Junab Ali

Chair, Cllr Junab Ali, West Swindon Parish Council



Volunteering

Residents are able to volunteer on their own or in an established group. There are groups that meet regularly to take care of local copses, for litter picking or looking after a local public open space.

If you would like to volunteer on your own or with a group please check our website for more information.

www.westswindon-pc.gov.uk

Tel: 01793 299399



Ben Bell



Why do I volunteer? To help wildlife, to make our neighbourhoods more pleasant, to help deal with the ecological crisis, to meet and work with like-minded others.

How does it make me feel? Like I've done something useful, positive, and rewarding.

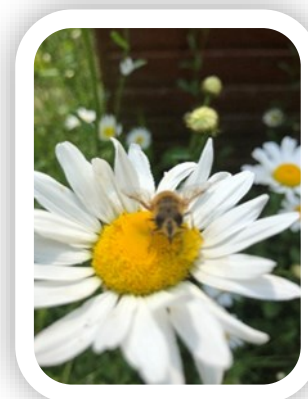
Blagrove Community Allotment

Early last year I approached WSPC for a plot to grow vegetables and was offered a space on Blagrove Allotment Site, on the understanding that anything we grew would go back to the community. My friend Glynis and I plus several other volunteers worked hard last year prepping the plot and building a shed. We utilised some of the tyres that were on site, had some raised planters made and dug out a pond from scratch (we have frog spawn this year) and last Summer we saw dragon & damsel flies. We asked for and received surplus veggies from the allotment plot holders and the Parish made us a wooden box which we placed outside the plot, and during the summer it was filled almost daily!

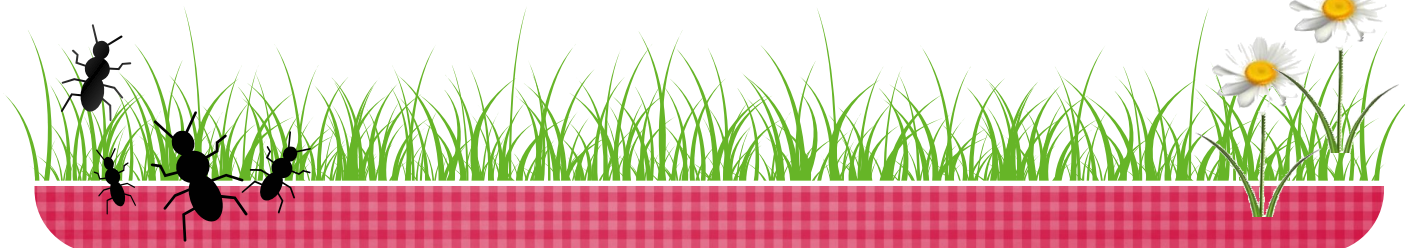
We have a wider variety of veggies growing this year - beetroot, cucumbers, peas, beans, sweetcorn, potatoes, tomatoes, onions, marrows and courgettes. Our only obstacle is critters who love our veggies. There are blue tits nesting in the existing boxes and it's a lovely, peaceful place to sit. Fingers crossed this year we will have a bumper harvest.

Greendown Copse Group

The Greendown group aims to increase biodiversity in a small area adjacent to Lydiard Park, meeting monthly on Sundays and occasionally midweek. We have planted mainly native species, such as English bluebells, primroses, and wild daffodils, snowdrops, ox-eye daisies, and musk mallows. We have also sown seeds of cornfield plants such as poppies and cornflowers. We have created habitats beneficial to wildlife: from woodpiles to stumperies, mini meadows to log pyramids, giving shelter, food and breeding grounds for various species. We have surveyed the bat population and aim to survey the hedgerow, trees and plants. In time we might be able to increase our knowledge of the mosses, lichen, and fungi.



We regularly litter pick to prevent harm to the environment and wildlife. The dumping of green waste has created problems for the environment such as the rapid spread within the copse of a plant on the 'Invasive Species' list. Volunteers have been combating this invasive plant according to government guidelines over the last 4 years and have finally nearly eradicated it from the woodland.



Glynis Hales

I have previously lived in other parts of Swindon before moving to West Swindon shortly before COVID. I had always wanted to live in West Swindon because it is so incredibly green and lush. My main interest is in re-wilding areas of the Parish. To this end I have always found West Swindon Parish Council to be extremely helpful and friendly.

I find it so incredibly rewarding being a volunteer and have met some lovely, like-minded people. I feel a sense of extreme satisfaction encouraging local residents to join me in my endeavours.



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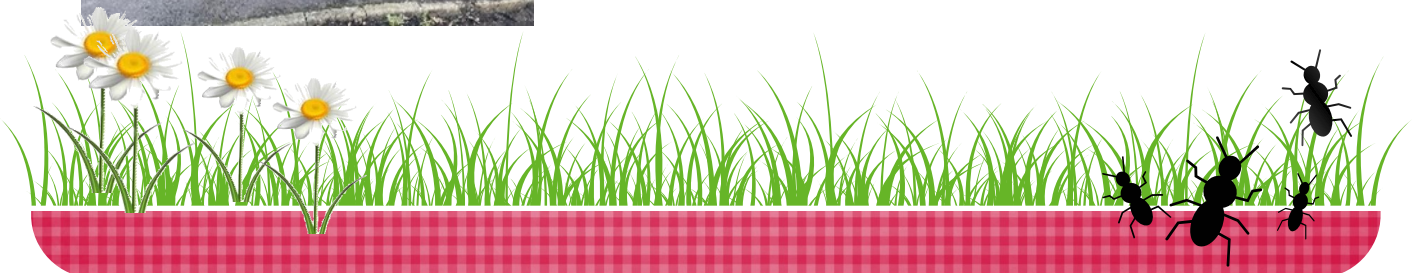
Karen Leggett

Karen is a very active volunteer across the Parish. Volunteering here with Cllr Leon Grother's litter pick in Freshbrook.

