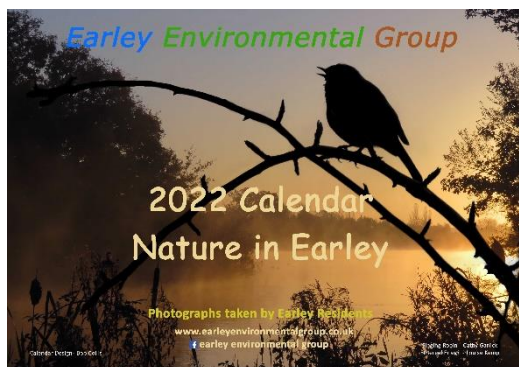


**WE OWE A BIG THANKS TO NATURE**

The daily walks in 2021 have continued to sustain many of us during a long imprisonment in our local environment. Thank goodness for nearby green nature areas. Several articles will remind you of some of the local wildlife we are lucky to have, and the Earley Environmental Group community calendar will refresh your memory throughout the coming year.

Sheila Crowson, Editor, EEG.



**EEG’s 2022 Community Calendar – The Best Yet!**

Over recent months, local photographers have been submitting their photos for inclusion in the Earley Environmental Group’s 2022 ‘Nature in Earley’ calendar. Many beautiful photos have been received, making the new edition the best yet! The calendar will be the EEG’s third and is planned to be available in August. Pages show scenes of the local woods and lake, as well as wildflowers, birds,

fungi, animals and insects found in Earley. The format will be the same as in 2021; A4 when folded, opening out to A3 at full size.

The calendar will cost £5.00, with money raised used to support the EEG’s activities. Information about how to purchase your copy will be posted on the EEG’s website <http://www.earleyenvironmentalgroup.co.uk/> and on its Facebook page ‘Earley Environmental Group’. You can also register your interest in purchasing the calendar by emailing [EEGphotocalendar@earleyenvironmentalgroup.co.uk](mailto:EEGphotocalendar@earleyenvironmentalgroup.co.uk)

Bob Collis, Calendar Editor

<i>Contents</i>	
	<i>Page</i>
<i>EEG Community Calendar</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Wild orchids</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Local wildflowers</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Gatekeeper butterfly</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Wasp</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Somerton Gardens Oak</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>News from Earley</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>News from Beyond Earley/Local Events/Bits and Pieces</i>	<i>7/8</i>

## *We celebrate our local wildflowers*

### Orchids of Earley, now you see them....

No sooner had a post appeared on the EEG Facebook page in early June of a sighting of Bee Orchids in Thames Valley Park than they were mown down. At about the same time, a concerned resident contacted EEG via the website about some found growing on Shepherd's House roundabout. We discovered that the Council had been contacted by another resident about these, and they had agreed not to mow them – relief all round, but the following day they were all cut down as part of the regular verge maintenance!

Wokingham Borough Council have apologised. They also said that, *'At the start of each grass cutting season, a reminder is sent out to contractors of previously-reported wildflower areas.'* This sounds hopeful for next year. They say that the Council *'welcomes residents and community members letting it know when they find a plant of interest.'* ([Bee careful! Council sorry for mowing down rare orchids - Wokingham.Today](#))



**Anne Booth.**

Fortunately, some more Bee Orchids discovered during the EASI/EEG litter pick on June 13<sup>th</sup> fared better and, as far as I know, have lived long enough to set seed. Pyramidal Orchids flowering around the Black Boy roundabout were also mown at the end of June. A concerned resident, who engaged with Wokingham Borough Council, has been assured this won't happen again next year.

This has been a good year for orchids in our area, and the loss of these spectacular flowers, that people don't often see, has highlighted the cost of cutting verges at the wrong time and/or too frequently. We hope this will stimulate a proper strategy by the Council for maintaining our verges and green areas to maximise benefits for wildlife - only close mowing those areas that require it. (Photos by Anne, top right, *pyramidal orchid*, left *bee orchid*)



*The daily walks many of us take enable us to see the changing colours and forms of wildflowers, as they make their appearance month by month for all to see*



In Whitenights (Reading University grounds), spring started with daffodils, fritillaries and cowslips, progressing up to the present to grassy meadows varying in their composition of wildflowers, perhaps one with the white of yarrow and studded with the taller yellow ragwort

(over 200 species of pollinating insects use this, some dependent exclusively), and another in which the white is sometimes



tickweed, accompanied by the statuesque purple loosestrife, all punctuated by vast numbers of the brown deadheads of knapweed, reminding us that time is passing!



