

There is also scope for increasing the number of trees within the village so we will ask for expressions of interest and work up an initiative to supply trees. The species will, of course, be determined amongst other things by the size of garden. There is no point in growing an oak tree in a small plot!

Talk of trees leads on to consideration of birds and how they can be encouraged through plants, feeding and nest boxes. In order to assist in this important area of the project the JCC team will produce presentations throughout the year on wildlife gardening and ways to attract and encourage nature. Look for 'Langdyke Countryside Trust' on YouTube. Attached to this note is a list of birds that you may have visit and nest in your Ufford garden. This will give you an idea of what sort of nest boxes you may need. We hope that this is an area which will be of interest to children. Looking to the future we will also arrange outdoor sessions where the speakers can come and give a hands-on presentation.

Community Orchard

One of the options promoted in the Project is the creation of a community orchard. Bainton Parish Council have extended this by acquiring a cider press and holding an annual cider festival. As the Parish Council does not have any land, we are open to offers from anyone who may be interested to take this on.

Ponds

Ponds can be created in back gardens. We are interested to hear from anyone interested in developing a substantial pond to encourage wildlife. Advice on suitable plants etc is available within the JCCP project team.

Flowers & Meadows

The Strategy promotes the idea of creating flower-rich meadows. This requires a landowner to take it forward and information and advice on seed mixes, suppliers and costs can be provided. Again, we would be open to offers but, in the absence of any interest, will put our effort into enhancing and maintaining our protected limestone verges.

THE WAY FORWARD

At present the project steering committee is awaiting the outcome of a bid for funds to the Green Infrastructure Fund. If the bid is not successful then other bodies will be approached. £10k has already been obtained through the PCC's Covid Recovery Fund, PECT has committed £7k and Natural England up to £4k.

'THANK YOU' TO NATURE

Many people have been brought closer to nature during the pandemic period and their well-being helped consequently. The JCCP partners have decided to have a series of special habitat creation events in Spring and Autumn 2021 to say "thank you to nature." Funds will be available to purchase saplings, hedging plants and guards, nest boxes, wildflower seeds et al.

The JCC Steering Group propose that each Parish should identify by the end of January 2021 one or two projects to prioritise in 2021 that will be most fitting for the Thank You to Nature programme. As Southey Wood has been very important to the village's well-being, we have decided that in Spring our two projects should be tree planting at the east end of the village (on the access to the Wood) and the installation of bird and bat boxes in the Wood itself. There will be branding and signage to reflect the Thank You to Nature programme and the JCC Project more widely. Other activities will be agreed later for the summer and autumn - Covid permitting.

The Steering Group has also suggested that, if and when conditions allow, there could be an open day in the autumn on one of the larger reserves in the area with walks and talks, plus an associated exhibition on how nature has helped us through the pandemic. This would be a chance to involve volunteers and JCC partners.

Children's Competition

We would love to involve and engage children in the Plan during the pandemic and beyond, therefore keep an eye out for some nature competitions coming soon - with prizes!

Finally, if you would like to join us in developing any of the suggestions we are proposing (either within your back garden or on your land) then please get in touch. We would love to hear from you.

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**UFFORD
PARISH
COUNCIL**

JOHN CLARE COUNTRYSIDE PROJECT NATURE RECOVERY UFFORD

BACKGROUND

The Government and Natural England are bringing together partners, legislation and funding to create the Nature Recovery Network (NRN) as part of the Government's 25-year Environment Plan. It will embrace biodiversity loss, climate change and well-being. By 2042, through the NRN, the Government will aim to:

- Restore 75% of protected sites to a favourable condition so nature can thrive
- Create or restore 500,000 hectares of additional wildlife-rich areas outside of protected sites
- Recover threatened and iconic animal and plant species by providing more diverse and better connected habitats
- Support work to increase woodland cover

There will be a national network of NRN's and Ufford is one of 15 Parish Councils in the north and west of the City Council area that have signed up to the John Clare Countryside Project (JCCP).



