

My Wild Bedminster: Big Green Spaces in BS3

May 2020



COVER IMAGES - clockwise from top left

- *'Blackbird, Hebron Road'* by [Chris Bertram](#), licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](#)
- *'Entering Dame Emily Park'* by [Neil Owen](#), by [Neil Owen](#), licensed under [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)
- *'Bug Hotel'* by [Avon Wildlife Trust](#)
- *'Red Deer at Ashton Court'* by [Andrew Bennett](#), licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)
- *'Northern Slopes'* by [Neil Owen](#), licensed under [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)
- *'Snowdrops & Bluebells'* by [Alistair Campbell](#), licensed under [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

Forward

This report, which is part of the **My Wild Bedminster** project, seeks to set out some basic information relating to wildlife habitats in the larger, often public, spaces in or bordering BS3. It also attempts to capture both the existing activity and proposed plans of ‘custodians’ of these spaces.

Although we are not dealing here with domestic and community gardens, we acknowledge that these are probably even more significant for both the abundance and variety of wildlife in BS3 than are the larger green spaces. **Every window box counts.** Hopefully, both larger and smaller green spaces can be made more wildlife productive in future years.

A separate report on community gardens has been produced.

The information gathered and distributed in this report will contribute to the achievement of the three aims set out for the BS3 Wildlife Group in its constitution.

The **BS3 Wildlife Group**’ three aims are:

- a) To make local people more aware of the wildlife around them
- b) To help make the BS3 area of Bristol more hospitable to a wide range of wild creatures and native plants
- c) To collaborate with other agencies and groups in order to further the first two aims

There are two categories of members:

- a) Independent organisations wishing to support the aims of the BS3 Wildlife Group
- b) Individuals wishing to support the aims of the BS3 Wildlife Group

Contact BS3 Wildlife Group on

MyWildBedminster@virginmedia.com

See also the BS3 Wildlife Group Facebook and sign up to the BS3 Wildlife Newsletter. Membership is free, and not restricted to BS3.

There follows a summary of responses from groups and organisations supporting the larger green spaces in and near BS3. These responses will provide ideas about what to do in 2020 and beyond.



- | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Ashton Court Estate | 6. Dame Emily Park | 11. Hotwells & District Allotment Association | 15. Marksbury Road Open Space | 18. Perret's Park and Perret's Park Allotments | 21. St Paul's Churchyard |
| 2. Avon New Cut Nature Reserve | 7. Enterprise Allotments | 12. Luckwell Park | 16. Northern Slopes Local Nature Reserve and Wedmore Vale Allotments | 19. St John's Churchyard | 22. South Street Park and ACTA Garden |
| 3. Bedminster Green | 8. Gores Marsh Park | 13. Malago Vale Community Garden | 20. St John's Burial Ground and Community Orchard | 23. Victoria Park | 24. Windmill Hill City Farm |
| 4. Brixham Road Open Space, including the Berry Maze | 9. Greville Smyth Park, including Ashton Meadow | 14. Manor Woods Valley (Local Nature Reserve) | | 25. Streams and Railways as Wildlife Corridors | |
| 5. Cotswold Green | 10. Hebron Burial Ground | | | | |

1. Ashton Court Estate

(850 acres)

Although most of the estate is outside BS3, this is an important interface between Bristol and its rural, North Somerset hinterland. Many creatures that we see in BS3 will have come in via the estate.

The estate is administered directly by Bristol City Council and there does not seem to be a support group. This space is important for wildlife and BCC say that they have some record of these, but we have not yet been able to access this information.

2. Avon New Cut Local Nature Reserve

The Avon New Cut was designated as a Local Nature Reserve in 2014 with a management plan running until 2019. It includes steep tree-lined slopes and exposed mud banks when the tide is down and an area of old wasteland known as Butterfly Junction.

Over 100 species of wildflowers, trees and shrubs were identified in 2019 in three afternoon surveys undertaken by local residents. These results were listed in FrANC's newsletter.

Birds have not been systematically surveyed, but various seagulls, herons, cormorants, oystercatchers, kestrel, goldcrest, long-tailed tit, sandpiper (?) robin, blue tit, blackbird, jay, sparrows, collared dove, raven, shelduck, mallard, magpie were seen in 2019.

