



B-Line News Issue 1

A word from the Chair

Welcome to our first edition. We thought it was important to keep you in touch at this difficult time. Your help got us off to a good start, and we will be back as soon as it is safe. I hope you enjoy this newsletter.

The 'what you can do section' has some ways you can continue to help pollinators and other wildlife.

A final thought; please be less neat! Leave wild patches for the wildlife.

Tony Davy

STOP PRESS...

"Bergh Apton Conservation Trust was successful this week in reaching our fundraising target and we are now proceeding with the fantastic acquisition of a 12 acres extension to our nature reserve along the Chet Valley". Tony Davy

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Planting bluebells at Loddon Allotments

The CVB-L project is led by Bergh Apton Conservation Trust (BACT), but works closely with Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT), South Yare Wildlife Group (SWYG), Norfolk Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG). It is funded by the Water, Mills & Marshes Landscape Partnership Scheme administered by the Broads Authority and is supported by Buglife (National Invertebrate Conservation Trust), Norfolk Naturalists Trust, The Woodland Trust and is part of the RHS Its Your Neighbourhood scheme.

What we have achieved so far:

We have:

- ✓ Advised at 12 sites
- ✓ Helped with 9 planting schemes— from bluebells to flowering hedges
- ✓ Received the support of 7 parish councils, 1 surgery, 1 supermarket, 1 marina and 4 other local organisations.

Latest News

A big thanks to Chet Valley farmer Tony Kerry, who has planted just over an acre of pollinator friendly flowers on his farm. As with most of our projects this is entirely self-funded. The seeds have germinated, and we hope to have pictures when they are in flower.

Success for Hales and Heckingham Parish Council's campaign to persuade South Norfolk Council to stop spraying herbicide on Hales Green (common land). This year saw a large patch of Cuckoo Flowers appear. See right. ➡

We also managed to plant our first pollinator square at the Millennium Gardens, Chedgrave before lockdown. Thank you to the Residents Association for keeping this watered in the dry weather. The first plants are in flower.



UN World Bee Day is the 20th June 2020. This is to raise awareness of the importance of pollinators, the threats they face and their contribution to sustainable development.

Our aim is to create an enhanced habitat corridor along the Chet Valley to boost pollinator numbers by increasing flower rich habitat.

- ✓ Working alongside FWAG with farmers and landowners
- ✓ Advising public bodies managing land on planting plans and grass cutting practice
- ✓ Encouraging wildlife gardening by the public

What you can do to help

- ✓ Avoid harmful pesticides
- ✓ Plant pollinator friendly flowers
- ✓ Provide a home - a patch of long grass and a source of fresh water

There are lots of websites giving advice on how to help our wildlife including pollinators. See links below.

Plantlife are currently promoting No Mow May and related activities, including some simple citizen science at [Every Flower Counts](#).

Some other useful links are:

[Buglife](#) more info and citizen science projects. You can see Chet Valley B-Line projects on their [B-Lines map](#).

[South Yare Wildlife Group](#) go to the Wildpatch page for lots of ideas.

[Norfolk Wildlife Trust](#) news and updates on Norfolk's wildlife.

