

Birds, Butterflies, Bees and Bugs in our Villages

The Great Big Green Week is the UK's Celebration of community action to tackle climate change and protect nature.

Here in Cheselbourne on Saturday 10th June the Climate Action Group welcomed an enthusiastic nature-loving audience to Cheselbourne Village Hall to hear three inspirational speakers talk about their passion for nature. Jon Ross, better known as Bingham's Birder, gave us helpful tips on bird identification: What does it look like? Where is it? How does it fly? How does it behave? What noise does it make? When is it? As always, Jon was entertaining and immensely knowledgeable.



It was a hard act to follow, but Nigel Spring, Chair of Butterfly Conservation Dorset Branch, stole the show with no less than 53 species of moth he had trapped the previous night in the grounds of Cheselbourne Manor. The sheer number of species amazed us all, but a huge (literally) favourite was the Elephant Hawk moth. Nigel is the warden of Alners Gorse Reserve on the north side of the road between Hazelbury Bryan and Kings Stag. It is an extremely rich site for all sorts of wildlife,

especially butterflies and moths. The grassland is being restored to enable the Marsh Fritillary butterfly to re-colonise from nearby sites.

The final presentation was made by Nick Knight from the Dorchester and Weymouth Beekeepers Association. He provided a great insight into the lifecycle and behaviour of the honey bee, emphasising their importance as pollinators of domestic and commercial crops. An especially interesting part of his talk covered the reasons why bees swarm, why swarms are important and why they are not to be feared! He warned us about the Asian Hornet which is a significant predator of bees.



Adrian Simmonds fascinated the children – and adults - with tanks of invertebrates he had caught that morning in Devil's Brook just near to Langham's Vinery café. We were all truly amazed by the wide variety of species and it was great to be able to look at these creatures close up through Adrian's magnifying glass.

All the above was topped off by tea and homemade biscuits, free pollinator plants and a children's colouring competition, won, we are happy to say, by all the children who took part as their butterfly pictures were so beautiful. A written quiz for the over 7's and 'adult' children invited them to identify some 24 birds, bugs, bees, nuts and butterflies. This was won by Wilf Scott - with a score of 21 – and he's only 7! The prizes were children's books about wildlife.

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