Butterfly counts were undertaken in 2016, 2017 and 2018, but not in 2019. FrANC is currently seeking advice on mowing and general management of Butterfly Junction which was damaged by the Metrobus development.

In 2017, a walk guided by the late Richard Bland identified 19 trees and 19 wildflower species between Gaolferry and Vauxhall bridges and back.

Clearing rubbish from the banks is an important FrANC activity over the winter when it will not interfere with bird nesting. The dates for these are on their website.

Friends of the Avon New Cut (FrANC)

www.franc.org.uk

3. Bedminster Green

Bedminster Green (aka Land at Dalby Avenue) contains grass and some well-developed trees. It is a part of the walking route from Windmill Hill to East Street. If and when the surrounding area is developed, it will be transformed, swallowed up or whatever. Property developers assure us that both the walking environment and wildlife improvements to the Malago are important to them. Time will tell. At the moment the green area and stream have no supporting group, as far as we can tell, although next to it is the HQ for the National Federation of City Farms and Gardens. The Fed itself has a garden.

4. Brixham Road Open Space (including the Berry Maze)

The park has a good balance of different species. There are trees on the side of the Malago and a mix of vegetation (hogweeds, brambles and other plants). There is a big area with grass and a smaller area with bushes that are virtually impassable by foot and these host a lot of birds and probably other wildlife. There are quite a few weeds on the outskirts of The Berry Maze, with thistles, morning glory, buttercups, stinging nettles, brambles etc.

At the centre of the park lies The Berry Maze, hosting 17 varieties of berries: blackberries (2 types), wineberries, tayberries, loganberries, boysenberries, raspberries (3 types), strawberries, currants (3 types) & gooseberries (2 types).

While working on the maze, local people observed many types of butterflies, worms, bees, beetles and other insects.

But, there has not yet been any systematic study of these as locals are struggling to keep on top of the weeds in the maze. A grant is hoped for to finish what was started and to control the maze weeds by planting ground cover for a few of the plots.

In general, the area is already quite wildlife friendly, so currently there are no proposals for doing more. However, the support group is open to ideas, so, would be grateful if someone else would be willing to look into this.

Perhaps, at some point, the maze builders could investigate 'nature trails' in collaboration with other groups.

Malago Greenway Project:

malagocommunity@gmail.com

www.facebook.com/TheBerryMaze2017

5. Cotswold Green

Cotswold Green (also known as Cotswold Open Space) is a piece of land to the north of Cotswold Rd, just next to the junction with Windmill Hill. The railway line from Temple Meads to Exeter runs along the northern boundary of the site, and the River Malago flows across the northern perimeter of the site, before disappearing through a tunnel beneath the railway. The open space was created when a terrace of houses was demolished in the 1960s and the site was declared unfit for human habitation! It is now a well-used green space for the local community, and forms part of the important River Malago wildlife corridor and the Malago Greenway cycling and walking route.

There was a threat to drive a Metrobus road over the Green earlier this century.... Which was soundly squashed by local people. As part of the campaign to prevent this the Kingfisher Group

(local people who looked after the river and its corridor) applied for Town Green status for Cotswold Green. This bid was not successful, but it helped to save the Green from being paved over, and the site is now designated by BCC as 'Open Space and Children's Play Area'.

The Green has always been an important space for the community and is used for informal activities. It's used by lots of children for games and by parents playing with their children. St Mary Redcliffe Primary School planted fruit trees here as part of the One Child One Tree programme. A variety of activities happen at different times of the year - from picnics and blackberrying to ball games and tobogganing when weather allows, and dog walking most days.

There have been a number of organised events since 2000. We held Street Parties for several years, when the Green

was used for children's games, races and tug-of-war, then music in the evenings. Perhaps the first was in 2005 and then one each September until 2015. There has been a gap for the last few years, but whispers are abroad about holding an event on the Green in 2020. Fingers crossed!

Currently there is a maintenance programme agreed with BCC and this has changed in recent times leaving more areas uncut, for wildlife. Litter picking happens twice a year, coordinated by the Windmill Hill Community Orchard Group. There is no one group who is dedicated to looking after the Green, but many local people care about it and enjoy using it.

