



# B-Line News Issue 2



## A word from the Chair .....

Welcome to our second edition. It follows a difficult stop and start year for everyone, but things are at last beginning to look more hopeful. We were really pleased to keep going *and make real progress with the B-Line.*

We are now considering the best way to move forward, celebrate the B-Line's progress and, of course, the more than doubling in size of the Bergh Apton Nature Reserve with you, our supporters.

Tony Davy

## STOP PRESS...

**No Mow May** is underway please join in, for more information see Plantlife's launch video:

<https://youtu.be/G-XB8xhnoSw?t=4>

CVBL is to become a **Planning Consultee** in the Chet B-Line area at the invitation of South Norfolk Council. See vacancy info.

**Loddon event: Lockdown Unlocked.** Let us know if you are available to help over the weekend of **3-4 July**. We hope to have a display and take the famous lawnmower game!

### In this issue:

A word from the Chair

Our achievements so far

Latest news

Working in Partnership

What you can do

Vacancies



Day 2 hedge planting volunteers at Bergh Apton 20<sup>th</sup> Dec

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), Norwich and Norfolk Naturalists' Society, The Woodland Trust and is part of the RHS Its Your Neighbourhood scheme.

### So far, we have:

- ✓ Advised 25+ landowners large and small and were particularly pleased that all 3 surgeries along the B-Line have given their support and now have wild areas.
- ✓ Recorded 56 sites on the national B-Line map (the highest of any group), put up 38 roundels and four interpretation map boards.
- ✓ Planted: 1375 hedging plants, 500 bluebell bulbs, an acre of pollinator friendly wildflowers. Distributed over 1 kg of seed.
- ✓ Volunteers provided at least 250 hours of their time to achieve this.

The biggest success of 2020 was Bergh Apton Conservation Trust's purchase of 12 acres, more-than-doubling the size of the nature reserve, which now has land on both sides of the Chet. This will be an invaluable, permanent asset for local wildlife and is a keystone site for CVBL. You are very welcome to visit, but if you can't then you can see the existing site on this [BACT video](#)



### National B-Line Launch

The charity Buglife launched the national B-Line network on 23<sup>rd</sup> March this year after having completed mapping the whole UK. This was a really important step forward, so we decided to announce our presence and give the press a local angle to this national story. Jamie Robins (Buglife Project Lead) and local boys Tony Davy and Andrew Milner were interviewed by Natalie Gray, ITV News.

You can see the interview on our Facebook page.

## Latest News



**Wildflower Seed** – We successfully distributed 200+ packets of Cornfield Annuals, each sufficient for 2 m<sup>2</sup>. A **big thank you** to Loddon Garden and DIY and Aldis and Sons Farm Shop for helping with the distribution also to those who packed the seed and delivered the packets. This was so successful it really stretched our resources, but we met a lot of nice people and generated two larger schemes. 120 m<sup>2</sup> site at Halsbury Homes and 50 m<sup>2</sup> site in the Pits Play Area, Chedgrave. **Thanks to Halsbury and Chedgrave PC for agreeing.** Fingers crossed the pigeons didn't eat all the seed in the dry spell. Picture: Carol sowing seed at Halsbury Homes.

**Poringland News:** Rodney reports that Poringland PC now own the community land site (13 acres) plus a further 10 acres adjacent to it. CVBL had been invited to advise on creating habitat and our partners the Norfolk Wildlife Trust will be visiting on 24th May. The formation of a local SYWG group to help with the site's management is being considered. The Budgens' planter has now been filled with pollinator friendly plants, funded by SYWG. An A2 sized version of the Interpretation Map is being displayed on the planter's side in this very busy site.

**Loddon and Chedgrave to the Yare:** Andrew reports that the Hardley Mill Trust have been advised on a planting plan to boost pollinators and an Interpretation Board, the fifth, will shortly be installed at the mouth of the Chet moorings funded by the Broads Authority. A working party has weeded the beds at Loddon Surgery; new plants had been added to the Millennium Gardens, Chedgrave; work and replacement plants are needed at Loddon Staithe and Church Close Green, Chedgrave. A survey and recommendations on Loddon PC's land has been prepared at their request. The hedges planted in both Loddon and Chedgrave are doing well. Some bulb planting schemes have been slow to get going, possibly due to the weather. Sadly a site identified as rich in insect habitat has been lost to housing development. The paucity of the [Biodiversity Net Gain](#) plan prompted CVBL to comment on the BNG provisions in the Greater Norwich Local Plan. Special thanks to Carol and all our volunteers for helping with all this activity.

**Bergh Apton:** Tony and Bob report that work is progressing to open up the new 12 acres of the nature reserve by bridging the Chet to create public access from the existing reserve. Bergh Apton Parish Council have generously agreed to pay for one bridge. Possibilities for funding a second bridge are being explored to provide a circular walk. Managing the reserve was already a big task before it doubled in size so if you would like to help with the conservation work please get in touch.

