

Somerset Wildlife Trust Netherclay Community Woodland Local Nature Reserve

Welcome to Netherclay Community Woodland Local Nature Reserve

What to look out for:

- Wildlife now using the young trees includes brown hairstreak butterflies, willow warblers and bullfinch.
- River Tone is important for wildlife such as otter and kingfisher.
- The reserve is managed by a partnership of Taunton Deane Borough Council, Bishops Hull Parish Council and the Somerset Wildlife Trust

The site comprises 24.4 acres (9.8 hectares) of former agricultural land that has been planted with native broadleaf trees and shrubs including oak, ash, wild cherry, blackthorn, hazel and field maple. The land was purchased in two separate blocks, the first in 2003 by Taunton Deane Borough Council, and the second in 2006 by the Somerset Wildlife Trust. The acquisition and management has been supported by Viridor Landfill Tax Credits, the Forestry Commission and Bishops Hull Parish Council.



Brown hairstreak ©Butterfly Conservation

The woodland planting has three main aims. As the trees grow they will provide an improved habitat for wildlife. They will also slow the rate of local rainwater run off, thereby reducing flood risk further downstream within the basin of the River Tone. The developing woodland will provide an increasingly attractive amenity for the quiet enjoyment of the local community.

When planted with trees the wildlife interest was largely confined to the River Tone which is used by many species including otter, water shrew, kingfisher and grey wagtail. Fish species in the river include both salmon and brown trout. A magnificent mature black poplar tree occurs beside the river at the western end of the site. Another black poplar, which collapsed, is regenerating from its stump and roots.

Now that the woodland is beginning to develop new species are colonising the site. Brown hairstreak butterfly larvae are using the young blackthorn trees and the site has the potential to support good numbers of this nationally rare butterfly. Birds that particularly like scrub habitats such as willow warbler, whitethroat and bullfinch are colonising the woodland.



Kingfisher ©Malcolm Brown

The footpath running through the northern part of the site follows the approximate route of the former Grand Western Canal towpath. This was part of a larger canal building project to link the Bristol and English Channels. Although work started on this section in 1831 it only enjoyed a few years of operation before the railway arrived in 1844 and captured most of its trade. It was finally closed in 1867 and gradually obliterated by adjoining agricultural management.

Now that the trees are getting older some areas are starting to be coppiced whilst others are being thinned. The aim of this management is to improve the woodland structure as an even age and height woodland is of less wildlife value than one containing more diversity.



Bullfinch ©Ben Simmonds | bensimmondsphotography.co.uk

⚠ Access and safety

- Please take care whilst visiting the reserve.
- The ground is uneven in places and the River Tone is deep and fast flowing with a steep and unstable bank.
- Camping and fires are not permitted.
- Please clear up after your dog and use the dog bin provided.



Danger
Deep water

The site is managed by:
Somerset Wildlife Trust
34 Wellington Road
Wellington
TA1 5AW
Tel: 01823 652400
E-mail: enquiries@somersetwildlife.org
Website: www.somersetwildlife.org

Taunton Deane Borough Council
E-mail: enquiries@tauntondeane.gov.uk
Website: tauntondeane.gov.uk

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