



Action on Climate in Teignbridge

ACT supports Teignbridge District Council, town and parish councils, community groups and residents to make the district carbon neutral, sustainable, resilient and healthy.



Wildlife Warden Introductory Training

This handout includes the most important information that you need to help you get started as a Wildlife Warden, so please read it before taking part in the Introductory Training Zoom.

It also includes several optional tasks, but you must do the risk assessment task before you become a Wildlife Warden. Thinking and planning ahead can keep you safe when you are working in the countryside! Please send your practice risk assessment back to Vicky, our Coordinator, in a separate document when you have done it (e.g. Liz Smith Risk Assessment.doc), as soon as possible after your Zoom Training Meeting.

Don't be daunted if any of this seems difficult - you can get in touch with Vicky at vicky@actionclimateteignbridge.org with any queries.

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1. The Wildlife Warden's Code of Practice:

When you are volunteering as a Wildlife Warden, we want you to enjoy what you are doing, keep safe and represent ACT's aims.

The ACT Ecology Group and its Wildlife Wardens aim to:

- **Make a real difference** – helping our wildlife to thrive all over Teignbridge.
- **Work safely wherever you are** – assessing the risks to yourself and everyone/everything around you and work with care (see Section 2).
- **Make sure you are safe when you are on your own** - always let a friend or partner know where you are, and when you expect to finish your task; then ring them to let them know you finish or are home again (see Section 2).
- **Carry out a range of practical work** - but without using power tools. Our insurance does not cover the use of power tools.
- **Work sensitively with** gardeners and landowners to help create more wildlife habitats.
- **Carry out surveys and fieldwork** - after getting all the necessary permissions and making risk assessments (see section 2).
- **Be prepared to work with everyone**, on the basis that most people want to learn more.
- **Keep communication channels open** with everyone you talk to - and try your best to avoid any arguments.
- **Work with Teignbridge District Council and Dartmoor National Park planners and ecologists** to ensure that developers do as little damage to wildlife as possible and provide the legal mitigation quickly (see Section 4)
- **Planning Applications:** Contact Vicky **before commenting on, or objecting to, a Planning issue as a Wildlife Warden**; send us details of any planning application that you are not happy with, with the reasons (see Section 4).



- **Working with young people** – working with school, scout, and youth groups **when their full quota of leaders there is fine.** Otherwise, you will need an up-to-date DBS check (Disclosure and Barring Service) for that specific group. Please talk to Vicky if you want to do work that requires a DBS in your role as a Wildlife Warden (see Section 6).
- **Work in a low carbon way whenever possible** – by using emails and phones when they can replace meetings, and by lift-sharing, cycling, walking etc when you need to work outside or take part in a face-to-face meeting.



2. Personal Safety and Risk Assessment.

Risk Assessment.

We want our Wildlife Wardens to keep safe while they are helping wildlife, so this is a **very important part** of the Introductory Training.

If you have completed the Introductory Training, then anything you do that causes injury or damage as part of your work as a Wildlife Warden is covered by ACTs 3rd party public liability insurance.

Whether you carry out work on your own, or with other Wildlife Wardens, we want you to think about the best and safest way to carry out a task, before you start.

Wherever we go, whatever we do, we subconsciously or consciously assess the risks and decide:

- a) whether or not we should do the task, or
- b) whether to do it differently, to be safer.

When writing a Risk Assessment, you should consider:

- who and how many people might be harmed, and how.
- all the hazards.
- all the controls, which are already in place.
- whether existing controls are working.
- the **likelihood** of things going wrong when all the controls are in place.
- the consequence of things going wrong – is it unacceptably serious and do you need to reduce the risk?

How to score Risks:

The Risk Scoring table below, shows that **multiplying the likelihood of an accident happening by the consequences of that accident**, gives you a **Risk Score**. This helps you to make decisions about how you do your work.

Types of accidents - Consequences:

- **Minor injuries: Score 1-2** for cuts, strains, and bruises.
- **Moderate injuries: Score 3-4** for anything that needs professional attention from a Doctor/Hospital, such as severe sprains, fractures, infections.
- **Major and Catastrophic accidents: Score 4-5** for accidents that could cause very serious injuries or loss of life e.g., it is possible to get stuck in pond mud, caught by the tide, hit by a car on a country lane, or hit by a falling tree.

Table 1c

Risk Score

LIKELIHOOD	CONSEQUENCE				
	1 Insignificant	2 Minor	3 Moderate	4 Major	5 Catastrophic
1 - Rare	1	2	3	4	5
2 - Unlikely	2	4	6	8	10
3 - Possible	3	6	9	12	15
4 - Likely	4	8	12	16	20
5 - Almost Certain	5	10	15	20	25

Before starting a task, the Risk Score for each hazard should be within the **green band**.

If a hazard is within the **amber band**, look for further ways to **reduce the risk** so that the score is within the green band.

If a hazard is within the **red band**, then a complete re-think is needed in order to either get the task into the green band – or decide not to do it.

Ways to reduce risk:

- **Eliminate** the risk or find a different way of doing the task.
- **Reduce** the risk e.g., allow more time, or involve more/less people.
- **Control** the risk e.g. by training people and using agreed procedures.
- **Minimise impacts** e.g. by using the right clothing, tools etc.

Accidents when Lone Working:

Tasks with low risks when carried out by two people can be much more hazardous when you are working on your own. It is very important when you carry out a Risk Assessment for a lone working task to recognise that both the likelihood and the consequences will probably be higher. **It is important to accept that some work will not be possible on your own.**

For example, having an accident while sampling water from a fairly fast-flowing stream, with steep banks, would probably have a likelihood score of 2-3 and a consequence score of 5 (the possibility of drowning!). With a score of 10-15, it is **not** safe, but working to a sensible plan with another fit and responsible person might make it safe, as long as the river was not flowing too fast, and the sampling point was safe.

When lone working it is particularly important:

- to **set up a 'buddy system'**, so that someone who lives within reach knows when you are starting and finishing work and has your mobile number.
- to have **a fully charged mobile phone** with you and you **must** ring your buddy when you have finished (and possibly before and after various parts of your planned work).
- your 'buddy' must be able reach you quickly and must be available to take your calls - and they must take action if they cannot contact you (even if your lack of contact is only because your phone battery has run out or you don't have reception).