Glynis Hales and Karen Leggett creating Bee Roads wildflower planting in Toothill Park



Keep Swindon tidy litter pick. At Bridgemead (incorporating some West Swindon areas on the way). I have been working over here since the beginning of December and have made great inroads.

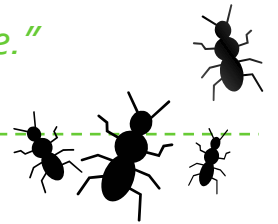


Chris Neville

I have been part of the parish litter picking volunteers for a few years and really enjoy going out and making a difference to where I live. It doesn't take much of my time but I feel if we could all tidy up in our own bit of space we would feel some joy and pride in our space. I get to chat to people, get some fresh air and a nice walk. What's not to like. I am getting on a bit now but we still do my best when we can.



"I really enjoy going out and making a difference to where I live."



Peatmoor Woodland Group

Peatmoor Community Woodland Group was set up by Swindon Borough Council in 1988 to engage volunteers in managing a 6.5 acre woodland once surrounded by farm fields in North Wiltshire. It's a remaining fragment of the ancient Bradon Forest and there is no evidence of building or clearance for cultivation.

When Swindon expanded westwards in the mid-1970s, the copse was preserved for its environmental biodiversity. As an unusual example of wet woodland and being located next to the artificially created Peatmoor Lagoon, it is important for its rainwater storage capacity. The group follows a traditional coppicing programme using hand tools from October to April. The summer months are spent keeping paths clear of vegetation and maintaining boardwalks over wet areas and bridges across streams.

Recent projects include planting hazel within the copse and creating a new woodland in a field owned by Swindon Borough Council close to the lagoon. Two bug hibernaculums have been built, and in response to climate change, volunteers dug a pond and made leaky dams across the streams in the copse. The aim is to sustain biodiversity by retaining moisture within the soil during months of little rainfall.

New members are always welcome to join in our important activity. Find out more at <https://peatmoorcopse.mystrikingly.com>





West Swindon FAB (Flowers & Butterflies)

West Swindon FAB volunteer at Shaw Ridge woodland and meadow. The woodland was planted in the 1980's as part of West Swindon housing development, understory was lacking, and the area is very wet due to a number of springs originating in the area. Volunteers have been working to improve the area and increase biodiversity by encouraging native wildflowers to flourish and establishing wildlife habitats. Volunteer activity includes maintaining the informal woodland path for improved access, planting understory, pollarding trees to encourage regrowth of dense foliage at a lower level, increasing woodland light levels to allow ground fauna to flourish, re-establishing and maintaining original hedgerows, enhancing the small seasonal ponds to encourage valuable habitats, planting native wildflowers in the woodland and meadow and litter picking to encourage others to look after our green spaces. Regular surveys are carried out to record plants and wildlife.

Working with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and Swindon Forest Meadows as part of their project with Buglife, volunteers recently planted 500 plug plants in the meadow to help our native insect pollinators and create B-Line network of flower-rich pathways linking existing wildlife areas to benefit pollinators, wildlife and the community. In the woodland native wildflower bulbs were planted in early Spring, including native bluebell, wood anemone, snowdrop, winter aconite and wild daffodil.

Join Us

Working together to establish wildlife habitats and boost biodiversity will have a positive impact on our environment, encourage the local community and inspire future generations to enjoy and get closer to nature.

New volunteers are always welcome, meeting at Shaw Ridge on the second Saturday of the month at 9.30am.

Find us on

Facebook at West Swindon FAB.



Kath Webster

I'm a retired Geography Teacher and have always taken an interest in the natural environment. Over the years I became increasingly concerned about the vast amounts of litter and plastic and the effect it had on the environment and wildlife. It also looked bad so instead of being cross about it I decided to pick it up. Once I discovered I could obtain litter picking equipment from WSPC I was off! I now pick litter around Grange Park and Shaw Ridge as often as I can. Sadly, easily filling a bag with litter from the paths leading from shops and food outlets in West Swindon Centre and Shaw shops. I wish local businesses would take more responsibility for the litter they produce. I now can't go for any walk without litter spotting and needing to return later to pick it up! I'm glad I decided to 'stop moaning' and do something about it!



Westlea Park

Heather, Trevor, Ray and Suresh have been working hard to improve Westlea Park for many years. From planting to pruning and litter picking they meet regularly to make Westlea Park a lovely place to walk, rest, picnic and play.

Getting together once a month is a chance to meet new people, get some exercise and fresh air, laugh, chat and before you know it your bag is full.

Mandy Reed

I like to litter pick as it's a great way to help keep your neighbourhood tidy. Getting together once a month is a chance to meet new people, get some exercise and fresh air, laugh, chat and before you know it your bag is full. There is a sense of satisfaction in seeing all the bags of rubbish piled up at the end.



Westlea Church Litter Picking Group

Westlea Church Litter Picking Group started up in 2016 and has been picking up litter from local verges, hedgerows and parks each month since then to help keep Westlea and local areas clean and tidy. Helping to make Westlea a greener and better place to live, by reducing litter and keeping plastic out of the local area and stream - and inspire others to do the same and encourage people not to drop litter or dump waste.

If you have the time and would like to help make a difference in the community, volunteers meet at 9.00am on the first Saturday of each



month at the bus stop by Westlea School, Langstone Way and go out for about an hour.

Litter picking equipment is provided.