The local contact for Cotswold Green is Christine at christinehiggott@tiscali.co.uk

6. Dame Emily Park

About 40% of this 'green' space includes play, skateboarding, games areas, paths and other hard surfaces. Most of the remainder is 'amenity grass'. Dame Emily is therefore not very attractive to wildlife, although sea gulls and crows are often seen. We have a reasonable amount of trees (some say too many) and squirrels have been seen, but rarely. Do they live in the park or are they just visiting? Bats visit at night and a fox family has lived next door at the Wessex Water site since 2015.

A small wildflower circle was created in 2018 with help from GoodGym and high quality seeds from 'Grow Wild'. There are annual and perennial plants growing such as dog's tail, oxeye daisy, yarrow, marigold, red campion, wild carrot, betony and garlic mustard. It's heaven for bees, butterflies and other insects and a colourful pleasure for humans too. DEPP intends to extend this feature.

DEPP started a Community Garden Group in 2015 and this meets monthly to maintain a corner plot of the park. With initial funding from Quartet and assistance from Incredible Edible, GoodGym and local residents DEPP has made this space a place for growing fruit including berries, apples and plums and vegetables like potatoes, radishes and beans. This area is mainly for food growing, but has proved attractive to insects and birds. In 2019 frogs (or perhaps toads) were reported in the community garden. We will check in 2020. Everyone is welcome to join in the gardening sessions and to pick veg, herbs or fruit for free.

DEPP members have undertaken a few systematic studies. In 2018 we started to count birds and looking for butterflies, but there were not many individuals or species. Lots of pigeons! Children's events in the park have featured 'bug

hunts', especially in the bushes and leaf litter around the park edges. There seem to be more dragonflies around, but we have not identified specific species.

Some students from Bristol University did a soil survey in spring 2019 and found that, surprisingly perhaps, that the park did not contain much coal or clay, despite its previous career as a coalmine. Also in 2019 we worked with a UWE conservation student who provided useful ideas and support.

DEPP wishes to make the park more wildlife friendly. Attempts to grow wildflowers around the dog free play area in 2018 have been moderately successful. Some plants have died and others were strimmed away by park maintenance crews. Nevertheless, in collaboration with the parks' department, DEPP is trying to incorporate more long grass areas,

simply by not mowing the grass along the border fence. This should create hiding places and homes for a wide range of animals. The area of tarmac close to the wildflower circle could be broken up or punctured for shrub planting. Creating a nettle patch (twice strimmed!!!) for red admiral and comma caterpillars will help too.

DEPP has raised funds to employ a qualified school teacher and experienced forest school leader to run weekly sessions that are available freely for children who are 2-4 years old during term time and up to 8 years old in school holidays. This started in June 2019 and will run until September 2020. The aim is that children and parents should learn about green issues, sustainability and the importance of preserving and maintaining our green spaces for future generations.

We are also working with neighbouring green spaces. Holy Cross Primary School

is keen to promote wildlife by planting some climbers on the school side of the fence to provide bird nesting opportunities. The Bedminster Patchwork Group has established a small orchard nearby with additional flowers and blossoms. South Bristol Swimming Pool has agreed to look after plant boxes by their entrance. These were recently replanted by DEPP members. We have also reached out to residents of Merrywood Road whose gardens back onto the park. As well as offering additional flowers, these gardens contain a few ponds. These are important for wildlife to drink and bathe during hot and dry periods.

Dame Emily Park Project (DEPP):

dameemilypark@gmail.com

[Facebook.com/DameEmilyPark](https://www.facebook.com/DameEmilyPark)

[Twitter.com/DameEmilyPark](https://twitter.com/DameEmilyPark)

7. Enterprise Allotments (BS3 5NN)

This is one of the smallest of the council-run allotment sites. Although chemicals are not banned, tenants are encouraged to be as green and sympathetic to nature as possible. The site is bordered by trees and hedges, supporting a thriving bird population, lots of insect life and native plants. We also find slow worms and grass snakes in compost heaps and under covers.

8. Gores Marsh Park

This is an important green space in Bedminster ward with trees and, at least a few years ago a wildflower planting project. Its support group – the Gores Marshals – may have ceased to function.

9. Greville Smyth Park, including Ashton Meadow (21.5 acres)

Greville Smyth is home to 46 species of trees as identified in a recent survey. A list is available upon request. There is a wildflower meadow adjacent to Ashton Road with a second wildflower meadow planned in the centre of the park next to the large field.

