

## **2023/24 Report from Stowupland Biodiversity and Wildflower Group**

The Green has a great potential for improving biodiversity within Stowupland. And it is important to remember that schemes to improve diversity take years to provide wide benefits; they are not always pretty, we need to be patient. The changes in our climate make it clear that it is ever more vital that, as a community and as individuals, we do more to reduce the harm caused by development of open land and over-intensification of land use.

The area of The Green is a huge benefit to insects and mammals. Some residents made comments on social media, but you need only to walk along the path from The Retreat to the Chapel to see and hear the wildlife in the unmown area. Making it look pretty will take time – unless drastic measures such as removing all the grass, cultivating the soil and planting wildflower seeds over the area are carried out. This would destroy the habitat in the short-term.

Over the next year, we intend to continue to discourage grass and encourage wildflowers in this area. Planting of native daffodils in various places has been successful. They will take time to fully establish; meantime we will make further plantings where no daffodils are evident.

We plan a village-wide consultation of residents to find out what their views are on conserving and enhancing biodiversity.

We hope that you are taking part in the sunflower competition. Every household in Stowupland should have received some sunflower seeds; a prize will be given for the tallest sunflower. Details are in the April edition of Telstar.

We have continued our work with schools, including:

- Providing raised beds
- Providing seeds and plants
- Providing bird boxes and hedgehog houses.
- Planting and maintaining trees
- Attending, and providing equipment for, Forest School

We are waiting for the pond by The Retreat to dry out so that silt and reeds can be removed, and a biodiverse environment established.

We will be taking part in the National Hedgehog Survey later this year; we would like to hear of hedgehog sightings around the village.

We had a very successful stall at the Church Christmas Fair and will have an even larger presence at the Spring Fair later this month.

We would welcome new members to join the Group, either as members of the planning group or as practical volunteers. Come and talk to us when you see our banner, which we set up when working around the village.