

Autumn 2016

Issue 6

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Welcome to the SBIS Planners' Update!

We aim to provide accessible information about biodiversity issues in relation to planning. If we can help with training events, factsheets or in any other way, please do contact us and we'll do our best to provide what you need. Previous Updates are available on the [SBIS Planners' Page >](#)

12th Annual Suffolk & Norfolk Planning and Biodiversity Seminar - 11th November 2016. Just a few places left!

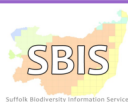


This year's seminar promises an outstanding line-up of speakers, the opportunity to exchange ideas with like-minded professionals and to gain high quality knowledge of biodiversity issues in planning.

There are a range of topics from inexpensive, practical mitigation ideas for charismatic species like hedgehogs to landscape scale projects and the challenges of dealing with international sites, such as visitor surveys and Habitats Regulations Assessments. *We are delighted to extend the invitation to ecological consultants again this year, providing great opportunities for everyone to network and gain new perspectives.*

Full details, including the agenda and booking form, are available on the Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service website on the [Planners Page >](#) The deadline for booking has passed, but we have one or two places left - please contact Gen Broad if you'd like to book.

Connecting with nature offers a new approach to mental health care (Feb 2016)

A study published by Natural England (NE) has reviewed the benefits and outcomes of approaches to green care for mental ill-health. The NE report shows that taking part in nature-based activities helps people who are suffering from mental ill-health and can contribute to a reduction in levels of anxiety, stress, and depression. [Read more >](#)

Planning and Biodiversity Seminar

Organised by Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service and Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership in collaboration with the Association of Local Government Ecologists (ALGE)

Friday 11th November 2016
9:15 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3YU

Aims:

- To provide an overview of the latest national and county-level developments & best practice related to spatial planning, development management and biodiversity.
- To foster an exchange of experience about biodiversity issues in planning amongst planners and ecological consultants in Suffolk, Norfolk and neighbouring counties.

**This event is free for local government planners
£50 fee for all others**

Topics

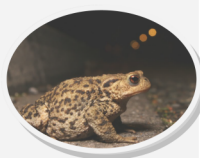
- Key Biodiversity Issues in Development Management and Spatial Planning
- 5 Simple Ways for Planners to help protect biodiversity
- What Good Mitigation looks like - Hedgehogs, Common Toads and Swifts
- Bridging the Gap: Local Authorities Working Together to Protect Barbastelle Bats at a Landscape Scale
- Survey Results from Natura2000 sites in Norfolk
- The Biodiversity Duty
- Managing Risks of Development near European Sites - a Quick & Dirty Guide to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) requirements

Lunch is available at £6.25 (pay on the day) or bring your own
Please car share if possible / travel by public transport (lifts available from Bury St. Edmunds station)

Contact: Gen Broad, Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service
Email: gen.broad@suffolk.gov.uk, tel: 01473 264308

Continuing Professional Development opportunity

- Exchange ideas
- Gain new insights
- Improve understanding of biodiversity issues in planning



Common Toad - Jim Foster

A Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy for Ipswich Borough, Babergh and Suffolk Coastal District Councils

Planners from Ipswich Borough, Babergh and Suffolk Coastal District Councils are being supported by Suffolk County Council's Senior Ecologist in taking a joined-up approach to mitigating development impacts on internationally important wildlife sites and de-risking projects for developers.

Providing new housing developments without an adverse impact on the environment is challenging anywhere, but more so in areas surrounded by nationally and internationally important countryside and coast.

The Habitats Regulations Assessments of the three Local Plans identified mitigation measures to address likely significant effects from recreational disturbance on

internationally important wildlife sites. The three Councils are working together and have begun the process of producing a recreational avoidance and mitigation strategy across their areas. This will identify and cost the measures necessary to mitigate recreational impacts, and confirm how they will be funded and delivered.