The JCCP - a local NRN – was devised and led by the Langdyke Trust together with Natural England, the Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT), the Cambs Wildlife Trust, Nene Park trust and Sacrewell Farm. The name derives from the fact that the project area not only encompasses Helpston and Northborough where Clare lived and worked but is also an area with which he was familiar and wrote about in his poetry. It is also an area which has a considerable amount of biodiversity with two National Nature Reserves – Castor Hanglands and Barnack Hills and Holes – several Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI'S), such as the meadow in Southorpe and Langdyke Trust reserves at Swaddywell and Maxey/Etton. It also contains several substantial woodlands, notably the Forestry Commission's Southey Wood in our Parish which is open for public access. Its attractive landscape attracts walkers and cyclists and its role in providing informal recreation, contributing to health and well-being, has been amply demonstrated during the Covid crisis when Southey in particular has provided access to open space, not only to residents in our villages but also to people in nearby parts of Peterborough.

Both of these facets, biodiversity and access, form key elements in the proposed initiative:

Biodiversity

Whilst there is considerable biodiversity in the area there is scope to increase it by improving connectivity between key habitats and also creating new ones. The project is aimed at being locally led and supported by residents, landowners, farmers, businesses and Parish Councils, all of whom will ensure a lasting legacy. The project wishes to develop nature recovery areas, inspiring residents to join in creating attractive routes through this beautiful landscape and its rich local heritage.

Parish Councils have been charged with developing base-line statements to identify where there are gaps to be filled to enhance the environment and to expand access.

This exercise should show where we could:

- Restore hedgerows
- Plant trees
- Plant verges
- Plant wildflower meadows
- Create/restore ponds
- Create a community orchard
- Provide nestboxes for birds and bats and bee hotels
- Encourage households to have a wildlife area in their gardens

Access

Some 25 years or so ago in Barnack Ward the Parishes worked with the then City Council Footpaths Officer to create the network we know and enjoy today. The main path, Torpel Way, allows you to go from Bretton to Stamford, for example. The challenge for the JCCP is to see if access can be extended or enhanced.

UFFORD

Southey Wood

As a joint-initiative, the Parish Council is working with the Langdyke Trust and Natural England to try to persuade the Forestry Commission to improve Southey Wood for walkers, horse riders and cyclists. Issues include re-opening the car park, re-instatement of the protected verge, re-instatement of way-marking, clearing footpaths blocked through forestry work, clearing and maintaining the picnic area and installing new signage. In addition, we wish to make improvements to the environment to increase biodiversity. Linked to this work is an aim to improve connections to the cycling networks such as the Green Wheel. We intend to place some bird and bat boxes in Southey Wood now that the programme of commercial felling has been completed.

Footpaths

We have reviewed the current situation in the Parish and concluded that it is not feasible to expand the footpath network. The only



possibility we know of to create a new path would be to utilise the right of way along the drift on Walcot Road. However, it terminates where it reaches the field boundary and it is not feasible to extend it further. The Ramblers Association have completed a research project to identify historic paths which have disappeared with a view to reinstating them before the Government removes them forever in 2026. Having reviewed the three identified in Ufford, they also offer no opportunity to expand our network. Our efforts in this regard will, therefore, be focused on the improvements to Southey Wood.

Trees & Hedges

Historically the Parish has, with the co-operation of landowners, re-instated hedgerows lost through deterioration over time or (more usually) through removal encouraged by the Common Agricultural Policy. It has also planted many trees alongside hedgerows and obtained trees for residents through tree schemes operated by a variety of bodies. We believe there is still limited scope to do more in this area and we will be approaching landowners to see if we can fill in any gaps in hedges or plant new trees. One of the key aims of the project is to try and link up existing woodland/hedge provision to create wildlife corridors which have been shown to be beneficial for nature, especially birds. We have already commissioned the planting of 14 staked trees in the field lying between Hillside Close, Marholm Road and Lambpit Drift and 6 more on Bainton Road. The wet weather has delayed planting. As noted below, the trees will be one of our "Thank You to Nature" projects as the 14 are symbolically on the way in to Southey Wood.

Gardening for wildlife

Many domestic gardens may look beautiful but do not offer a great deal for wildlife. This can be improved by leaving an area devoted to butterflies such as by having a patch of nettles and planting a range of native flowers to attract bees and other pollinators. Or by ensuring that access to the garden by hedgehogs is not impeded.