You should fill in a risk assessment form when you are doing a significantly different task for the first time.

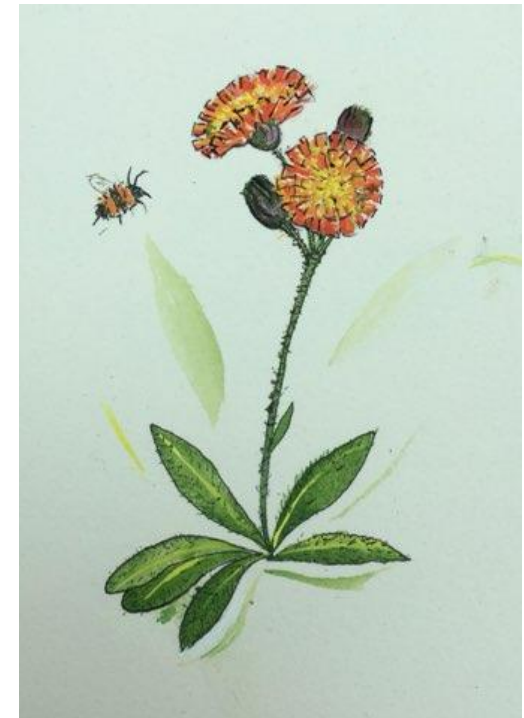
You do not need to fill in a form every time you go for a walk - but you do need to plan in a structured and methodical way, weighing up the risks carefully.

Follow-up task:

Please fill in and return to us a Risk Assessment, preferably within 1 week of completing your Introductory Training Zoom.

Either do this, for the sort of task that you might do (for example, surveying a hedge on a country lane).
Or think of a minor accident that you or a friend have had and fill it in so that it shows how it could have been avoided!

See Example below:



Description of activity: Working with another Wildlife Warden to plant a hedge.

Where the activity is taking place: Give the name of the site and either the postcode, the grid ref, or [What 3 Words](#)

Hazard	Measures being taken to prevent the problem	Likelihood 1-5	Consequences (seriousness) 1-5	L X C = 6 and under acceptable
Cuts, bruises etc because people do not keep to safe working distances	Agree to maintain a distance of at least 4 m while working. This is important for general safety.	1	3	3
Accidental collisions, hits and pokes while working or walking to the site.	Agree how to carry, use and plant whips & canes that could poke you in the eye, or elsewhere. Especially if walking along a lane or pavement where cars and other users are at risk.	1	3	3
Safety while working outside: slips, cuts and preventing infected cuts.	Be aware of muddy/slippy, conditions. Only handle blackthorn and other prickly vegetation which can cause infected scratches, if wearing strong gloves. Have a first aid kit that you can use if necessary. Take an alcohol-based disinfectant hand gel to reduce infection.	1	4	4
Getting cold and wet	Wear strong, comfortable work clothes, gloves and footwear and bring Waterproofs.	2	2	4
Creating a tripping or falling hazard for others who are visiting the site.	Do not leave holes or tools unattended, if necessary, use stakes and hazard tape to mark hazards.	1	3	3

If you want to lead a group of people who are not Wildlife Wardens, or you want to lead a walk or organise an event, then you will first need to complete a training module in 'Leading Volunteers Work Groups and Community Events'. Please ask us when the next course will be.



Specific infections and sensitivities to bear in mind when working outside - including special measures needed to prevent/reduce the risk of infection during practical work. Never hesitate to seek medical advice!

A) Hazardous plants including hogweed, hemlock, hemlock water-dropwort and giant hogweed.

We have currently updated our advice about these plants see Appendix 1 (Page 32)

B) Ticks and Lyme disease

Ticks carry several diseases which affect humans and animals; the main disease that humans can catch is Lyme disease.

Fortunately, only a minority of ticks carry Lyme disease, but it is becoming more common, and Tick-Borne Encephalitis Virus (TBEV) has just been confirmed in the UK (2023), though as yet it is very rare.

Where do ticks live?

Ticks have become a much bigger problem over the last 30 years and can now be picked up in short grass, as well as bracken and tussocky grass.

When are ticks active?

In most months of the year, though the **peaks** in Devon are from March to June and August to November.

How can you reduce the risk of being bitten?

- Clothe as much of yourself as you can, including tucking trousers into your socks and wearing long-sleeved shirts.
- Wear light-coloured clothes so that any ticks show up - they are very tiny before they have latched on and sucked your blood.
- Use insect repellent if you can (some herbal repellents are said to be effective).

What do you do if you have a tick?

Your main aims are to remove the tick promptly, to remove all parts of the tick's body and to prevent it releasing additional saliva or regurgitating its stomach contents into the bite wound

- Remove it carefully with a special tick-removal tool or pointed tweezers (not blunt eyebrow tweezers). Pull upwards, without squeezing or crushing the tick.
- The site may be itchy and inflamed for some time, but this is not necessarily a symptom of Lyme Disease.
- Watch the site for a circular skin inflammation, like a 'halo' around the bite, which can appear up to 3 months after the bite; you can be infected without this circular mark.
- Be aware that a high temperature, headaches and muscle/joint pain are all symptoms of Lyme's disease and TBEV. In either case, see a doctor at once as rapid antibiotic treatment is needed.
- Visit [Lymes disease UK](#) for more advice and information.

C) Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)

This is a serious bacterial infection which many people carry. However, in the context of practical conservation work, it can be caught through scratches, particularly from blackthorn. It is important to take an alcohol-based hand disinfection (over 90% alcohol) on practical work tasks, for use when someone has a scratch or whenever soap and water would usually be used.

Symptoms: Any reaction, such as redness and swelling, should be carefully watched and anyone experiencing this after the workday should **always contact a doctor**. This should be done as an **emergency** if the person also has a temperature/fever. Staphylococcus aureus can occasionally cause sepsis, which is **extremely dangerous**.

Prevention: Wear long, strong, preferably leather gloves and a thick jacket when cutting back scrub such as blackthorn. In thick or tall scrub eye protection and a helmet are also needed.

D) Leptospirosis/Weill's Disease

This is a rare disease most often caught when working in ponds and waterways. It is present wherever there is urine from infected animals, such as rats.

