

Wistow Hedgehog Project

A council project to encourage the protection of endangered wildlife

Adopted:

Review:

Hedgehogs in figures:

- Declining numbers: it is hard to estimate exact numbers of hedgehogs, in 2018 the Mammal Society estimated there to be 879,000, but there is wild uncertainty about this figure, and rural hedgehog populations have continued to decline by between a third and three quarters in the last two decades alone. The number of urban hedgehogs that live in peoples gardens and live on amenity land such as playing fields is a much more stable population and is estimated to be 200,000-250,000, but by every metric used (gamebag figures, ie the numbers accidentally killed by gamekeepers between 1995 and 2009, showed a decrease by 28%, road casualties of hedgehogs have declined by three quarters, and five studies by the hedgehog Preservation Society have seen annual losses of hedgehog numbers between 2.2 and 7.9 percent every year since 1981) there has been a steep decline in the population in the last 30 years.
- Habitat loss: hedgehogs prefer villages to open farmland, they are likely to follow field margins and hedgerows, hedgerows have declined by around 118,000 miles in the UK since the post-war intensification of farming and moving from pastoral farming to more intense arable use. This intensification has also introduced new chemicals that reduce the food sources for rural hedgehog populations.
The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, with 1-in-6 of its native species now threatened by extinction.

How households can help hedgehogs:

- Wildlife corridors:

- Help hedgehogs climb out of household ponds: While hedgehogs are great swimmers they struggle to climb out of smooth sided ponds if they fall in. An easy solution is if residents would be willing to put chicken wire on the sides of their ponds, to help hedgehogs climb out to safety.
- Adding hedgehog friendly features to their garden, these include wild areas, leaf and log piles ect.
- Remember to always turn over garden bonfires before lighting as these are perfect habitats for hedgehogs that love to climb in to hibernate over winter.
- Becoming hedgehog champions and contributing to the big hedgehog map at <https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/>

How the council can help hedgehogs:

- Help residents create hedgehog corridors through their fences
- Use our land to create habitats for hedgehogs and other mammals. Areas that could be utilised:
 - Jubilee Playing Field
 - The new cemetery Field
 - The Green
 - Gypsy Corner Woodland

Resources:

The British Hedgehog Preservation Society

<https://www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk/>

Peoples Trust for Endangered Species

<https://ptes.org/>

Our letter to residents:

Dear Resident,

We know that residents of Wistow feel strongly about protecting wildlife and supporting nature. We as your council care about this too, and we would like to help facilitate the protection of wildlife in the village.

One project that we wish to establish with the help of villagers is the creation of Hedgehog Highways.

The hedgehog is a well loved animal in the british countryside, unfortunately, this adorable mammal has seen a steep decline in population numbers in recent times.

Hedgehogs can travel up to 2km a night. So one of the main ways to support hedgehogs is to create safe passages through our gardens. If you have a wooden fence connecting yours and a neighbour's garden then you can make a small hole in the fence for hedgehogs to safely make their way through.

If this is something you are interested in, then volunteers from the council could help you install a hedgehog highway in your garden!

There are lots of amazing ways you can support hedgehogs and wildlife in your garden, you can find useful information and resources in our policy document.

Wistow Parish Council

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