



Where are our local wildlife heroes?

The search is on for wildlife heroes working to make a difference for nature and people in local communities. The Community Biodiversity Awards are organised annually by the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership (NBP), a well-established partnership working to co-ordinate and share initiatives to conserve biodiversity across Norfolk.

Last year we made 12 awards for outstanding projects from across the county, such as the toadwatch patrollers from Cranwich who ensured that thousands of toads safely crossed the road to reach their spawning grounds; volunteer groups from Scarning, Southrepps Common, West Runton, Great Massingham, Hunstanton, Hethel Churchyard and Earlham Cemetery, three inspiring individuals: Martin George; Sean Locke and Richard Waddingham, and the Norfolk Bat Survey – an innovative countywide project.

Can you help find this year's winners?

We are looking for individuals, businesses, local groups and parish and town councils involved with action to improve the local environment for nature. In judging the awards, we look for evidence of biodiversity enhancement, as well as the degree of community involvement, and project long-term sustainability.

If you know of someone or a group who you feel fits the bill (or you would like to enter directly yourself), please nominate them using our special form which can be downloaded from the NBP website (nominations should be made with the knowledge and consent of the project/individual).

<http://www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/communityprojects/biodiversityawards.aspx>

Nominations close on Friday 22nd May 2015. Winners and their guests are entertained at our summer Awards ceremony which takes place in July in Norwich. All winners are presented with a framed certificate to record their achievement.

Awards will be presented across five themed categories:

1. Parish and Town Councils (recognising councils whose direct activities have led to improvements in local biodiversity)
2. Inspiring Others (recognising those who have gone the 'extra mile' to bring about a wider appreciation of biodiversity)
3. Best Group (recognising efforts to create or organise the best project or site for biodiversity, encouraging local access)

4. Outstanding Land Manager (recognising landowners and managers who have created opportunities for biodiversity and made provision for community access)
5. Themed Award – heathlands (recognising action taken by local communities to improve this important habitat in Norfolk).

The Awards have been generously sponsored by Richardson's Boating Holidays (Inspiring Others Award); Kelling Heath Holiday Park (Themed Award – Heathlands); and The Landscape Partnership (Outstanding Land Manager).

Paul Holley, Chair of the NBP Communities and Nature Topic Group that organises the Awards said: "This is the twelfth year for the Community Biodiversity Awards. Over this time we have celebrated some outstanding conservation projects and individuals who have made a real difference in their local communities. Working together on conservation projects is a great way to make a difference for wildlife alongside benefits for human health and wellbeing. This year we have broadened our award categories so that we can recognise important efforts to conserve biodiversity undertaken by parish and town councils, land managers, local businesses and schools. We are also looking to recognise work to conserve Norfolk's precious heathland– a fragmented and threatened lowland habitat important for range of specialist plants and animals. "

Anne Casey, Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership's Coordinator said: "We are delighted to have received sponsorship for our Awards from three local firms, already well known for their green credentials. The Landscape Partnership, Richardson's Boating Holidays and Kelling Heath Holiday Park have and keen to demonstrate their commitment to safeguarding and enhancing Norfolk's natural environment."

To enter, please go to down load our form:

<http://www.norfolkbiodiversity.org/communityprojects/biodiversityawards.aspx>

Notes for Editors

1. For more information about this press release please contact :
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2. More about our sponsors
 - a. Kelling Heath Holiday Park is sponsor of our Themed Award (heathlands). Kelling Heath Holiday Park is set amongst 270 acres of mixed woodland and rare open heathland; in an area of outstanding natural beauty at Weybourne in north Norfolk. An estate management plan has been in place since 1998 to protect, preserve and enhance the location for the benefit of future generations to enjoy. The park has recently converted what was an arable field to lowland heath, increasing the size of this rare habitat, complementing the neighbouring heathlands.
 - b. Richardson's Boating Holidays is sponsor of our Inspiring Others Award Richardson's has helped visitors experience the best of the Norfolk Broads for over 70 years. We have more than 300 hire boats making us the largest operator on the Norfolk Broads. We have boats to suit many tastes and budgets, all maintained to the highest standard. The great thing about a Norfolk Broads holiday is that you can take things at your own pace. You choose the itinerary whether it be visiting local towns and pubs and restaurants, fun family days out, walking, cycling, bird watching, visiting the city of Norwich or the seaside town of Great Yarmouth and so much more.
 - c. The Landscape Partnership is sponsor of our Outstanding Land manager Award. The Landscape Partnership was established in 1986, and is an environmental consultancy with a deserved reputation for delivering independent, high-quality services to clients in the public and private sectors in the fields of planning, landscape architecture, urban design, ecology and arboriculture. Our work, underpinned by a wide ranging and expert knowledge of the East Anglian landscape and natural history, delivers high quality schemes; and we specialise in finding innovative solutions to planning and design problems. We recognise the importance of early identification of environmental opportunities and constraints and the ways in which these might help shape or influence design or development decisions, and are thus able to provide creative and sustainable solutions that maximise a site's potential, yet remain sensitive to the needs of local communities, landscape and wildlife
3. More about our Award Categories