In another grassy area, there's an impressively large planting of sun-loving wild carrot, a lovely flower, and sometimes with a small purple flower in the middle of its umbel. It's enjoyed by nectar- and pollen-feeders.

**Sheila Crowson**



***Rushey Way: Flowers to be enjoyed by Earley motorists***

**One of several stunning areas in Earley, planted for grassland insects and pollinators by Grahame and Ashley of Earley Town Council.**





## ***A Lost Treasure in Somerton Gardens***



**Earley has lost one of its finest veteran Oak trees.** Despite having a Tree Preservation Order, it was felled on July 13<sup>th</sup>. The trunk of this wonderful tree now lies on the ground in large pieces, having grown for about 260 years. Application (no 202102) was made on grounds of subsidence, but it was condemned on grounds of health and safety. No evidence for the claim of basal fungal decay is in the public domain, and requests to WBC for details have been unanswered. Options other than felling the tree to ground level appear not to have been investigated, again there is nothing in the documents with the planning application.

No-one knew about the application to fell the tree, made in August 2020, and permission given in November. This was invisible to the public as no notice has to be displayed and nearby residents are

not notified although this should be standard practice. Earley Town Council might have normally noticed the planning application, but they were not allowed meetings at the time because of Covid restrictions.

This is yet another example of the inadequate protection we give to these natural assets. The UK's veteran trees are precious jewels and are the envy of Europe and we are destroying them.

It is hard now to put right the planning mistakes of the past, when new housing was allowed to be built too close to the hundreds of mature Oak and Ash remaining when Lower Earley was built. The Council did good work in retaining the trees and hedgerows of the old field system, and quite a few were protected by TPOs. The threat to trees has been made worse by the many extensions given planning

permission thus bringing homes even closer to the trees and inviting a future potential threat of blame for safety or subsidence. Planning law should protect these trees and hedgerows.

We must save those that remain by pruning or pollarding a tree which is

a proven safety risk, rather than complete destruction. Buildings suffering proven subsidence should be reinforced, with the cost to be borne by the homeowner's insurance. ([www.wdvta.org.uk/map/ Tree 356](http://www.wdvta.org.uk/map/Tree%20356))

**Anne Booth**

### ***Nature Poems by Loddon School***

From the nursery up to Year Six, the children at Loddon School, Earley took part in composing nature poems. Three members of EEG were asked to judge these, but all the children were winners as they showed a real appreciation of the beauty of the world around them, as well as knowledge of the problems faced. The following quote from one of the poems should be directed at COP26:

***'Help the world or nature will be an illusion  
So please help and get rid of pollution.'***

### **NEWS FROM EARLEY**

#### **Garden Surveys:**

In June, both Gillian and Margaret noted visits from holly blue butterflies. However, Margaret also had a visit from a wall brown, belonging to the Satyridae family (the Browns), like Derek's gatekeeper.

**An all-weather 3G\* football pitch may be installed in Laurel Park.** On June 24<sup>th</sup> Wokingham Borough Council's Executive Committee stated that Laurel Park was the 'ideal location', and approved £300,000 towards the cost, with the remaining £500,000 coming from the Football Foundation. An extra 50 car parking spaces will be needed. The planning application will go in this summer. 3G pitches have sometimes been a controversial choice, with objectors citing water-course pollution from run-off from the rubber crumb used in their construction; increased traffic, light (from floodlighting) and noise pollution were other common concerns. To consider siting a 3G pitch so close to Maiden Erlegh Nature Reserve is worrying, and EEG has agreed to object to the proposal.

*\*3G pitch is an artificial surface as a substitute for grass*

#### **Earley's Environmental Initiatives:**

Earley Town Council adopted a Climate Emergency Action Plan on 31<sup>st</sup> March. It can be seen at [31.3.21-Appendix-F.pdf \(earley-tc.gov.uk\)](https://www.earley-tc.gov.uk/31.3.21-Appendix-F.pdf). It includes lots of good intentions to improve facilities, reduce waste, and enhance green spaces.

## **NEWS FROM BEYOND EARLEY:**

### **COP26 – Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.**

This conference is to be held in Glasgow in November, and will be chaired by Alok Sharma MP (Reading West). Please contact your MP soon, saying that you want the government to make every effort to achieve international collaboration to reduce the risk of temperatures rising above 1.5°C. We should commit to overseas aid as well as to national actions to reduce local emissions.