There are hedgehogs, but these are nocturnal and rarely seen. Grey squirrels can often be seen in the daytime. A wood mouse was spotted in September and December 2014.

Many birds visit the park. A FroGS member has monitored these over several years, mainly between 2013 and 2017. On the right is a chart of what she has found on or flying over Greville Smyth Park – a total of 40 bird species ->

Greville Smyth Park was also surveyed in the 2019/20 Winter Birds survey. 14 Species were claimed.

Friends of Greville Smyth Park (FroGS)

frogs.bristol@gmail.com

www.facebook.com/frogsbristol/

<https://friendsofgrevillesmyth.wordpress.com>

Birds spotted in Greville Smyth Park between 2013 and 2017
(green = species spotted this year)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Blackbird	Green		Green	Green	Green
Blackheaded Gull			Green	Green	
Blue tit				Green	Green
Buzzard	Green				
Chaffinch	Green		Green	Green	Green
Coal tit					Green
Collared dove				Green	
Crow			Green		
Dunnock	Green		Green		
Feral pigeon			Green		
Goldcrest			Green	Green	Green
Goldfinch	Green		Green		
Great tit			Green	Green	Green
GS w'pecker	Green		Green	Green	
Grey heron		Green			
Grey wagtail		Green			
Herring gull			Green		
House martin			Green	Green	
House sparrow			Green		
Jackdaw			Green	Green	

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Jay	Green		Green	Green	
Lesser BB Gull			Green		
Long-tailed tit			Green	Green	Green
Magpie			Green	Green	Green
Mistle thrush				Green	
Mute swan					Green
Nuthatch	Green	Green	Green	Green	
Pied Wagtail	Green	Green	Green	Green	
Raven					Green
Redwing	Green		Green	Green	Green
Robin	Green		Green	Green	
Song Thrush	Green	Green	Green	Green	
Sparrowhawk	Green		Green		
Starling		Green	Green	Green	
Swallow			Green		
Swift		Green			
Treecreeper	Green			Green	
Willow tit				Green	
Wood pigeon			Green	Green	
Wren			Green	Green	Green

10. Hebron Burial Ground

A wildlife survey was carried out by Avon Wildlife Trust three or four years ago. A copy of this is not currently available, but we will see if AWT has one on file. The local group seeks to make the space as accessible as possible. Maintenance takes into account the needs of wildlife, eg by reducing disturbance during breeding seasons. Much of the area is fairly wild and we seek to preserve a balance.

There are a variety of birds but mainly common wood pigeon and magpies. I believe the magpie numbers have decreased in recent years. A small number of starlings have nested in/on Hebron Court.

I find the most interesting insects in the burial ground to be the solitary bees which burrow in some of the more open spaces. They can be seen flying in significant numbers at a

height of about 30 cm when the season and weather suits. There are also a variety of other insects and bugs. There are not large numbers of butterflies but we do see butterflies and moths.

We have no foxes at present but sometimes they form a den and have cubs. If there are older cubs, they can sometimes be seen digging. I think they dig for solitary bee larvae and honey. No other mammals are observed in the burial ground though bats living in Hebron Court fly over. We have never seen a hedgehog in the burial ground.

The wild plant life is common and includes ground elder, cleavers, nettles, brambles, bindweed, ivy and self-seeded trees (mainly sycamore). We recognise the value of some of these as habitats but they are weeds in the context of a burial ground. There is also some planting.

There is the Caraboo Neighbourhood BS3 group which now has a sole focus on the Hebron Burial Ground.

Twitter: [@hebrincaraboo](https://twitter.com/hebrincaraboo)

Facebook: facebook.com/hebrincaraboo

11. Hotwells & District Allotment Association

We have had no response from the management group. We know that these allotments are important areas for birds, butterflies and slow worms. The non-response is particularly disappointing since several of our butterfly observers are allotment holders.

12. Luckwell Park

This small park is next to a games area and a green space linked to Luckwell School. No information has come from the Luckwell Improvement Project (LImp) and this group may no longer be functioning.

13. Malago Vale Community Garden

This is a community garden which is also a wildlife corridor behind Southmead and Martock Roads. Local residents are developing this community space by gardening and protecting a wildlife area. Recent events include building a Bug Hotel and a BBQ with gardening days.

