

## Update from Tiggins Meadow June 2020.

A year ago saw us hold our first Open Weekend to which we were delighted to welcome around 100 people ! Beforehand I don't think we could have guessed just how much interest and enthusiasm would be brought to the event, never mind all the knowledge, skills and insights which people so generously shared that weekend and in the following months. It certainly helped us to feel that we have 'got something right'. We enjoyed welcoming people of all ages, some local, some from much further away, and many donated generously to our chosen charity ME Awareness - thank you !



Of course one of the highlights was the orchids which gave us a grand display and visitors that weekend also spotted two orchids new to us - the Bee orchid and the Southern Marsh orchid.



We are delighted to report that Bee orchids are in flower again this year.

August last year was the hottest we've recorded at the field with temperatures in the 30s. Not the easiest conditions to get the mowing done, so Peter was glad he no longer does it using a hand scythe ! We gather up the grass cuttings into piles in order to avoid building up fertility and to provide a habitat clearly enjoyed by lots of little creatures.



By the autumn our focus is on hedges - we are working to build up their thickness to provide improved habitat for birds, and also to keep the big deer out. We do some 'laying' but also weave in cut branches. This is also the time to enjoy harvesting blackberries and apples - visitors are welcome to help themselves !



We had planned to have a Christmas Day picnic at Tiggins Meadow but with a 3 week old grandson we decided perhaps staying at home by the wood burner was a pleasanter option. But the New Year saw us back on site with another big but enjoyable task - the willow harvest. We have 9 different varieties planted here, all with different purposes. We don't cut all of them, just the ones for weaving with. I use them for basket weaving and making fence panels. Please do ask if you are interested in making use of any of our harvested willow.

We are thrilled to find that the verge on Tiggins Lane beside Tiggins Meadow has been made into a Roadside Nature Reserve and the markers are now in place. Local resident Jeremy Bowdrey has kindly compiled a Species List for Tiggins Meadow which has been sent to the Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership Biological Records Office.



In March we put up a new barn owl box, inspired by the fact that our existing one has seen at least 11 chicks successfully reared over the last few years, and we understand barn owls like to stay in the area in which they have been raised.

Just before lockdown commenced we set up a 'trail camera' on site. Having never used one before we weren't sure what to expect but have been thrilled with some of the activity it has captured including a foraging badger, performing pheasants, a curious fox, hares, muntjac deer and rooks.

We planned to hold another Open Weekend in 2020 - who could have guessed that we would be halted in our tracks by a global pandemic? In the meantime though, we encourage local people to continue to enjoy Tiggins Meadow.

***Juliet Freeman & Peter Miller***