Symptoms are a high temperature; feeling hot and shivery; a headache; feeling sick or being sick or having diarrhoea; aching muscles and joints; red eyes; loss of appetite. It is important to tell the Doctor you have been working in water. Antibiotics usually clear this up quickly.

Prevention: Good hygiene, using an alcohol-based hand disinfection (over 90% alcohol) whenever soap and water would usually be used. Do not work in water if you have deep scratches/cuts. Cover any small scratches well, using waterproof plaster.



E) Covid

Symptoms are variable – use the NHS website.

Transmission of the Covid virus is less likely when working outside and when group members have completed vaccination.

Be aware that some people are especially vulnerable to becoming seriously ill if they catch Covid – so check if anyone you are working with would like to keep an extra distance and avoid physical contact. If so, make sure that everyone is aware of this, have hand gel available and do not share tools or snacks.

There are many other infections, sensitivities and allergies so imagine your task before you start.



3. Projects

Being a Wildlife Warden does not mean you have to organise lots of projects; there are many very simple ways you can help wildlife.

There is information on various projects in the [Wildlife Warden section](#) of the ACT website.

Working with your community and your Parish Council:

- **If possible, write a monthly or quarterly update for ACT** - and send it to your Parish Council too. Make it as interesting as you can, maybe including a picture, so that people who aren't yet into wildlife catch on!

- You could re-format your report as an A4 poster, which you could put up in your Parish. You could put your name at the bottom, for example, 'Angela Brown, ACT Wildlife Warden for Parish
- If you make a poster, only put your email address on it if you are certain that you don't mind being sent emails - which might not be about wildlife at all! You might want to have an email address that is just for your Wildlife Warden work - ask us for help if you would like to do that.

Are there other Wildlife Wardens in your Parish?

- It is good to keep in touch so that you do not duplicate work! Ideally you could meet up regularly and see if you can work as a team on some projects.
- You will almost certainly achieve more for wildlife if you work with other WWs in your Parish; you may find that you have different skills and projects, or that you want to work together on some projects. Whichever you do, keeping in touch with each other, by meetings or emails, will help keep things running smoothly.
- Working with WWs from neighbouring Parishes will be really important for connecting wildlife habitats - animals don't read maps or books so have no idea about respecting Parish boundaries! It's more fun too.

- If you are lucky enough to have a Primary School in your Parish, you could tell them about the school Wildlife Warden Scheme (see page 26).
- If you need funding for a project, we will send you a document with suggestions that could help you get it. Please let us know if you are thinking of applying for local funding, as we will all be more successful if we don't compete with each other for money from the same 'pot' at the same time!
- **The Wildlife Wardens have their own Facebook Page, WhatsApp group and a Group.io** for your posts and discussions. You will be sent links to the following training. Using them is fun and can help you discuss problems and share solutions.



Are there any topics here that you think you would be good at, and would enjoy doing?

a) Working with your Parish Council – is it keen to tackle Climate and Ecological Emergencies?

- Is there a Parish Councillor who you know and could keep in touch with?
- Will the Parish Council help you to access small grants from their funds?
- Is there land in your Parish owned by the Council or a similar body that could have potential for creating wildlife habitats, however small?

b) Inspiring people:

- Writing Wildlife Newsletters - or a monthly article for your Parish Mag
- Creating fun posters with ideas for helping wildlife - maybe by changing how we live, reducing waste and plastic, driving less etc.
- Organising Parish competitions for the best Wildlife Gardens
- Getting your community to help you identify and record species - a year-round Bioblitz!

c) Habitat creation and management projects, such as:

- Practical habitat management
- Working with farmers and landowners

d) Preventing wildlife damage by:

- Monitoring planning applications
- Watching as development takes place to ensure that planning conditions are respected - and that any mitigation is done in a timely way.

- Reporting any possible wildlife crimes to the police by ringing 101 and asking for the Wildlife Crime Officer (or by ringing or emailing your Community Police Officer if contact details are available through your Parish Newsletter or similar)
- Working with communities/young people to increase their love of wildlife.



Project funding:

Most projects need very little funding, as trees and meadow seeds are often available free of charge. If projects need some funding, then talk to Vicky and Audrey so we can discuss asking your Parish Council, your Teignbridge District Councillors, or your Devon County Councillors if they have any money available. There may be other local Trusts and other organisations giving money in your area. We can help with applications. Devon Wilder Communities team also keep a good, up-to-date list of funding opportunities [here](#).

Training to help you with projects: The Ecology Group will provide free training in many of these areas that can help you with your projects – ask Vicky or Audrey if there are other areas you would like help with:

- Identification of all types of wildlife
- Habitat management and connectivity: hedges, woodlands, meadows, verges, ponds
- Farming and wildlife
- Writing risk assessments – and working with them!
- Wildlife gardening
- Creating pesticide-free zones
- Carrying out desktop surveys
- Monitoring planning applications and developments.
- Leading work groups.

Projects Task: Think what project you might most like to start off with OR discuss with fellow Wildlife Wardens from the same or neighbouring parish. Talk to Vicky or Audrey if you'd like support or information.

When you become a Wildlife Warden, it would be very helpful if you could introduce yourself to your local Parish Council (either by email, or by attending a Parish Council Meeting) and give the information (*in italics below*) to them. They may already know about Action on Climate in Teignbridge and its Wildlife Wardens but telling them again is always useful – especially for any new Councillors. Parish Councils now have legal [duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity](#) in England and many Wildlife Wardens have been providing helpful support or gently nudging them in the right direction! Contact your Parish Clerk, who should forward details to all the Councillors.

Information about the Action on Climate in Teignbridge's volunteer Wildlife Wardens Scheme.

The Wildlife Warden Scheme is part of Action on Climate in Teignbridge (ACT) (www.actionclimateteignbridge.org) and there are currently over 150 Wildlife Wardens across the district. Their work covers nearly all of Teignbridge's Parishes and Towns.

ACT's Mission:

To provide independent encouragement and support for Teignbridge District Council, town and parish councils, community groups, businesses, organisations, and residents in the district to act together to:

- 1. Ensure Teignbridge is on a path to no more than 1.5C of warming.*
- 2. Ensure Climate and Ecological Emergency declarations are reflected in all national and local government policies, decisions, and activities.*
- 3. Reduce and reverse the speed and effects of climate change and pollution.*
- 4. Develop more sustainable lifestyles to regenerate and maintain biodiversity and ecosystems.*

ACT has several sub-groups, dealing with various different aspects of the Climate and Ecological Emergencies, of which the Ecology Group is just one. **The Ecology Group** decided to achieve its objectives by establishing a **Wildlife Warden Scheme** and involving as many communities as possible.