See Facebook page at
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Malagovalegarden>

14. Manor Woods Valley (Local Nature Reserve) (53 acres)

Manor Woods is part of the Malago wildlife corridor, and abuts onto BS3. Really though, it belongs to BS13, and details of activity there can be found in the BS13 Green Spaces report.

Manor Woods Valley Group:

manorwoodsvalley@gmail.com

<https://manorwoodsvalley.org>

[Facebook: Manor Woods Valley Group](#)

15. Marksbury Road Open Space

This is an important space with trees, grass and shrubs. It is also part of the Malago wildlife corridor. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be a support group, so it seems that there is currently no monitoring or management designed to enhance its value as a wildlife habitat. The Brixham Open Space group undertake an occasional litter pick, but they are already over stretched with the Berry Maze. A new support group is needed.

16. Northern Slopes Local Nature Reserve and Wedmore Vale Allotments

Parts of this space are designated as a Local Nature Reserve. Local members monitor wildlife, often as part of national surveys, e.g. coordinated by Butterfly Conservation, RSPB.

We wish to enhance the wildlife of the Slopes and have recently agreed a development plan to 2030. This includes wildlife-related elements such as:

1b. Explore how to work with others to extend activities to cover social, health, learning and site-based activities. (Examples include visiting schools, arranging tours for schools and groups, arranging specialist – including wildlife – walks; extending Green Gym and My Wild Child to other parts of the Slopes; organising dark sky events, walking and running events (including the pipe walk); picnic days, an annual teddy bear sponsored walk to raise funds and fairy and adventure activities).

2b. Lobby politicians and other organisations to safeguard the existing footprint of the Slopes and expand them where possible (eg through the planning system and achieving more protection such as dark sky status).

3a. Encourage local residents to undertake wildlife surveys / monitoring through existing initiatives (eg BS3 Wildlife, Bioblitz, RSPB, Butterfly Conservation surveys).

A report on birds was submitted as part of the 2019/20 Winter Bird Survey. 16 species were claimed.

3b. Protect and enhance the wildlife interests of the site (eg wildflowers for pollinators, hibernacula for reptiles, ongoing management activity).

3c. Attend training to help us do more for wildlife.

Next to the Northern Slopes and just outside BS3 are the Springfield Allotments which are linked to Knowle West Health Association. It's hoped that allotment holders will start monitoring their wildlife visitors with a winter bird survey

(allotment@knowlewesthealthassoc.org.uk)

The Northern Slopes Initiative:

enquiries@northern-slopes-initiative.co.uk

17. North Street Green

This space has no conservation designation or formal monitoring for wildlife and no current plans for enhancing its wildlife potential. However, we would be interested in doing this.

North Street Green Initiative:

Momulligan@blueyonder.co.uk

18. Perret's Park and Perret's Park Allotments

The support group for this park has not responded to our request for information, although the existence of an active Facebook page suggests that the group is still functioning.

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/perrettspark/>

19. St John's Churchyard

(1.5 acres)

At the heart of medieval Bedminster, the churchyard is now administered as a small park. There is no current wildlife development plan, but the space already contains trees including acers, whitebeam and limes as well as various bushes, including brambles. Other plants include nettles, wood anemones, clover, dandelion, daffodils, bluebells, daisy, poppies, ivy and various garden plants in nearby flats. Birds such as jays and other crows, blackbirds, robins, sparrows, various gulls and pigeons and wagtails have been recorded. There are grey squirrels.

A new footpath has been laid by BCC from the steps in the corner to the entrance at Church Road. Four new trees have been planted: Horse chestnut, Black Pine, Spruce, and a Foxglove tree. Some trees have been

removed for safety reasons. Work has been done to the boundary walls, to stop further collapse. There is more work to do, but not sure when.

St John's Community Association:

lateron5507@hotmail.com

20. St John's Burial Ground and Community Orchard

As we approach our 10th anniversary it is a pleasure to sit in the orchard, on the newly mended bench, enjoy the glowing colours of the crab apples, and look back over work completed, and ahead to future projects! Our community orchard is located in St John's Burial Ground, with entrances from Cotswold Rd at the top and from St John's Lane at the bottom. The 2 biggest assets of the site are also, of course, its greatest challenges it is a very steeply sloping orchard, and it is open to everyone at all times. We started planning the orchard back in 2010, and the first planting of fruit trees was in the winter of 2010/2011. We have planted a variety of apples, plums, pears, quince, plum and medlar over the years. We have also added walnuts, and various fruiting bushes in the hedgerows. We have planted new stretches of hedgerow, with a mix of native species, and lots of woodland wildflowers.

