

LOWER WINDRUSH VALLEY PROJECT

2018 UPDATE



The Lower Windrush Valley Project (LWVP) works with environmental organisations, mineral operators, landowners and the local community to coordinate a range of initiatives that:

- Strengthen and develop the evolving landscape of the valley
- Protect and enhance the biodiversity it supports
- Improve opportunities for people to access and enjoy the countryside
- Raise awareness, understanding and involvement in the diverse issues that influence the environment in the valley

FRIENDS OF THE LOWER WINDRUSH VALLEY

The LWVP has a number of active volunteers who this year have contributed over 450 hours of their time to support the work of the LWVP. Their roles include site and footpath wardens, a task group who help to look after the nature reserves, and office and events volunteers. If you would like to find out more about volunteering opportunities contact Lucy Kennery (lwvp@oxfordshire.gov.uk).

EVENTS

This year's events calendar included guided walks, talks, a birdwatch at Rushy Common and a family day. Together with Smiths Bletchington we also ran three very popular tours of Gill Mill Quarry over the summer. The tours included a look at the current extraction areas, processing and recycling plants, and the restored sites of Rushy Common Nature Reserve and Tar Lakes.

YELLOW FISH

This year, we worked with the Environment Agency to roll out the Yellow Fish scheme in Witney, which helps to make people aware of possible pollution pathways to our rivers. The project is undertaken in two stages: Raising awareness about sources of pollution and how to prevent incidents taking place, and placing yellow fish stickers near surface water drains leading directly to watercourses. We focused on an industrial estate in Witney where there have been several pollution incidents in the last few years, and with permission from the landowners and highways authority we attached 58 stickers to surface water drains around this area. Approximately 50 businesses were visited and given information about the scheme and session on the project was run with Geography students from Henry Box School.

NATURE RESERVES AND BIRD HIDES

The Lower Windrush Valley and its 50-plus lakes are a nationally important area for wintering wildfowl, specifically gadwall and shoveler. The two nature reserves we look after, Standlake Common and Rushy Common, make up an important part of that resource and offer keyholders an opportunity for wildlife watching in our three bird hides and bird viewing screen. If you would like to purchase a bird hide key, please contact Lucy Kennery (lwvp@oxfordshire.gov.uk) or visit the LWVP website.

In February, we replaced two barn owl nest boxes at Standlake Common Nature Reserve. The two previous boxes had been well used over the years and were beginning to disintegrate. We hope these two new boxes will get as much use in the years to come! Thank you to Linear Fisheries for funding the boxes and Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks for helping with the installation.

For information on the project and updates on our activities, 'like' us on Facebook or visit our website: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/lowerwindrushvalleyproject



VISITORS ON A TOUR OF GILL MILL QUARRY.



YELLOW FISH STICKER BY A SURFACE WATER DRAIN IN WITNEY.



ONE OF THE NEW BARN OWL NEST BOXES BEING INSTALLED AT STANDLAKE COMMON NATURE RESERVE.



BIRD HIDE AT RUSHY COMMON NATURE RESERVE.



STANDLAKE COMMON NATURE RESERVE.