### **‘Great Big Green Week’ - September 18th to 27th:**

In September communities across the UK will join together for the ‘Great Big Green Week’, co-ordinated by The Climate Coalition <https://greatbiggreenweek.com/>. Both Reading Town Meal and Reading Climate Action Network are running on-line ‘events’ on relevant topics – check out their websites nearer the time to see what’s on offer. See <https://readingcan.org.uk/> and <http://www.readingtowntmeal.org.uk/workshops.cfm> .

### **‘Global Day of Action’– 6th November:**

The ‘COP26 Coalition’ <https://cop26coalition.org/> is proposing decentralised nationwide actions – watch out for events in Wokingham or Reading. Friends of the Earth’s guidance is at <https://takeclimateaction.uk/get-involved/global-day-action-6-november-2021> .

## **LOCAL FORTHCOMING EVENTS August 2021 – December 2021**

**Friday August 27th 12 - 2pm** **Bug Hunt.** Meet at the Interpretation Centre. Pre-booking required. Contact Charlotte for details 07771 605825

**Friday September 3<sup>rd</sup> 7.30pm-9.30pm** **Bat walk.** Learn about bats, and join us on a walk to search for local bats. Meet at the Interpretation Centre, Instow Road.

**Wednesday September 22<sup>nd</sup>** **Litter-pick.** Along the River Thames. For details, contact Grahame Hawker.

**Saturday September 25<sup>th</sup> 10am-3pm** **St Nicolas Church Big Green Week fete.** St Nicolas Church, Sutcliffe Avenue, are holding a fete as part of the Big Green Week celebrations. EEG are hoping to have a stall at the event, where among other things, you’ll be able to buy your 2022 Nature in Earley calendar. See the website [www.earleyenvironmentalgroup.co.uk](http://www.earleyenvironmentalgroup.co.uk) or Facebook, for further details, including confirmed times.

**October** **EEG talk following on from Big Green Week.** For details see the website nearer the time.

**November** **COP26 linked event/talk.** Details to be confirmed.

**December** **EEG Christmas social.** Details to be confirmed.

### **Bits and Pieces**

Don’t forget: the Earley Environmental Group has a **Facebook** presence. We will be using this in addition to the main website and the newsletter as a way of keeping everyone up-to-date with our activities, and to let you know about upcoming events. Members are also welcome to post news stories or any photographs relevant to the group. Search for ‘Earley Environmental Group’ and we should pop up. Look forward to seeing you on there.

**EASI** (Earley Adopt-a-Street Initiative) would like more volunteers. Help keep your street clear of litter, everything provided. Contact Brian Hackett by phone (986 1115), or e-mail [easilittergroup@gmail.com](mailto:easilittergroup@gmail.com).

Can you offer active **help to EEG**? If so, phone 0118 962 0004, or go to the website <http://www.earleyenvironmentalgroup.co.uk>. We would welcome more member involvement. At the moment 'the few' help to keep EEG going.

**EEG committee members** can be found on [www.earleyenvironmentalgroup.co.uk](http://www.earleyenvironmentalgroup.co.uk) under Contacts.

For **Wildlife Survey Forms**, go to the website, or phone Earley Town Council on 0118 986 8995.

**Comments or contributions to the newsletter** to: [sheila.crowson@ntlworld.com](mailto:sheila.crowson@ntlworld.com) or 2 Reeds Avenue, Earley, RG6 5SR. We would welcome short contributions from members.

If you know someone who would like to join **EEG**, **membership forms** are available from Earley Town Council, 0118 986 8995, on the website under Downloads, or send an e-mail to the Membership Secretary, Liz Wild at [liz@helva.plus.com](mailto:liz@helva.plus.com). **Please inform Liz if you intend to change e-mail or address** at 50 Kenton Rd, Earley RG6 7LG, or e-mail her.

**Erlegh Elfins** and **Earley Environmental Junior Group** may soon commence activities, and Charlotte Allchin will be updating interested participants in due course, 07771 605825.

**Thanks to ORACLE** Corporation for reproducing our newsletter on recycled paper. Oracle is the world's second-largest software company, situated at Thames Valley Business Park in Earley. Oracle UK adheres to the ISO14001 Environment Standard which confirms Oracle has considered and acted upon its environmental impact. As part of Oracle's corporate social responsibility, it supports a number of local groups, including us. It has given us valuable support in reproducing the hard copies of our newsletter in colour, as well as printing off posters and membership leaflets for us to distribute to libraries, schools etc.