Until recently we have also organised popular community events twice a year. We usually do a Wassailing evening in January, with lots of singing around the fire, as well as dancing around the trees bashing pan lids and other tuneful instruments! And of course warm drinks and delicious apple cakes. And we usually organise a Wildlife Day in May or June, with stalls and activities themed around wildlife - and with cream teas and sometimes musical entertainments too. We have gradually added noticeboards and some seating, and keep in touch with Bristol City Council (the landowners) over maintenance issues such as mowing and bins. We have involved local children with wildflower planting each year, and have been part of Art on the Hill. Quite a number of local people feel connected to the orchard and have enjoyed being involved over the years.

However, 2019 brought a new challenge to the group unfortunately, many of our most active and stalwart members have happened to all move away from Windmill Hill, all in the same year! All is not lost ... we still have a handful of people determined to keep the orchard maintained and active, but we have not managed to run either of our usual public events this year. The annual pruning has happened, and the bench has been restored, and we are working with BugLife to create a new area of summer meadow. And of course the ongoing litter picks have happened.

We would be thrilled to have new members who are keen to play an active role in taking the orchard onwards into its next 10 years. Do get in touch to find out more please. Contact Helen at h.k.adshead@gmail.com.

21. St Paul's Churchyard

This churchyard is close to the Avon New Cut Local Nature Reserve. It is already well supplied with trees and bushes which offer opportunities for many creatures to feed, nest, hide and spend the winter. The higgledy-piggledy grave stones offer further secure places to hide from predators and the weather.

This space's wildlife potential is already quite high and there is an aspiration to enhance this still further in a project linked to students from UWE. From autumn 2019 students and church members will prepare a plan involving planting food sources for adult and young insects (lava); maintaining these in collaboration with Bristol Parks and monitoring plants and animals that live in or visit the space. It is hoped to link the churchyard to a 'village plan' including the establishment of community gardens in the immediate vicinity of the church and encouraging more wildlife gardening amongst local residents. The plan will also look at 'walkability'.

22. South Street Park and ACTA Garden

Once a barren, windswept, miserable patch of land, South Street Park was redesigned and developed by the West Street Neighbourhood Group, WOW, with S106 funds supported by the (then) Greater Bedminster Community Partnership. Working with Compass Point School and acta Community Theatre Company a new path, seating, tree and wildflower planting, the establishment of a children's play park and the development of the 'Bark Park' has made this a popular green space for all ages.

Noticeboards, funded by Bristol Green Capital, tell the story of the Park and its wildlife. Friends of South Street Park and the School undertake regular activities when the opportunities arise: such as tree, bulb and wildflower planting, the installation of bat boxes and community activities such as firework displays and adventure play. The group is currently awaiting lighting

– via a hard-won grant – along the path which links West and North Streets.

The adjacent acta garden is maintained by volunteers as a peaceful space for sitting and relaxing. There are wild plants here with some native plants – particularly a screen planting of dogwood, hawthorn, wayfaring trees, birch and ivy, as well as native annuals, eg forget-me-not, ox eye daisy and perennials. Garden plants include spindle, buddleia, hebe and many others. There is a box hedge along half the boundary. There was a lot of mature ivy, but that crashed down recently and will need to be removed. The apple trees drop a lot of apples.

The grounds of Gaywood House are close to South Street Park and offer additional wilding opportunities.

Friends of South St Park Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/fossp/>

23. Victoria Park

Victoria Park, on the eastern side of BS3, is a large park of over 50 acres, created in the 1880s. There are a lot of activities available in the park, which is mostly used by the communities of Windmill Hill and Totterdown, but it has a wealth of natural wildlife too. As well as long grass and wooded areas, there are many avenues of trees, some very old and unique to the park and some planted within the last 12 years by local people in association with the Victoria Park Action Group (VPAG) and Bristol City Council.

