

Wild Windsor

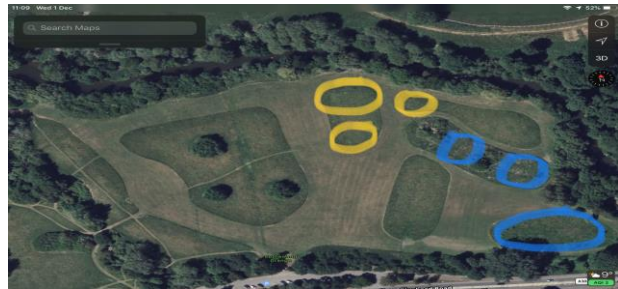
Expanding our work and positive impact in RBWM

Speed Update - TVERC Autumn Recorders Conference - 19th October 2024



***Wild Windsor** is a small group of volunteers who share a passionate regard for the town's natural environment. After RBWM's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019, several workshops were organized for Officers, elected Members, residents and professionals working on climate change issues to help develop the RBWM Environment & Climate Strategy (2020-25). Wild Windsor was formed during this period and quickly welcomed by the existing 'Wilds' into their efforts which included contributing to the first RBWM Biodiversity Action Plan. This contains targets that significantly inform the RBWM Natural Environment Team and 'Wilds' collective aims and activities.*

***Wild Windsor's current projects and community engagement opportunities** include: **a)** planting and maintaining whips; **b)** improving hedgerows; **c)** building log piles to enhance habitats and soil quality; **d)** carrying out pond and riverside maintenance including water quality testing; **e)** installing and maintaining bird and bat boxes; and **f)** undertaking surveys with expert guidance from RBWM, BBOWT and TVERC. We also link caring for the natural environment with raising awareness about heritage and historic landscapes in Clewer, Dedworth and Windsor.*



Since 2022, Wild Windsor has gradually expanded its activities to cover more sites across the town and extend its community engagement. Natural Environment Team members and 'Wilds' groups have built an ethos of mutual support and shared action – benefitting RBWM's environment as a whole and individual area priorities within this.

Principal activities to date include:

- **Planting, maintaining and monitoring whips**

Since 2022, access to free trees, guards and bamboo canes through TCV's "I Dig Trees" initiative (OVO Energy) will have enabled us to plant nearly 1,000 whips across four sites by early 2025. We are continuing to develop a partnership hedge planting project with a local secondary school as well as a post-planting tree care programme launched during "The Big Help Out" for King Charles III's Coronation. Training in hedgerow skills such as coppicing will be provided by RBWM in 2025 at a site in our area. All 'Wilds' volunteers are welcome to join these sessions.

- **Building dead wood log piles**

A BAP target of at least two buried log piles per location is being implemented by 'Wild' volunteers and Natural Environment Team members at all biodiversity sites in the Borough. For this activity, Wild Windsor volunteers produced a guidance note and photos as a pan-'Wilds' training resource. 'Wilds' volunteers have been compiling a file of resources and support which can be shared collectively and we are contributing to this process.

- **Pond and site clearing, including removing aggressive weeds and invasive species**

Clearing pondweed has been added to our list of tasks at a small dedicated wildlife garden near the town centre to encourage more aquatic life to survive and thrive. Removing bindweed, nettles and brambles where necessary to prevent whips and maturing saplings from being overwhelmed is another regular activity, as is routine removal of Himalayan Balsam from a riverside site containing one of the Borough's designated Local Nature Reserves.

- **Installing, monitoring and maintaining bird and bat boxes and participating in BTO surveys**

A new volunteer with the group is a licensed bird ringer and helping train us in relevant skills and knowledge. We also have access to 'Wilds' expert support in bat matters including installing bat boxes and carrying out surveys. RBWM have several bat recorders and other equipment which are loaned free of charge to community groups.

Principal activities to date (cont'd):

- **Moth and butterfly surveys**

One of our volunteers offered the use of her humane moth trap and organised two “Moth Watches” in the local churchyard, introducing this process into our range of wildlife surveying and monitoring opportunities. We did some informal butterfly monitoring during the summer and have been asked by the Natural Environment Team if we can undertake this again in future.

- **Wildlife walks**

We have been offered a valuable opportunity to host a Wildlife Walk led by one of the BBOWT Community Ecologists at a site in our area. Tickets are free and places (20) are available on a first come first served basis. Please register on the link here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/walk-with-a-community-ecologist-clewer-park-windsor-fri-8-nov-tickets-1028091117207?aff=oddtcreator>

- **Wildlife Gardens Awards**

This extremely successful initiative was pioneered four years ago by another ‘Wild’ group and is aimed at increasing the amount of space (“30 by 30”) given over to wildlife in RBWM. We have been spreading the word and supporting the scheme in various ways. A great, fun opportunity to introduce biodiversity awareness in a non-threatening way.

- **Supporting biodiversity and sustainability goals at St Andrew’s Church, Windsor**

St Andrew’s Church in Clewer Village is Windsor’s oldest church and oldest building. The site dates back to the Saxon Manor of Clewer held by Harold II at the time of the Battle of Hastings; the present building was begun in the Norman period. The churchyard is home to a range of biodiversity and ideas for wildlife-friendly planting areas currently being discussed. Wild Windsor helps support the church’s award-winning ‘Wild Worship’ programme and several related activities, including the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch and annual bat surveys.

- **Exploring “Green Screen” opportunities at the local arts centre**

Inspired by Greener Henley’s example, we approached Windsor’s Old Court Artspace with a request to screen “Six Inches of Soil”. The response from staff has been very positive and we hope this will be able to take place sometime this autumn – may be extended to more films in future.

Thank you!

*For more details about Wild Windsor,
please visit our display table during today's conference
and our Facebook and Instagram pages*

<https://www.facebook.com/WindsorWild/about>

<https://www.instagram.com/wildwindsoruk/>

If you'd like to keep in touch, please feel free to email us

info@wildwindsor.co.uk