[RHS Wild About Gardens](#) for reliable garden plant advice

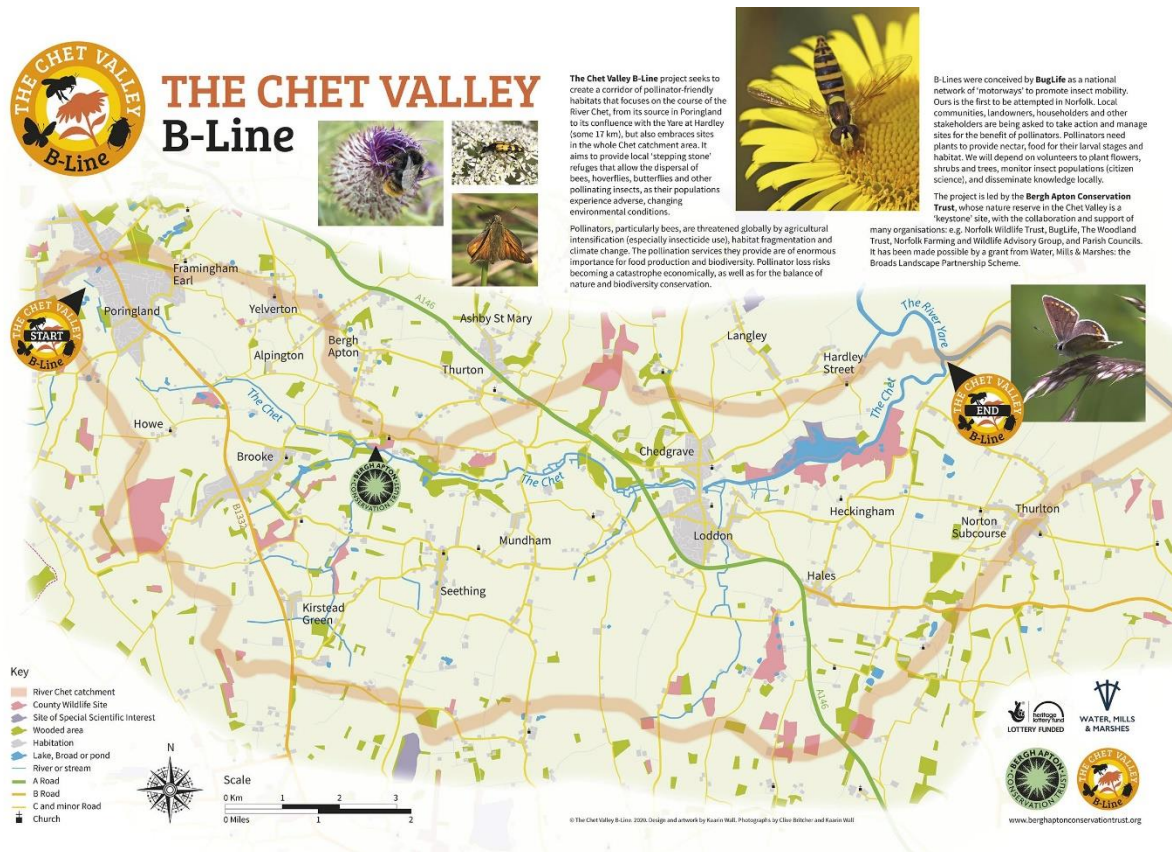
You can also follow Chet Valley B-Line on [Facebook](#) 

The Pollinator Squares list is our guide to perennials suitable for most gardens. We have a wider list called Plants for Pollinators including wildflowers, shrubs and trees. Please email us at chetvalleybline@gmail.com if you would like a copy.

'On The Verge of Success'

Rodney attended this conference in Ipswich (29th Feb 2020,) which was about improving roadside verges for wildflowers and wildlife. He was concerned to find that Norfolk was at the back of the class, not only beaten by Lincolnshire, who have found a way to pay for verge cutting by collecting and selling the cuttings for biomass, but worse also by Suffolk, who have 10 times more roadside nature reserves. Collecting the cuttings reduces fertility over time, which reduces the frequency sites need to be cut and provides the ideal poor soils for wildflowers. Win, win.

Loddon PC and Chedgrave PC have both agreed to leave 2m grass margins to be cut once a year in late autumn at the Hockey Field and Hardley Road Allotments, respectively.



Visit to Old Hall Farm, Woodton

Back in February Members of the B-Line Management Group met farmer Rebecca Mayhew and she told us about their approach to 're-generative' farming as we enjoyed breakfast in their farm café. The land has belonged to the family since the 1940s, but Rebecca and husband Stuart began to change the way they farm in earnest two years ago and were convinced to adopt this approach after watching their top soil blow away; a poor experience pig breeding for a large company and a general concern that agriculture was being driven in the wrong direction. Stuart and Rebecca are convinced that this approach will not only be sustainable but also eventually increase productivity.

Re-generative farming is a step beyond organic and is defined as a conservation and rehabilitation approach to food and farming systems. It focuses on topsoil regeneration, increasing biodiversity, improving the water cycle, enhancing ecosystem services, supporting bio sequestration, increasing resilience to climate change, and strengthening the health and vitality of farm soil.

They have a mixed farm of 500 acres and are in the Higher Level Countryside Stewardship scheme. They have 150 native breed cows plus pigs and chickens. They use Jersey cows for milking and calves can remain with their mothers and wean naturally rather than be removed early to improve milk yields. They have planted 7.5 acres of vines and hope to introduce beehives shortly. They sell raw milk and the meat in their Farm Shop attached to the Café.

They still have 100 acres of arable which they crop 50:50 alternate years with no ploughing or pesticides and underplanting with traditional meadow plants. Not ploughing reduces soil

loss and they expect the water in their ditches to cease being muddy and run clear. A 1% increase in organic matter increases water absorbency by 8-10%.

Rebecca said that like all farmers they are in a risky business and worried that they won't get a good crop or the weather will be bad or prices for the crop will be low. This has led farmers to an over reliance on chemical companies who promise to reduce these risks, but she summed up their new approach as "questioning everything and not doing what it says on the packet".

There is more information on their website [Old Hall Farm](#)

"Water, Mills & Marshes and the National Lottery Heritage Fund are proud to support such an important project to help pollinators in the Broads. Every day we witness the impacts that climate change and other factors are having on our local insect populations, and we know that the Chet B-Line is an important step in protecting these environmentally and economically important creatures."

Andrew Farrell, Programme Manager, Water, Mills and Marshes: the Broads Landscape Partnership Scheme



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