Wildlife Wardens are ACT members who work with their communities to help support, protect and increase our district's wildlife and improve its chances of surviving the ecological and climate emergencies we face. Anyone who is interested in, or knowledgeable about wildlife/ecology can become a Warden.

These are the sort of things that they can do:

- Give their parish's wildlife several hours of their time a month.*
- Look out for opportunities to protect, help, and increase the wildlife in their parish.*
- Carry out practical work in their parish that will benefit wildlife.*
- Send their parish council a brief, monthly or quarterly account of what they have been doing, so everyone can share successes and difficulties.*
- Work with Wildlife Wardens in neighbouring parishes on joint projects.*
- Use their special skills and knowledge to help other Wardens.*

- *Survey and help to improve and connect habitats.*
- *Promote organic wildlife gardening.*
- *Monitor building and development within the parish and alert ACT of any possible wildlife damage.*
- *Work with communities, schools, and local groups.*



4. Planning and Development

Development and Planning Applications are often very upsetting and feel like real threats to the wildlife and landscape of your Parish! If you are ever worried about forthcoming development, please **re-read this document AND get in touch with the Vicky and Audrey**.

Anyone can object to a Planning Application as a member of the public, but if the objection is to be an official one from Action on Climate in Teignbridge's Wildlife Wardens, we need to look at them together and respond together. (See the table below for information on how to make a convincing and valid objection).

Because ACT works closely with Teignbridge District Council, a response from ACT will carry more weight. This also applies to developments within Dartmoor National Park.

Report any suspected infringements of Planning Conditions to the ACT Wildlife Warden Coordinator and to the **Local Planning Authorities**, who often do not have enough staff to keep checking. Always use the words 'suspected infringement' rather than making a direct accusation – planning law is complex.

Report any development you see happening that you think has not got the planning permission it needs. Again, please contact the Wildlife Warden Coordinator or Audrey.

Local Plans – both [Teignbridge](#) and [Dartmoor National Park](#) have new Local Plans.

Teignbridge District Council has finished its final consultation.

See

The Dartmoor National Park Authority Local Plan applies to all Teignbridge Parishes within the Park.

Local Plans give guidance as to what sort of development is acceptable, where it is acceptable and what is protected:

- Local Plans are written by Councils as a guide on where homes, employment land, business infrastructure and community facilities could be built during the life of the Plan.
- The Plan **has** to include enough land for the number of houses that the Government has decided should be built in that district.
- **They include policies to protect environmentally important sites.**
- When the Local Plans were written there were several opportunities for the public to make comments and influence the content.
- The Plans try to identify in advance the best places for development; places that have good infrastructure (or the possibility of providing it); local employment (or the possibility of developing it); and good, sustainable transport links.

How to comment on a Planning Application:

- Everyone has the right to object to, comment on, or support planning applications as an individual.
- **Please contact the Wildlife Warden Coordinator if you think that ACT should respond, and that you would like to respond as a Wildlife Warden.** Use the information below to give us as much detail as possible.
- The local planning authority (LPA) tries to make it easy for people to comment online or in writing.
- On the [TDC planning webpage](#) click on 'View and comment on planning applications and appeals. You can search by planning application number (if you know it), address, location via a map, or do an 'advanced search' which allows you to choose the type of application or area you are interested in, e.g. search by Parish.
- For Dartmoor National Park Authority [click here](#).

Making your comment effective:

- Your comments will hold more weight if you provide evidence and if your comments take account of national and local planning policy.
- Search for the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) 2019, see p5-7 re 'Sustainable Development' & paras 170-177 for wildlife policies.
- Click [here](#) for Teignbridge.
- Click [here](#) for Dartmoor.
- See Teignbridge Local Plan 2033 (LP) via the link above, for policies for wildlife, for Green Infrastructure and for Countryside/wildlife.
- These NPPF & LP Policies and LP Text, set out how far TDC is expected, and allowed, to go in protecting wildlife, etc. It may not be as far as you would like! Local Plans are expected to balance the 'Constraints' such as wildlife, against the need for the development (e.g. places for people to live). Sometimes the need is deemed to outweigh the constraints.

There are similar policies in the [DNPA Local Plan](#)

National and local policies change from time to time:

- Govt has promised a big shake up of the planning system soon. Some changes were made recently (February 2023). Look out for public consultations and send in your views!

It helps to know the law too! Rather dry reading, but check out:

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
- NERC Act Section 40-41
- Badgers Act
- Hedgerow Regulations.

Explore the [TDC Planning Biodiversity and Development](#) pages for more info to help you get to grips with wildlife planning issues.

Housing numbers:

Central Government tells local councils how many houses they should 'deliver' per year – though this has recently been freed-up a little (Feb 2023). As the actual delivery is up to developers, the Council has to have a '5-year housing supply' of planning permissions and hope that developers choose to build the number dictated by Government each year.

How Planning Applications are assessed:

- Each planning application will be assessed by a Planning Case Officer, who collects all the relevant information, including comments from consultees (for biodiversity, this includes the TDC / DNPA Biodiversity Officers, Natural England, Environment Agency, RSPB, etc...), and the public.
- TDC and DNPA review the information considering national and local policies and present this in a report, recommending refusal or approval with conditions.
- Smaller and less controversial applications are usually decided by planning staff.
- Larger and controversial applications are usually decided by the Planning Committee.
- The local District Councillor and the Parish/Town Council can ask for applications to be decided by the Committee.

Refusals:

If planning permission is refused, the applicant has the right to appeal against the refusal: refused applications may be granted permission by the Appeal Inspector. Appeals can be very expensive for the Council.

In the Plan, the Council/DNPA label land for development. Developers buy the land, but they will only build on it when the housing and industrial markets are profitable - so quite a lot of development land can be waiting, unused, for the economic conditions that will generate the most profit. This can result in the Council being challenged by the Government for not building enough houses.