The long grass and more overgrown areas have a wide range of wildflowers and hedgehogs have been seen, whilst the wooded areas are home to a variety of birds, including owls, jays, finches and woodpeckers. At least 8 species of bat have been recorded in the park, some of them quite rare, and squirrels and foxes are seen regularly. During the 2015 Bioblitz (a 2-day event in which 900

people surveyed all the wildlife in the park), over 200 different plant species were found, as well as 21 bird species, 47 lichen species and 37 species of butterflies and moths.

A Wildlife Group was formed as a sub-group of VPAG in 2013 and is led by a local ecologist who has organised some very successful events including the Bioblitz, an Owl Day, wildflower planting, bat walks and the creation of a willow tunnel. A City Nature Challenge is planned for 2020 (when coronavirus restrictions are lifted). Meanwhile, work continues on the Community Garden (south of the Bowling Club) which attracts lots of pollinators.

Children from the local primary schools (Victoria Park and St Mary Redcliffe) have regularly used the park for Forest School and other wildlife activities.

More information about Victoria Park is available on this website:

www.vpag.org.uk and queries can be emailed to info@treasuremind.org.

24. Windmill Hill City Farm (c.4 Acres)

Windmill Hill City Farm is held on a long-term lease from Bristol City Council.

We garden organically and plant lots of flowers with consideration for pollinating insects. We have many verges and edges which are allowed to be 'wild' with twigs and dead wood for habitats. We have a large pond, which we have a project to regenerate, and a few smaller ponds across the site. We have many mature trees, including fruit trees, and hedges. Situated next to Victoria Park, we have a healthy population of birds and butterflies using the site.

There has been a survey of trees. Information has been collected about wildflowers on site and is available in a leaflet for visitors. Pond dipping is a regular activity for visiting children and school groups. Other activities e.g. mini-beast hunts happen on an ad-hoc basis.

The pond regeneration project aims to undertake some substantial tree work to let light into the pond area. We then plan to replant the pond and its margins to encourage a better water quality and more diverse pond life. We also have a pollination border that has been overrun with bindweed. We will look to dig this over and rethink the planting.

We have a lot of hedges, edges and margins that we would be interested to learn how best to manage in order to benefit the widest range of wildlife. After three years of butterfly surveying, we would be keen to take advice about what we have and how best to support the butterflies that use the Farm, ie plant food for caterpillars as well as pollinating opportunities.

A BS3 Wildlife member has undertaken butterfly survey each year since 2017. 12 species have been recorded.

A map of the farm is available on the website: www.windmillhillcityfarm.org.uk

Windmill Hill City Farm:

Jodi.peacham@windmillhillcityfarm.org.uk

25. Streams and Railways as Wildlife Corridors

The Malago and Colliter's and Longmoor Brooks flow from south to north and empty into the Avon New Cut. For parts of their journey they are in tunnels, so of little interest to wildlife.

As well as habitats in their own right, these streams offer corridors along which it is assumed that many types of animal move. The streams pass through some of the green spaces in this report and thus may receive some support locally, but, it seems, there are no dedicated 'Friends of ...' Groups specifically focused on the streams.

The BCC Sustainability Service classifies water quality from Good ecological status (0% of Bristol's streams), to

Moderate (86%) and Poor (14%) down to Bad (0%). Colliter's Brook was recently rated as Moderate and the Malago & Pigeonhouse as Poor. Longmoor Brook is not monitored.

The streams contain invertebrates that are the base of a food chain including fish, birds and mammals. Chironomidae (nonbiting midges/lake flies) and Oligochaeta (aquatic worms) are the most numerous species noted at the Cotswold Road section of the Malago. On Colliter's Brook (Silbury Road) the most numerous species are the same two plus Gammaridae (various freshwater shrimps) and Sphaeriidae (freshwater bivalve molluscs). Ratios are likely to vary from year to year.

A Wildlife Survey of the Pigeonhouse Stream and the Malago was undertaken by Phil Quinn in May 2010 for the Heritage Lottery funded Riverscapes Project. The report is available upon request.

Railway lines are also considered to be useful as wildlife corridors. We are not aware of any studies undertaken regarding the railway lines in BS3, but some reports from BS3 Wildlife Group members suggest that railway embankments are significant habitats for slow worms.

Thanks

This report was put together by Ben Barker. Many thanks to those people who supplied information for this report, and to [Rachel Turner](#) who helped with the maps and general layout. May 2020. mywildbedminster@virginmedia.com