The strategy is being drafted by specialist consultants for public consultation before being adopted by March 2017. Once approved by the 3 Local Authorities, the strategy will provide an option for developer contributions to an agreed and costed scheme of mitigation for residential developments with the zone of influence, over the plan periods.

For further information please contact :
Natasha Moreno-Roberts Ipswich Borough Council
N.MorenoRoberts@ipswich.gov.uk

Householders Guide to engaging an Ecologist (Feb 2016)

CIEEM has published *A Householders Guide to Engaging An Ecologist: Key Considerations*. This is aimed at homeowners renovating, extending and developing their property where planning permission is required.

The document covers how to find a local ecologist, what role the ecologist has in planning decision, advice on comparing proposals and provides sources of further information. It is a document that will be invaluable to any homeowner on their home improvement journey.

Download from the website : [A Householder's Guide to Engaging an Ecologist >](#)

Most significant conviction for bat crime ever recorded (Mar 2016)

In April 2014 the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) reported on the conviction of Hargudial Singh RAI and ISAR Enterprises Ltd for destroying a roost used by brown long-eared bats in Matlock. Bat Conservation Trust believes that this case is the most significant conviction for bat crime ever recorded. Not only is it the first occasion where such a case has been heard in the Crown Court, but to their knowledge it is the first time that a proceeds of crime application has been heard in relation any wildlife crime not involving the illegal trade in endangered species. A strong message is being sent to developers to the effect that they cannot, in future, expect to benefit from criminal behaviour.

[Find out more - BCT >](#)

National Wildlife Crime Unit funded to 2020 (Mar 2016)

It was confirmed in March that the National Wildlife Crime Unit will be funded until 2020.

[Find out more - Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management >](#)

Defra publish guidance on providing and protecting habitat for wild birds (Feb 2016)

A competent authority (which includes local authorities) must provide and protect habitat for wild birds. They must, as part of their existing duties as a competent authority, take the steps they consider appropriate to preserve, maintain and re-establish habitat that is large and varied enough for wild birds to support their population in the long term. They competent authority must use its powers so that any pollution or deterioration of wild bird habitat is avoided as far as possible.

[Find out more - Gov.uk guidance >](#)

News on Biodiversity Offsetting (Feb 2016)

Defra has published the summary of responses to the consultation on biodiversity offsetting in England. The consultation provided an overview of biodiversity offsetting, explored how it might operate, and introduced the key issues that would need to be addressed. Defra sought views on biodiversity offsetting and, in particular, ideas for how it could be delivered whilst ensuring real benefits for the environment and the economy. The responses vary quite widely on how biodiversity offsetting could be taken forward, with a substantial number of respondents disagreeing with it being taken forward at all. Defra has also published initial research on the pilot schemes, together with research into international experiences of biodiversity offsetting.

[Find out more - Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management >](#)

Protected Species: How to Review Planning Applications (12 Aug 2016)

Planning authorities must consider how a development might affect protected species on or near a proposed development site when reviewing a planning application. Natural England has published standing advice to review applications that might affect bats, great crested newts, badgers, hazel dormice, water voles, otters, wild birds, reptiles, protected plants, white-clawed crayfish, invertebrates, freshwater fish, natterjack toads or ancient woodlands / veteran trees. Natural England's Standing Advice can help you to decide whether to reject or approve an application if a protected species could be affected. For certain species a developer will need a wildlife licence before they can start work. Standing advice doesn't affect licence requirements. Visit [Gov.UK website >](#)

There is also guidance on how to review planning applications that affect protected sites and areas - visit [www.gov.uk Guidance >](http://www.gov.uk/Guidance)

Street lighting disturbs pollinating moths (2 June 2016)

New research has shown that street lights change the natural behaviour of moths and disrupt nocturnal pollination. The study shows a shift in moth activity in street-lit areas from vegetation level to lamp-post height and the impact this is having on their ability to pollinate flowers. Until now, the role of moths in pollination has been overlooked as previous studies have focussed on daytime pollinators, such as bees. ***"Moths are an important part of the UK's biodiversity, as pollinators of wild flowers and as food for many birds and predators. However the total abundance of moths in Britain has decreased by over a quarter since the 1960s with likely knock-on effects on many other organisms. The role of artificial light in causing moth declines remains unclear, but this new research indicates effects not just on moths but on the whole ecosystem"*** . [Read more >](#)

