

Bromsgrove & Northeast Worcestershire Local Group

Spring newsletter 2025



Worcestershire
Wildlife Trust

Thank you!

We started 2025 with some great talks and there's more to come!

In January the Trust's **Steve Bloomfield** gave us a fascinating talk about his work to safeguard wildlife from inappropriate development. Then in February our own **Chris Jewson**, volunteer warden at Piper's Hill and Dodderhill Common (Hanbury Woods), gave a brilliant talk on this important local reserve and the work that he and his team of volunteers do to protect and enhance it. Steve and Chris are doing vital work on our behalf and we thank them both.

As you read this, we'll have just heard from **Dominique Cragg** (Western Reserves Officer) about the Trust's incredibly ambitious project '**Green Farm - the birth of a nature reserve**'. Our final indoor meeting before we break for summer will be on Monday 14th April when the Trust's **Wendy Carter** will be speaking on '**Spotting wildlife near you**'. We expect a full house so don't be late.

Our programme for the autumn will include talks on pine martens, the Heart of England Forest and bats -

look for more information in our summer newsletter.

If you are a regular at our indoor meetings, I hope that we'll see you at all upcoming talks. If you have never tried us before, maybe now is the time to do so.

With my belated best wishes for 2025 on behalf of the committee and the Trust.

Viv

Viv Chandler

Chair, Bromsgrove and NE
Worcestershire Local Group
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Newly appointed WWT Chief Executive, **Mike Perry**, attended our January meeting when we presented him with a donation of £1,000 from your Local Group.



Mike has asked us to pass on his and the Trust's thanks to all those whose support for the Bromsgrove Group made this possible. THANK YOU.

Join our events

Meetings start at 7.30pm and cost £3 (cash only) per person
Amphlett Hall, Crown Close, off Market Street, Bromsgrove B61 8DW

Monday 14 April

Spotting wildlife near you
with WWT's Wendy Carter

Dates for our autumn talks are
8 Sep, 13 Oct and 10 Nov.

We are planning visits in **April, May** and **June** to Eades Meadow, Piper's Hill & Dodderhill Common and Feckenham Wyld Moor. If you are interested in coming along please let us know

wwtbromsgrovebranch@gmail.com

www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/whats-on

Piper's Hill and Dodderhill Common

Dodderhill Common is situated between Hanbury and Bromsgrove on a plateau known as Piper's Hill. This area is a vestige of what was once an expansive common that succumbed to the encroachment of agriculture during the 18th century enclosure movement. As the land was gradually turned over for farming purposes, what remained was poor-quality heathland, suitable only for rough grazing. The thin, stony soil on this remnant of common is likely what saved it from total disappearance.

During this period, trees began to appear on the common. This may have occurred naturally but it is more likely they were planted; the practice of using the same piece of land for trees and grazing, known as wood pasture, has existed for millennia. Piper's Hill is one of Worcestershire's few remaining examples of this ancient habitat. By the end of the 19th century, grazing had begun to diminish and without browsing animals the trees were able to reproduce unchecked.

Today, the common has evolved into a mixed woodland encompassing over

240 veteran oak, sweet chestnut and beech trees – a legacy of the wood pasture landscape. These ancient trees hold significant ecological value as habitats for rare invertebrates and fungi. They are also home to bats and woodpeckers. The primary objective of the Trust is to preserve the veteran trees and restore the wood pasture. This involves a strategic thinning of the surrounding trees (haloing) to minimise competition for water and daylight.

A dedicated volunteer team handles most of the conservation work, which includes clearing scrub to promote grasses and wildflowers. In the absence of grazing animals, this task needs to be done annually.

Chris Jewson