We also successfully planted 250m of new pollinator\* hedge over a weekend with the help of Bergh Apton Conservation Trust, CVBL, and South Yare Wildlife Group volunteers. Thank you very much to all those who took part - 25 volunteers of all ages - and to Tony Kerry, the local farmer who kindly cleared the sod and an old rabbit fence to make the planting easier. We might still be there otherwise. Hedge and volunteers are doing well!



The new hedge at Bergh Apton to infinity and beyond...

Three potential hedge planting sites have been identified for this winter. Two in Bergh Apton and one in Loddon. Fingers crossed.

\*The Woodland Trust have designed a special mix of pollinator friendly hedging plants. [Pollinator Tree Mix](#)

**Hales and Heckingham Parish Council** have been truly leading the way and not just in their own patch. We helped survey some areas they thought could be improved but discussions they initiated with Saffron Housing Association will shortly result in changes to grass cutting practice on 19 suitable sites along the length of the CVBL (more on this later). The changes will be followed by shrub and bulb planting schemes around the village sign. But what they would really, really like to see is Norfolk County Council step up to the plate and improve the new verges and roundabout by planting wildflowers. Maybe after the County Council elections there will be some new councillors and new ideas?

We were really pleased to see the kilometres of new mixed hedge planted by farmer Peter Cargill, continuing his family tradition. This will be a boon for lots of wildlife. We have sent our thanks.

## Working in Partnership

It was always our plan to work with and influence the policy and activities of public bodies to improve their approach to pollinators and other wildlife. Now this has really born fruit or at least flowers! The generous support we have received takes our breath away.

**South Norfolk Council:** We surveyed seven areas of land they owned in Loddon and as a result they are implementing a new grass cutting approach. They will continue to cut all sites at least around the edges but will leave some areas uncut until the end of the season. At the end of the season the cuttings will be removed from site. This will slowly reduce the fertility of the soil which encourages more wildflowers in the coming years. Special thanks to **Helen Sibley** and to our District Councillors **Kay Mason Billig and Jeremy Rowe** for their unstinting support.

**Saffron Housing Association:** Thanks to an initiative led by Hales and Heckingham Parish Council Saffron HA have identified 19 sites in parishes along the whole length of the B-Line where they can adopt the same approach as SNC. A huge thank you to **Paul Bunce** and the directors of the Housing Association.

We are keen that neither of the above are seen as cutbacks. They are a rational response to help halt the decline in pollinators and provide them with a much needed boost.

**The Environment Agency:** A meeting took place in November between the Environment Agency and CVBL in partnership with the Broads Authority (Water, Mills and Marshes), Buglife and the Norfolk Wildlife Trust. We had been pressing for a meeting since May following initial complaints to the EA by one of our supporters about the early cutting of Hardley Dyke and the Chet. This has much wider implications than the Chet itself as the Environment Agency manages some 240km of flood defence banks in the Broads area, including three national B-Lines along the Yare, the Bure and the Waveney.

Tony Davy, CVBL Chair, described it as “very constructive as a start to getting more ecologically sensitive management.” The four ‘clients’ were much in accord about what would be desirable. Our broad principles are:

- We are in support of pollinators in the Broads and the preservation of suitable habitat is key.
- We are also well aware of the importance of the flood defences and the need to monitor and maintain them throughout the year.

There are two specific areas we discussed to support pollinators:

- as late start as possible to grass cutting to extend the flowering period;
- the collection of cuttings for long term reduction in fertility which will increase wildflowers for pollinators and make the job easier.

There is still a long way to go and we recognise the complexities involved. We are hoping to meet again in May 2021. We are given hope by the partnership working between the Yorkshire EA and Buglife. Also given the work on [sea defences](#) by **Tim Gardiner EA Pollinator Ecologist**, which are similar in many ways to the Broads Flood Defences. In the meantime we and we hope you will continue to challenge the EA for more ecologically friendly management.

## In other news

**Dr Neil Strong, Biodiversity Strategy Manager at Network Rail** reported at the B-Line national launch that they are creating a one-mile section of B-Line just outside of Norwich. They have cleared and raked the site prior to sowing local seed. More details are thin at the moment, but many national B-Lines follow rivers as do railway lines and they want to expand the scheme. This project was chosen by their Accelerated Leaders Programme for future senior managers. We will report more information when we have it, but it was hoped this would be the model for more b-lines.

**Norwich now has a Bee Street** as reported in the Evening News. We have been in touch to say hello and will keep in touch. <https://www.eveningnews24.co.uk/news/rosebery-road-in-norwich-turned-into-bee-street-7870612>

**Rebecca Pow was appointed Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.** Her brief includes the national pollinator strategy so naturally we wrote to her asking for a few words of encouragement to include in this newsletter. Sadly, we didn't get a reply, though she did do an interview in the latest RHS Magazine. What have they got we haven't? We'll send her copy to show her what she missed!