None of us will ever feel completely happy with a Local Plan, because even with 'mitigation', development damages wildlife, changes landscapes and uses up precious resources. But having a Plan is better than not having a Plan - and fighting even more damaging piece-meal applications.



Neighbourhood Plans:

[Neighbourhood Plans](#) give communities the power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood & shape the development & growth of their local area. They are able to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built, have their say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided, and grant planning permission for the new buildings they want to see go ahead.

Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to plan for the types of development to meet their community's needs and where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area.

Tasks: Does your Parish have a Neighbourhood Plan? Look on your Parish website for information.

Look on the Local Plan (TDC OR DNPA) for any pieces of land in your Parish selected for development.

How can your input be useful?

- Make sure the Local Planning Authority knows about any protected wildlife and habitats that might be affected by a proposed development. TDC has maps of Devon's wildlife sites, including SSSIs and County Wildlife Sites, and of some locations for rare and protected species, but there are many habitats and species they do not know about. They will not always know about how a development might affect nearby wildlife. The [National Biodiversity Network Atlas](#) is a freely available source of species data and the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre may have useful information too.

Protective measures and mitigation:

- Suggest protective measures that will be needed if the development goes ahead, and appropriate wildlife enhancement.
- Remember, the role of the LPA is to 'enable appropriate development,' not to stop development. So even if you are Objecting because you want to see a development stopped, it is useful to suggest avoidance, mitigation, compensation, and enhancement measures, because permission may be granted, despite objections, or permission may be given at appeal.

The Weekly List:

- Town/Parish Councils get sent a weekly list of all the applications in their area and can comment on them.
- If you work with your Parish/Town Council, you might be able to be involved in commenting on applications through them, e.g. as a co-opted member of their local planning committee.
- There is a [Planning Tool](#) on the ACT website to help you find out about local developments.

Checking developments as they are being built:

- It is important to check up on developments as they are being built.
- Please report any suspected infringements of conditions to the ACT Wildlife Warden Coordinator so we can report them to the Local Planning Authorities, which do not have enough staff to keep checking.
- You can also report any development you see happening that you think has not got the planning permission it needs. Again, please contact the Wildlife Warden Coordinator first.

[RSPB Local Planning Pack](#) This is new and useful!

[Devon Wildlife Trust Planning Guide](#) This document has very important and interesting information about protected habitats and protected species.

Here is a useful extract:

Wildlife, biodiversity, and ecological importance

Many people's understanding of wildlife/planning issues is blurred by the terminology used. Most of the enquiries we receive are concerned with 'wildlife'. The planning system, however, is concerned with the wider issue of '**biodiversity**'.

'Biodiversity' (biological diversity) is the all-encompassing term for the world of wildlife, ecology, nature conservation, habitats and species, designated sites, wildlife corridors and ecological networks.

When decisions on planning applications are being made, it is the proposed development's effects on 'biodiversity' which are considered, not simply 'wildlife'.

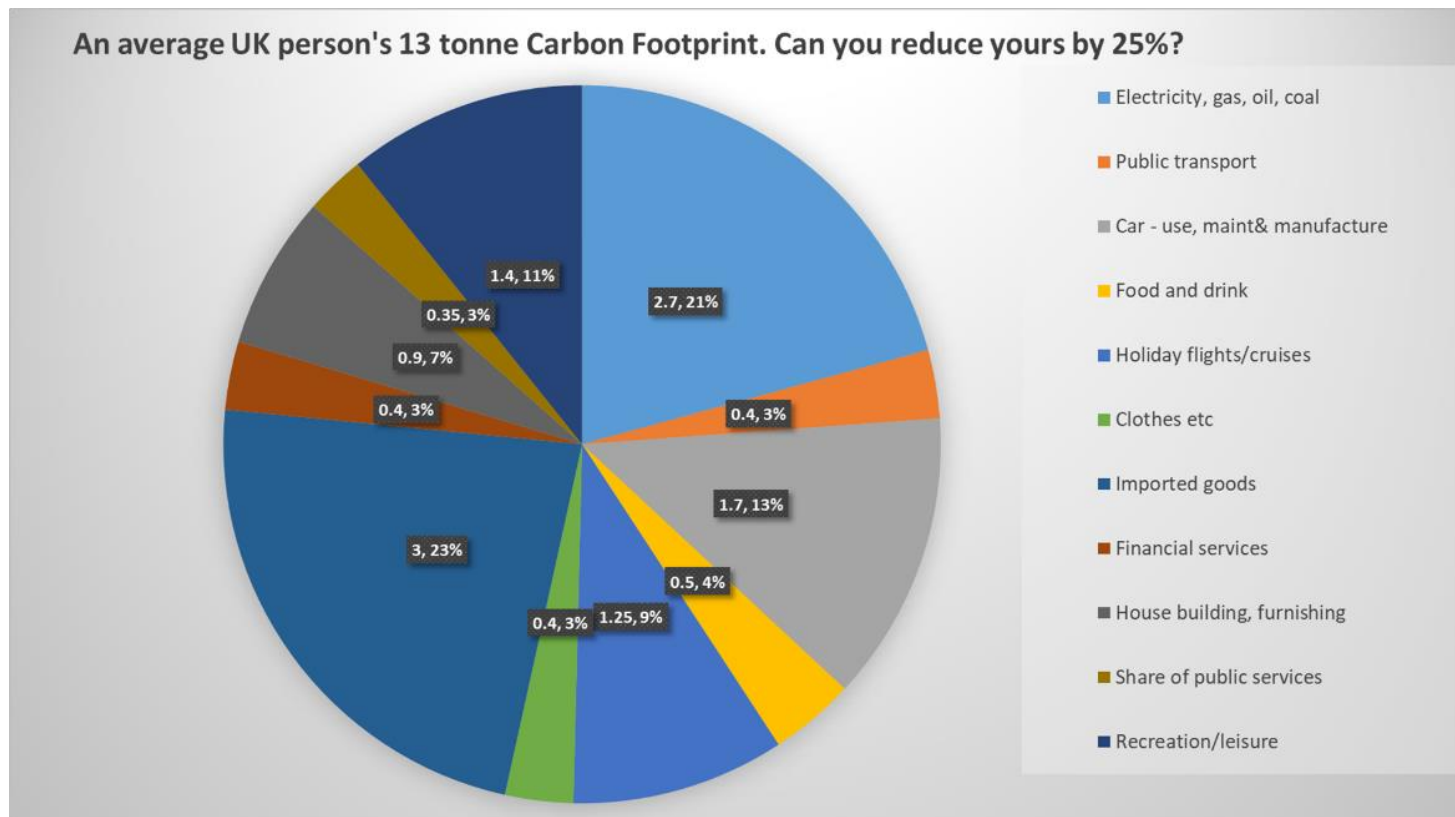
Planning applications for larger developments are usually accompanied by Ecology Appraisal Reports written by professional ecologists. These ecologists recognise some aspects of biodiversity as being more important, in ecological terms, than others. For instance, some designated sites, habitats, and species are rarer or more threatened and therefore carry more weight (in biodiversity terms) when the local authority deliberates the pros and cons of the development proposal.