Richard Fox, Butterfly Conservation

State of Nature report 2016 (14 Sep 2016)

The State of Nature 2016 report is the most comprehensive assessment to date of the status of species, across a broad range of taxonomic groups, in the UK. Written by a coalition of more than 50 leading wildlife charities and research organisations, the report assessed the status of wildlife in the UK at land and sea. Nearly 10,000 species were assessed including plants, pondlife, birds and mammals. Some of the hardest hit species include familiar species such as hedgehog, turtle dove, swift and toad. **Planners can help to support the conservation of these charismatic species at a local level through simple practical measures - sign up for the Planning and Biodiversity seminar on 11th November to find out how! [Read more >](#)**



"The natural world is in serious trouble and it needs our help as never before"

Sir David Attenborough

Natural England response time to planning applications (June 2016)

Natural England (NE) has a duty to respond as a consultee in the planning system to respond within 21 days or other agreed period. NE has reported that in 2015-16 they received 12,842 planning application consultations and responded to 98.07% of these consultations within the 21 days or other agreed deadlines. [Read more >](#)

New Nature After Minerals website (July 2016)

The RSPB-led minerals restoration partnership programme, with support from Natural England, the Minerals Products Association (MPA) and the British Aggregates Association (BAA) – have launched a new website at www.afterminerals.com. This acts as an information hub for all stakeholders with an interest and active involvement in minerals restoration for a nature conservation end-use. The resource shares advice on a range of land management issues such as priority habitat creation; species protection and strategic minerals planning and showcases minerals restoration best-practice case study examples for biodiversity gain, ecosystem services benefits and local community engagement. [Visit the site >](#)

Goodbye to Sue

Suffolk Biodiversity Planning Group members are immensely sad to be saying goodbye to Sue Hooton after 28 years of invaluable service as an ecologist at Suffolk County Council. Our loss is Essex County Council's gain!

Over the years, Sue has made a huge contribution to supporting planners and improving understanding about biodiversity issues at both strategic and practical levels. She has driven forward many initiatives including the Suffolk Biodiversity Planning Group, the Planning and Biodiversity seminar and the Biodiversity Validation Checklist.



THANK YOU SUE for all your inspiring and dedicated work, we wish you well on your new journey.

Protected Species focus - BATS

Key facts

- 13 species resident in Suffolk
- **Widespread, common or locally common:** Brown Long-eared, Common Pipistrelle, Daubentons, Soprano Pipistrelle
- **Widespread, but uncommon:** Barbastelle¹, Natterer's, Noctule, Serotine
- **Rare:** Leisler's, Nathusius' Pipistrelle, Lesser Horseshoe¹
- **Insufficient information:** Whiskered, Brandts

¹ Populations declining

- **Planners should be aware of :**
 - loss of significant roost sites (i.e. maternity and hibernation sites) in traditional timber framed barns and historical buildings, such as churches.
 - Loss and degradation of feeding habitats as a result of development.
 - Disturbance to commuting routes resulting from artificial illumination.
 - Bats are European Protected Species under EU Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.



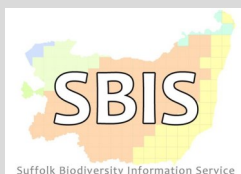
Barbastelle bat on tree (c) Hugh Clark/www.bats.org.uk

Please send me information about any relevant biodiversity and planning issues that should be highlighted. The update is published twice a year, in spring and autumn and goes to a wide audience in Suffolk and Norfolk. I look forward to hearing from you!

Gen Broad

Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service

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Visit us at

<http://www.suffolkbis.org.uk/biodiversity/statutoryobligations/plannerspage>