- a. Parish and Town Councils. This category recognises councils whose direct activities have led to improvements in local biodiversity
 - b. Inspiring Others. This category recognises those who have gone the 'extra mile' to bring about a wider appreciation of biodiversity. Examples could include: a school which is sharing a wildlife area with the local community; a walks leader; a business that provides a nature trail in their grounds; an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to nature conservation or biodiversity-related education.
 - c. Best Group. The category recognises the efforts of a group which has created or organised the best project or site for biodiversity, and encouraged local people to access and enjoy their local nature sites.
 - d. Outstanding Land Manager. This category recognises landowners and managers who have created opportunities for biodiversity and made provision for community access to that resource.
 - e. Themed Award – heathlands recognising action taken by local communities to improve lowland heathland in Norfolk
4. About the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership (NBP). The NBP was established in 1996 and is a partnership of 22 partner organisations. It works through a number of "Topic Groups" to enhance and conserve Norfolk's natural heritage. The NBP seeks to give nature a voice in Norfolk and show that the conservation of the natural environment is possible for everyone to participate in. You can read more about the NBP here: www.norfolkbiodiversity.org. The Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership, works to conserve, enhance and restore the county's biological diversity. Established in 1996, the Partnership is a collaboration of the resources and expertise of 22 voluntary groups, local authorities and statutory agencies. The Partnership is made up of the following organisations: Anglian Water; Breckland Council; British Trust for Ornithology; Broadland District Council; Broads Authority; Environment Agency; Farm Conservation Ltd.; Forestry Commission (East of England Conservancy); Great Yarmouth Borough Council; King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council; Natural England; Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society; Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service; Norfolk County Council; Norfolk Wildlife Trust; North Norfolk District Council; Norwich City Council; River Waveney Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; South Norfolk Council; the University of East Anglia; and the Water Management Alliance.
5. The NBP's vision. The Partnership is involved in a wide-ranging programme of work. Amongst other activities, it prepares and implements action plans for some of the county's most threatened habitats and species; manages a small biodiversity project fund which is used to support high priority recommendations contained in the action plans; works closely with the Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service to improve the quality and availability of

biodiversity information; and promotes the integration of biodiversity into strategies, plans and programmes including Sustainable community Strategies and Local Development Framework.

Find out more at www.norfolkbiodiversity.org

6. The world's biodiversity is under threat from a range of issues such as habitat loss and fragmentation; pollution; invasive non-native species; climate change; over-exploitation and the growth of human populations. Most of these are a result of human activity.
7. There are many opportunities to make a difference for biodiversity close to home, whether it is by creating a garden that has wildlife in mind; joining a local practical conservation group or taking care not to inadvertently introduce invasive species into the wild.
8. Parish and town councils can play a direct role in conserving and enhancing local biodiversity:
 - a. through the implementation of their statutory functions – for example through the National Planning Policy Framework
 - b. by seeking similar standards and principles from 3rd parties (suppliers, vendors and contractors)
 - c. using opportunities to communicate, educate and promote biodiversity conservation during daily contact with the general public, communities and other stakeholders
 - d. by supporting projects and programmes that contribute to the conservation of biodiversity
 - e. by ensuring that biodiversity is considered across their remit including investment decisions
9. Last year's (2014) winning projects were:
 - Friends of Earlham Cemetery for their work to conserve, enhance and record the biodiversity of the cemetery and to promote its value as a key wildlife site (Group Award Winner)
 - Scarning Conservation Volunteers for conservation and access management of Scarning Water Meadows County Wildlife Site (Group Award, Highly Commended)
 - The Toad Watch Patrollers for their work in helping over 9000 toads to cross the A134 road at Cranwich safely to breed (Group Award, Highly Commended)
 - Richard Waddingham for his passion about conservation and farming and his work over 40 years to protect and enhance biodiversity on his farm in Briston, which is an inspiration to others (Individual Award Winner)
 - Sean Locke for his enthusiasm and passion for recording wildlife and for overcoming health issues to play a key role at Mousehold Heath and Strumpshaw Fen (Individual Award, Highly Commended)
 - Norfolk Bat Survey for inspiring 350 people to take part in the largest county-level bat survey using their innovative methodology

and generating an unrivalled quality and quantity of reliable and usable data (Inspiring Others Award, Winner)

- Southrepps Commons' Trust for their energy and commitment to educate and involve the community in conserving and improving the five commons (Commons, Greens and Churchyards Award Winner)
- Hethel Churchyard for managing their churchyard with wildlife in mind for over 20 years as well as recording biodiversity, welcoming visits and promoting conservation management of churchyards (Commons, Greens and Churchyards Highly Commended)
- West Runton Nature Society for identifying the need and taking a wide range of practical actions to improve the biodiversity and community involvement in the seven commons (Commons, Greens and Churchyards Highly Commended)
- Queens Jubilee Biodiversity Project, Great Massingham for identifying the need for action and then working to improve the biodiversity of the site (Site Award Winner)
- Henry le Strange Community Orchard, Hunstanton for involving the community in transforming their field into a haven for wildlife and a place for people to enjoy (Site Award, Highly Commended)
- Dr Martin George, OBE, for his enormous contribution to the understanding of the Broads and for playing a significant role over 50 years in safeguarding them for posterity (Special Achievement Award)