By contrast, common species, such as rabbits, foxes and grey squirrels are not regarded as ecologically important. Similarly, the fields used for the growing of vegetables and the fields of rye grass used for cattle, sheep, and horses or as sports and recreation grounds, may not be ecologically important. They carry little weight (in terms of biodiversity). The hedgerows around these fields, however, may be of ecological importance.

Task: Familiarise yourself with the TDC and DNPA planning websites and if possible, find an application for a house to be built in your Parish within the last few years, and follow its progress, using the website. Note any wildlife issues, surveys, mitigation.

5. Looking after wildlife by changing how we live:

Whatever we do locally as Wildlife Wardens, we also need to live sustainably. Climate Change, Habitat Loss & Pollution are the greatest threats to our planet and its wildlife. Start with calculating your carbon footprint - **the World Average Footprint is 4 tonnes/person: in Africa 0.5 tonnes, in the UK 13 tonnes!**



Follow the chart clockwise from 12 o'clock - with "Electricity" first at 2.7 tonnes and 21%

To find out more about your footprint:

If you have details of your energy use and car use, try the [ACT Carbon Calculator](#) which is very accurate.

If finding those quantities is difficult, try the [WWF Carbon Footprint calculator](#) – not nearly as accurate, but still helpful.

Both of these will give you an idea of how big your footprint is and which areas you might want to reduce.

Here are some general ideas:

- **Waste nothing!** Refuse to be influenced by adverts - instead borrow, swap, upcycle and recycle.
- **Avoid synthetic** clothes and home furnishings - polyester, acrylic, lycra, and nylon are all plastics and shed micro-plastics, that pollute our world.
- **Reduce your transport footprint** by walking and cycling **more** - and **driving and flying** less.
- **Reduce your central heating** temperature, only heat rooms you are using - and wear more clothes!
- **Check your insulation and draught-proofing** and improve the bad areas.
- **Check** your garden shed for pollutants and pesticides. Chemicals such as weed killers, pesticides, white spirits, bleaches, old medicines and toxic household chemicals must be in a securely labelled container and taken to your local [recycling centre](#). There is often a limit of 5 litres. (Information taken from [DCC website](#))
- **Look** around your home and stop buying any polluting or damaging products, such as:
 - Detergents, shampoos, cleaning products that **are not eco-products** - they are killing and poisoning our soils, streams, rivers, and seas.
 - Any products that include rain-forest destroyers - such as palm oil, soya, cheap beef (from the UK and imported), uncertified furniture, uncertified coffee, uncertified cocoa, coconut, avocados, and gold (yes, honestly!).
 - Instead look out for Fairtrade, Organic, Rainforest Alliance, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), RSPO (Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil) products.



- **Reduce your Food Footprint** by:
 - buying local/seasonal food.
 - deciding which foreign 'luxuries' you feel you can buy - and which you will reduce or stop.
 - look for a local Zero Waste outlet so you can minimise packaging and plastics (currently in Newton Abbot market, Moretonhampstead, Bovey Tracey and Chudleigh's Thursday Market.
 - grow your own if you can - then swap and barter with friends!
 - preserve fruit and vegetables for the winter.

6. Working with schools and young people:

Outside of school, parents and Wildlife Wardens could get together and start a Watch-type nature club - see [Wildlife Watch](#).

If you have contact with local schools, you may be able to help with forest school, or nature study activities. When working with children, teaching staff or the child's parent/carer MUST always be present, to avoid any child safety issues.

Schools can be Wildlife Wardens too!

Our wildlife needs help - and most school children understand that! We think that many schools may want to become a Wildlife Warden School too.



Schools may be able to help with some of their local Wildlife Wardens' projects, as well as some extra ones - they can choose some of the following:

- send us lists of wildlife you have seen in the school grounds, or on your walk to school.
 - see if they can create some new habitats - log piles, rock piles, wildflower areas, shrubs, and hedges.
 - find out how the best wildlife habitats can be joined up to let wildlife move around safely when they are looking for food and shelter.
 - look at old maps online to see where good habitats, such as hedges, orchards and woods once were - so we can understand why they have gone.
 - ask parents, grandparents, and older members of the community for their memories of how wildlife used to be in the area - so we can understand how quickly we have forgotten how much wildlife there was 60 years ago.
 - tell us which trees, shrubs and flowering plants in their school grounds insects and other wildlife like best.
 - go for nature walks and look for good wildlife habitats.
 - find out whether there is a special species in their Parish that they could find out about and champion?
- scan and send us pictures and maps showing the best habitats in your Parish.
 - write letters to their local farmers, asking them to let their hedges grow bigger - and explaining how that would help wildlife.
 - make posters to put up in their village or town, with their ideas for making gardens better for wildlife.
 - each school term put a report in their Parish Magazine with ideas for everyone to share (and send a copy to us!).

7. Wildlife Gardening:

Giving advice and getting people involved as a community. There is plenty of information about wildlife gardening available, but we need to find ways to make it of community interest.