**Vacancy: Are you keen to help our pollinators and have skills in giving planning advice or social media? Then we would like to hear from you. We think we need an extra person(s) on our management group. ... And we can't help but notice we are all male at the moment. Email us at [chetvalleyblineline@gmail.com](mailto:chetvalleyblineline@gmail.com)**

**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

We have revised our pollinator plant guides covering both wildflowers and non-wildflowers, shrubs and trees. These should hopefully be available to download from our website soon: [Bergh Apton Conservation Trust](#)

In the meantime, please email us at [chetvalleybline@gmail.com](mailto:chetvalleybline@gmail.com) if you would like a copy.

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](#).

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

[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](#)  or learn about us and lots of other interesting projects on <https://watermillsandmarshes.org.uk/chet-valley-b-line/>



# THE CHET VALLEY B-Line



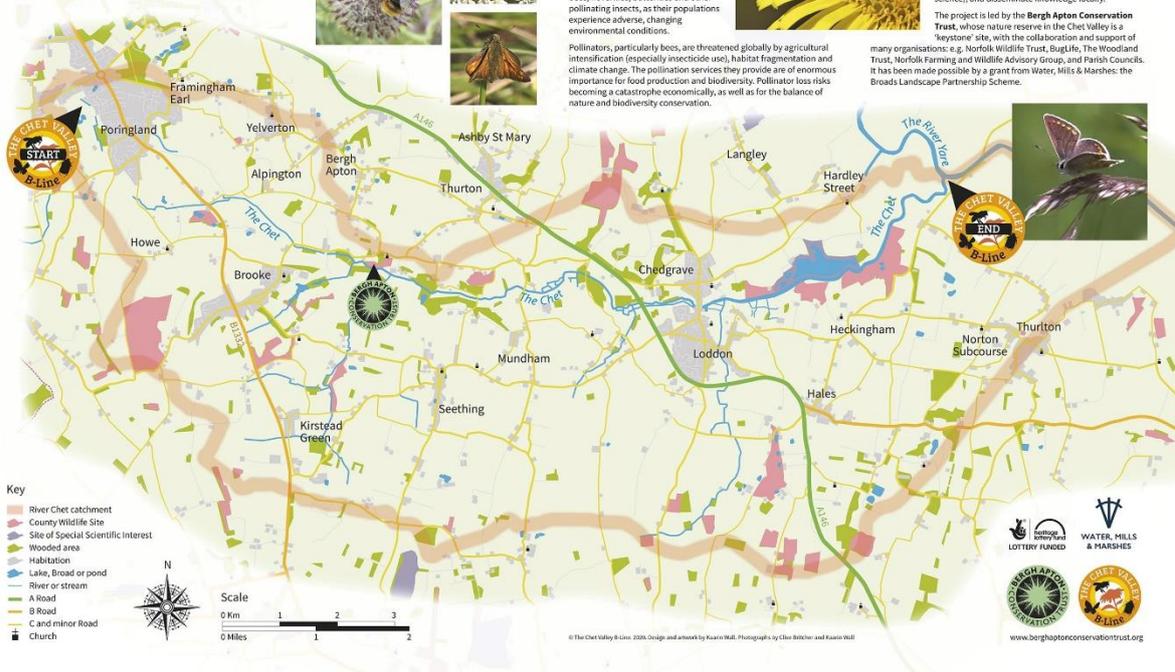
The Chet Valley B-Line project seeks to create a corridor of pollinator-friendly habitats that follows the course of the River Chet, from its source in Poringland to its confluence with the 'lure' at Hardley Street (some 17 km), but also embraces sites in the whole Chet catchment area. It aims to provide local 'stepping stone' refuges that allow the dispersal of bees, hoverflies, butterflies and other pollinating insects, as their populations experience adverse, changing environmental conditions.

Pollinators, particularly bees, are threatened globally by agricultural intensification (especially insecticide use), habitat fragmentation and climate change. The pollination services they provide are of enormous importance for food production and biodiversity. Pollinator loss risks becoming a catastrophe economically, as well as for the balance of nature and biodiversity conservation.



B-Lines were conceived by BugLife as a national network of 'motorways' to promote insect mobility. Ours is the first to be attempted in Norfolk. Local communities, landowners, householders and other stakeholders are being asked to take action and manage sites for the benefit of pollinators. Pollinators need plants to provide nectar, food for their larval stages and habitat. We will depend on volunteers to plant flowers, shrubs and trees, monitor insect populations (citizen science), and disseminate knowledge locally.

The project is led by the Bergh Apton Conservation Trust, whose nature reserve in the Chet Valley is a 'keystone' site, with the collaboration and support of many organisations: e.g. Norfolk Wildlife Trust, BugLife, The Woodland Trust, Norfolk Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, and Parish Councils. It has been made possible by a grant from Water, Mills & Marshes: the Broads Landscape Partnership Scheme.



*“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



Published by the B-Line Management Group: Prof Tony Davy (BACT Chair), Bob Kerry (BACT Treasurer), Matt Jones (NWT Living Landscapes Officer), Rodney Aldis (SWYG) and Andrew Milner