



TIGGINS MEADOW

DECEMBER 2021

Open Day | Swallows | Barn Building

Ants

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This year we noticed lots of anthills appearing all over the field which we believe is another indication of the increasing biodiversity since the cessation of ploughing. We are very ignorant of ant species and lifestyles so we have lots to learn. Happily there is plenty of information available, including on the National Trust website in an interesting article 'Discover the amazing anthills at Coombe Hill'. We think ours are yellow meadow ants as described in their article.

Stoats

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Another new observation this year has been what we are pretty sure are stoat bolt holes. Apparently they dig out an existing hole, perhaps made by voles or mice and what we've spotted is the dug out material. We've also got glimpses of what we think are stoats dashing into bramble thickets. We will use the trail camera to try to get evidence.

Our Website

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<http://wildabouttiggins.org>



Season's Greetings !

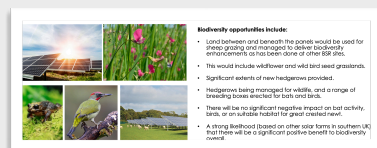
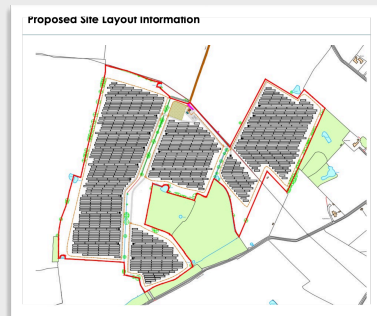
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With more Covid uncertainties to contend with this year we sincerely hope you've managed to stay healthy and found ways to appreciate the joys of our natural world - Tiggins Meadow has definitely helped us. We've been thrilled at how many other people have also come along to enjoy time here whether as day visitors popping in or campers coming to enjoy open air living - we've had some delicious campfire meals !



Solar Farm Plans

Earlier this year we heard that our neighbours at Town Farm are proposing to develop part of their acreage into a solar farm. They have chosen BSR Energy as their partners who have been consulting with local people prior to making a planning application. We were interested to read about 'biodiversity opportunities' in the plan and so we contacted Kelsale Parish Biodiversity Group to review and respond to BSR Energy together. This resulted in us travelling to the HQ of BSR Energy to meet with them followed by a site visit to Town Farm with all of us. We are keen to demonstrate that this type of joint working between contractor and local people really can work, feeding local knowledge and expertise into plans that ultimately will enhance the farmland biodiversity and local environment. We are optimistic that it will !



Willow Harvest

Our year started, as it does every January, with harvesting willow. We have several different types of willow growing, only some of which we harvest for weaving with. It's a tough, cold job to do, so much nicer to do with company - thanks to Lion for his enthusiasm and energy!



And then he used some of the willow to weave beautiful things !



Barn Building

We're very grateful for all the help we've had with building the barn this year, both from visitors and from two new regular helpers: Ameer put lots of energy and persistence into getting the shingles onto the roof:



Swallows

We were absolutely delighted to spot swallows swooping over the barn and coming down to collect mud from the new pond edge.



We will make sure we keep some of the pond edges clear of vegetation so hopefully the swallows will return. The pond was also well used by other birds - we saw green woodpeckers coming to bathe as well as lots of linnets who seem to like the smaller pools at the edge of the pond.

Bee orchids

Despite a cold, wet spring the orchids put on a good show this year. We found considerably more bee orchids this year, many appearing in completely new locations. It is fascinating to see how they are



More barn building



We've had regular help from Steve which has been really enjoyable and fruitful, often keeping us going when we might otherwise have given up ! He set a record for doing seven mixes of hempcrete in one day which was twice what we'd ever managed before !

We have a lot more still to do, but the barn is now fundamentally weathertight. We will only work on it intermittently during the winter as the weather allows. Charring of the

weatherboards is a major task, in addition to finishing the roof ridge, edges and guttering, laying the internal earth floor, installing the Hide Room window and shutters, plumbing in the rainwater filtering system, clay plastering and painting the internal walls...and no doubt much more! Luckily we really enjoy trying our hand at these sorts of tasks.

Open Day

We held this in June when the orchids were looking their best. We were very



lucky to have a gorgeous warm, sunny day for it. We really enjoyed showing people around, sharing our experiences and learning from people who came along with all sorts of knowledge and local information. Many thanks to Jenny for sharing her paper-making skills and her

friends who played some lovely live music. The youngsters enjoyed doing owl pellet dissection - it's always fascinating to observe the tiny little bones, ribs and skulls emerging !

Wishing you a relaxing & peaceful Christmas. We look forward to seeing you at Tiggins Meadow in 2022. Juliet & Peter.