Useful links:

[The Wildlife Trusts – Wildlife Gardening](#)

[Wildlife Garden Project](#)

[RHS Wildlife Gardening Advice](#)

[Devon Wildlife Trust – Wildlife in your garden](#)

[Devon Wildlife Trust – Actions for your garden](#)

Here are some ideas you can add to:

- Providing small signs that people can put on a garden gate, in a lawn or flowerbed, to recognise a wildlife friendly front garden, to show that it is managed with wildlife in mind.
- Having a Parish competition for the best wildlife-friendly gardens - with classes for small, medium, and large gardens, best pond, best child's bug hotel etc
- Making sure there are classes for organically grown vegetables, fruit and flowers if your Parish has a Garden Produce Show (or set up a little one in the Village Hall).
- Getting people to sign up to a Parish Garden Pledge or to receive a DWT [Wildlife Gardening Award](#) (not using pesticides, making spaces for wildlife, growing flowers that are good for pollinators etc).
- Making and delivering wildlife gardening fliers to new homes, telling them about your local wildlife and how to make a space for it.
- Starting a Parish Community Garden using spare allotments or a borrowed piece of land. There will be more information on the ACT Wildlife Warden website if you are interested.

Task: Share with us any ideas that you have!

8. Finding Funding:

Most projects need very little actual funding - putting out a request for paper, flowerpots, compost, people who will grow seedling trees etc. on the village Facebook page can motivate local people to help you **and** do similar things themselves!

Projects such as hedge planting and turning grassy corners into wildflower meadows may need some money (though always ask around for free local seeds - for example, I (Audrey) let people come to Deer Park Farm and gather free meadow seeds for meadow projects every year). If you need external funding, work out exactly what you need to buy and how much it will cost before asking for a grant.

Many potential funders will only fund properly constituted organisations that have a bank account. If possible, work with your local Parish Council, as they may either have some funds available, or they may help you to apply for funding from your local District or County Councillors. Teignbridge District Councillors each have a small fund for local projects and County Councillors have a bigger fund (their Locality Fund). You may be able to use your local Parish Council's Bank Account if they support the project. If this is not possible, then ACT may be able to apply for funding, bank it, and be responsible for its proper spending and use – but we can only do that if you have a detailed plan and budget.



If you are part of a local wildlife group then it will probably be best for you to either work with your Parish Council, or, if you are a constituted body with a bank account and insurance, apply and be responsible for using the funding.

Please contact us (deerparkfarm@btinternet.com or vicky@actionclimateteignbridge.org) if you are thinking of applying for funding.

If you are doing a grant-aided project as a Wildlife Warden (or partly as a Wildlife Warden), then we need to work together. If the project isn't coordinated properly then our ACT insurance could be invalid, and the funding could be compromised. If you apply for the funding as an individual and the money goes to your bank account, then we cannot help in any way, and our organisation's name cannot be used.

Working closely together will mean that we are aware of all the different projects that are planned in the same area. A Parish Council or a District or County Councillor will probably not be able to fund several different Wildlife Warden projects at the same time. Planning together and prioritising will make us more likely to be successful in getting funding.

Here are some funding sources:

Your Parish Council:

Under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, Parish Councils have discretionary powers to award grants to local groups or organisations for the purposes of bringing a direct benefit to the parish or its residents. To be considered for an award, applicants should apply for a grant with details of their project. You are most likely to be awarded funding for your project if you have already been keeping in close contact with them - for example:

- introducing yourself to the Council at an early stage (see Section 15 for information you can send to them).
- talking to their Environment Committee or nominated Councillor about your role and your ambitions.
- sending them monthly or 2-monthly reports about what you have been doing.
- working with other groups and individuals within your Parish, to show that there is widespread support for your project.

Teignbridge District Council: Information about [community funding](#)

Devon Wildlife Trust's Wilder Communities Team keep an up-to-date list of possible funding [here](#).

Funding for community and voluntary groups

There are grants and funding streams available for community and voluntary groups, such as:

Rural Aid:

- individuals and members of the public are not able to apply for Rural Aid funding; applications must be made through town and parish councils. For contact details for your town or parish council, please visit [town and parish councils](#)
- The Rural Aid grant is only available for the following parishes: Abbotskerswell, Ashcombe, Ashton, Bickington, Bishopsteignton, Bovey Tracey, Broadhempston, Chudleigh, Coffinswell, Denbury, Doddiscombsleigh, Dunchideock, Dunsford, Exminster, Hacombe, Hennock, Holcombe Burnell, Ide, Ideford, Ilsington, Ipplepen, Kenn, Kenton, Mamhead, Ogwell, Powderham, Shaldon, Shillingford, St George, Starcross, Stokeinteignhead, Tedburn St Mary, Teigngrace, Torbryan, Trusham, Whitestone, and Woodland. If your parish is not included in this list, you are not eligible for Rural Aid grant funding.

Teignbridge District Council Councillor's Community Funds:

- If you want to apply to the **Councillors' Community Fund**, please contact your local Councillor(s). Applications for the Councillor's Community Fund can be made through your [local councillor](#).
- The **Councillors' Community Fund** can only support one-off projects and cannot be used to replace any withdrawn public funding or provide/imply any ongoing support. Applications can only be received from not-for-profit groups and organisations **and not** individuals. Local Councillors have £1,000 each municipal year to spend on projects within their Wards. There is no lower limit. Projects costing more than £1,000 could be supported by other Councillors combining monies if they wanted to.



Devon County Councillor's [Locality Budgets](#):

- Each of our county councillors has a Locality Budget Fund that they can use to respond to urgent local needs in any financial period (April to March). **Note: Be aware that there may be a time-limit of the end of March** for using this grant; it may be a problem if it is applied for late in the financial year and then must be used within a few weeks.
- Councillors can, if they wish, make grants to support projects or activities that benefit the communities they represent.
- Locality Budget Funding adds value to projects that are beneficial to local communities and help meet the Council's strategic objectives as described in the Council's Strategic plan.
- Any properly constituted not-for-private-profit voluntary or community group (including town and parish councils) can apply to their local county councillor for a grant from the locality budget fund.
- You can find details of the grants which councillors have already made from their locality budget fund by viewing their [individual profile pages](#).
- To discuss a locality budget fund application, you should contact your [local county councillor](#) in the first instance. You can view a [map](#) of each of the Council's electoral divisions to help you to identify your local councillor. Use the link above to find the application form and further details.

Teignbridge Community and Voluntary Services: For further advice and guidance around fundraising for voluntary groups, please contact [Teignbridge Community and Voluntary Services](#). They may have information about small local Trusts and Funds which could help you. But please keep in touch with us too!



Have a great time being a Wildlife Warden and send us a few sentences about what you've been doing every few months.

We would also like you to share these reports with your Parish Council, so that you can enlist their help and support.

We always appreciate feedback about our training and organisation, so that we can make it as good as possible – do keep in touch!

Thank you to Bridford WW Lucy for allowing us to use her beautiful wildlife illustrations.

The ACT Wildlife Warden Scheme is supported by Teignbridge District Council, Devon Wildlife Trust, the Devon Biodiversity Record Centre, the Devon Local Nature Partnership and the Woodland Trust.

We have been given funding and support by Awards for All National Lottery Community Funds, the Devon Environment Foundation, Teign Energy Communities (TECS) Community Fund, Dartmoor National Park Authority, the Nineveh Trust and many of our TDC Councillors and many of our Devon County Council Councillors through their Locality Funds. There have also been numerous individual and private donations. We extend our thanks to them all for this vital help.



[ACTion on Climate in Teignbridge](#) Audrey Compton, Lead for Ecology and the Wildlife Warden Scheme.

ACT supports Teignbridge District Council, town and parish councils, community groups and residents to make the district carbon neutral, sustainable, resilient and healthy.

ACTion on Climate in Teignbridge is a CIC registered in England, number 12278894. Its registered office is Wessenden, Thornley Drive, Teignmouth TQ14 9JH.

Appendix 1: Guidance for Wildlife Wardens working safely with Umbellifers and other hazardous plants

The Apiaceae plant family, also known as umbellifers, can be easily recognised when they are in flower by their distinctive umbrella-shaped flower clusters – think cow parsley! This family includes many of our common native plants, often seen in hedgerows, woods, fields, and along roadsides, paths, and waterways. Some of these plants are incredibly useful, like carrots, while others are highly toxic, such as hemlock. While most people can identify cow parsley and hogweed, there are many more to watch out for!

Audrey and Vicky have spent a long time trying to find up-to-date information and research about these plants. It has been really difficult, with differing opinions and big gaps in knowledge about them. We've done our best, but please be aware your own personal experience may be different. As we learn more, we will update you in the WW newsletter. Please let us know of any of your own observations.

Our guidance reflects the significant risks posed by certain umbellifers, whose sap can cause burns, scarring, and photosensitisationⁱ upon skin contact. These plants are often tall and, after strong winds or rain, may lean or fall over paths. If bent or broken, they can leak sap onto passers-by - a particular risk to children and some dogs.

Before any planned activity or task, please conduct a quick survey to check for the presence of hogweed, hemlock, hemlock water-dropwort, or giant hogweed. If any of these plants are identified, please do not carry out the work as a Wildlife Warden unless you have attended our Umbel Training, where you will learn about the very limited circumstances under which we can support such activities.

Cutting or handling this type of vegetation requires a very high level of personal protection — including **full face and skin coverage** — which is essential to keep health risks within acceptable limits. Additionally, there is a **significant concern that cut plant material may pose a hazard to the public** if not properly managed.

If a Council or landowner requests this type of work, kindly inform them that it isn't safe and explain the risks and potential consequences.

Look at the pictures and video links to help you to ID these plants. Lots of these plants look very similar so it is important you know what to look for and, if in doubt, double check with us or just steer clear! (Note: the videos have not been created by us, and we always recommend using several methods of identification if you are unsure).





**Hemlock Water-Dropwort
(*Oenanthe crocata*)**

A common plant in wet, marshy areas. All parts - but especially the roots - contain a potent neurotoxin called oenanthotoxin that can cause convulsions and death. It remains toxic when dried, and its sap can cause phytophotodermatitis.

Useful ID video: [How to Identify Hemlock Water Dropwort](#)



Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*)

Less common but can be locally abundant along hedgerows and in undisturbed fields. All parts of the plant contain coniine which can be fatal even in small amounts. Poisoning may occur through ingestion, skin contact, or inhalation of airborne particles. The sap can also cause photosensitivity.

Useful ID video:
[How to Identify Hemlock](#)



Hogweed
(*Heracleum sphondylium*)

The sap of this very common plant can cause serious phytophotodermatitis after contact with the skin and exposure to UV light. This can lead to redness, blistering, and scarring. Healing can take a long time, and prolonged photosensitisation of the area and recurrence can be a significant problem.



[Woodland Trust factsheet](#) with ID pointers

[Useful ID video](#) –
but stop it to look, otherwise the words are
hiding the plant!

Giant Hogweed
(*Heracleum mantegazzianum*)

This plant is very rare in Teignbridge, but can cause *extremely* serious burns, so should always be looked out for. Giant Hogweed grows much taller than Hogweed - but remember, even Hogweed can grow to over 2 metres (6' 6")!

Cow parsley and its look-alike cousins - some or all of these can also cause photosensitivity; if in doubt, use protective clothing.
Spurges (for example Dog's mercury, wood spurge) - some people are sensitive to sap from spurges, again, use protective clothing.

We know that as an individual (**not** as a Wildlife Warden) you may choose to work with these plants, and you may even have them in your garden!

If you do here are some key points to think about when working with them:

- **Work should never be done in hot, sunny weather! Even when it is cloudy, UV levels can still be high, and burns can occur.** Limit working with these plants to very early morning or later in the evening when UV levels are lowest.
- Wear suitable protective clothing which should include face, neck, eye protection, thick gloves and a hat. Use synthetic, water resistant clothing as sap can seep through cotton and linen fibres.
- Have a container nearby with water, sponge, soap and eye wash kit available in case of any sap splashing.
- Sap can remain active on clothing and equipment for many hours after work has finished. Take care when removing clothing and wash thoroughly. Wash all equipment used carefully.
- Power tools should be avoided at all costs as this results in an airborne spray of pulverised plant material which is very hazardous.
- If skin does contact sap, wash carefully with soap and water as soon as possible. Keep the area covered from sunlight (even dull overcast days) for at least 48hrs and seek medical advice if concerned. Use suncream for months afterwards.



¹ Photosensitisation occurs when chemicals in certain plant sap make skin the extra sensitive to sunlight. If a person or animal gets plant sap on their skin which is then exposed to the UV in sunlight, these chemicals can cause a reaction that leads to redness, swelling, and even blistering, like a severe sunburn (phytophotodermatitis). This can lead to prolonged problems with skin healing, scarring and can reoccur.