



Third Anniversary Meeting

March 2nd 7.00-9.00pm – The Anchor

Report and Notes

Agenda	
Overview	Discussion points
A brief look back	
Feedback	
Our website	
This year	Regular events & existing projects
	New projects
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Nectan's • Garden show & garden wildlife

Attended	Apologies
Clare G	Jennie W
David W	Joy C
Caroline W	Penny D
Ellen W	Linda & Patrick M
Frannie L	Joe N
Philip L	Claire & Rupert B
Clemmy D	Simon P
Merlyn C	Letty G
Chris H	Laura P
Richard H	Rob W
Lisa C	Richard McD
Sonia H	Mike R
Richie H	Christina W
Alex W	Sarah C
Paul C	Emilia R
Jane S	Kris C
Pete & Kirsty R	Pete C
John & Iris W	Lorna H
Sue T	Maria B
Sally Z	George M
Jane L	Steve H
	Adrian & Elaine A
	Sally B-J
	Michaela C
	Mike & Azita D
	Shelley P
	Sue P
	Paul & Emilia R
	Dawn R-W
	Lynn S
	Annie S
	Carla W
	Christina W

A brief look back

The last year was busy with many different events held, most were well attended and enjoyed.

Events included:

Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Sept	Oct	Feb 26
2 nd AGM	Litter pick	HNS social evening	Hartland community orchard	Swift and house martin evening	Bats at Fosfelle	How to photograph insects – Jamie Owen	Fungal Foray – St Nectans	Evening with Guy SW
	Early spring walk - Stoke	Water testing weekend	Late spring walk - East Titchberry	Himalayan balsam pull	Pondnet at the garden show			Boosting Local Biodiversity meeting
			Dawn Bird Walk					Swift & Jackdaw nest boxes at St Nectans
			Community Himalayan Balsam pull					

In addition, citizen science and data collection by individual members:

- Hartland Bird Diary
- RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch
- Big Butterfly Count
- Butterfly transect survey
- Bumble bee monthly survey
- Cetacean watch/Sea watch

Highlighted events & projects

Swift, House Martins and Jackdaws

Frannie gave a brief overview

- A new information board has been fitted on the chapel at St Johns to highlight the swifts and how to identify them. This was the result of a grant and design conversations between Frannie, Merlyn and Clare.



- St Nectan's church has joined the 'swifts in churches' project launched by Devon birds. The bell room in the tower now has over 20 swift nesting boxes and four jackdaw nesting boxes. This was achieved as a result of conversations between Frannie, Clare, Rob and Jerry (from Devon birds). We are now hoping to monitor swifts and jackdaws around the tower this year.



HNS Bird Diary

Richard has been keeping a diary for interesting bird sightings over the year and presented some highlights – as illustrated below.

Jan	Feb	Mar	April	April
Jan 17 - Chiffchaff (Eldern Point)	Feb 10 Bullfinch Feb 27 - Wheatear (Eldern Point)	Mar 9 - Swallows (South Hole) Mar 23 - Woodcock (South Hole) Mar 24 - Swallows, Sand Martins (50) (East Titchberry) Mar 5 - From Devon Birds sighting: "First early arrivals of Swallows and Sand Martins at around 4pm Mar 25 - Swift (Speke's Cliff) Mar 31 - White-tailed Eagle (Speke's valley)	Apr 1 - Red Kite (West Street) Apr 1 - Red Kite (2), Sand Martins (30), Swallows (2) (East Titchberry) Apr 9 - Hoopoe (Spekes) Apr 9 - Hoopoe (Cranham)	Apr 9 - Grasshopper Warbler (Eldern Point) Apr 10 - Cuckoo (Abbey Wood) Apr 13 - Hoopoe (Kings Arms) Apr 16 - Hoopoe (Fosfelle) Apr 30 - Swifts, House Martins (Hartland Square)

May	June	August	Sept	Oct	Nov
May 4 - Spotted Flycatcher (Cheristow Wood) part of dawn walk.	June 11 - Hawfinch (Milford)	Aug 8 – Goldfinches (c50) feeding on Knapweed (Ball Hill) Aug 11 - A mix of Swallows and House Martins on wire 160+ (Ball Hill) Aug 18 - Marsh Harrier (Philham Water)	Oct 9 - Turtle Dove (East Titchberry) Oct 13 - Kingfisher (Pattard Water)	Nov 25 - Marsh Harrier (m) (Youltree Cross)	Dec 6 - Dipper, Kingfisher (Milford) Dec 16 - Kingfisher (Pattard Water)

Of note

- **White-tailed eagle;** From 2019 onwards there's been a White-tailed Eagle project based on the Isle of Wight, run by Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation and Forestry England, under licence from Natural England and NatureScot. The birds released there are fitted with satellite tags to enable the team to follow their movements. This has shown that Exmoor has become a White-tailed Eagle hot spot, with 12 separate birds visiting since 2019. 2025 also saw the first nesting pair at RSPB Arne in Dorset.
- **Hoopoe;** Further afield reports of 80 Hoopoe seen in Ireland- two influxes. Also reports of these birds in South West Cornwall and Scilly Isles early April. Earliest record probably 9th Mar. Hoopoes continued to appear through the year in small numbers in other parts of the UK.(Norfolk, Lincolnshire, Shropshire to name but a few)
- **Marsh Harrier;** In recent winters, Marsh Harriers have become an increasingly regular sight around many of our estuaries and marshes.
- **Turtle dove;** Europe's only migratory dove, they travel 3,000 miles to West Africa but have suffered a 99% decline in the UK since the 1960s, making them critically endangered and Red-listed.

Feedback

We asked the meeting -

- Which HNS events did you attend and particularly enjoy last year?
- Did you attend the Boosting local Biodiversity meeting?
 - What feedback do you have?
- Do you have any suggestions for events you'd like us to organise this coming year? Walks, field surveys, speakers, films etc.
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The consensus was that we are doing things that everyone enjoys and attends when they are able.

Suggestions and ideas for the forthcoming year included –

- Another bat evening at Fosfelle
- A late Spring walk at Marsland, possibly lead by DWT who manage the reserve
- A dawn chorus walk in Galsham woods
- A talk from the Woodland Trust on so-called, temperate rain forests.
- A talk on wildlife apps & citizen science
- Films – we currently have an agreement with the Film Club for the use of their equipment and so we can think about larger audience films for the Hartland Community. We also have use of the large monitor in the Hart for smaller films and gatherings
- Fungi walk (&talk)
- Lichen walk – in Hartland woodland
- Survey at St Nectan's as part of the Caring for God's Acre project
- Moth trap

The committee will discuss these and try to arrange for leaders and speakers for all events.

The BLB meeting was considered a success which attracted a wide audience from, in some case, far afield. A video of highlights is currently under production. It was a big project that demanded a huge amount of work from the committee – we decided that we would likely not undertake such a thing again, BUT, that a yearly HNS talk, perhaps at Christmas/New Year, might be a good idea.

Our website

Over the past year David has continued to work on the website for the society. Free of charge, he has worked tirelessly to include all our events and to improve the website where possible. He has done a wonderful job.

<https://hartlandnaturesociety.org.uk>

The website showcases what the HNS does, has done and plans to do.

Please take time to visit the website on a regular basis to stay updated and to feedback any comments. At the meeting we agreed to include another page on the website to cover links to associated societies, activities and citizen science projects of interest.

Unfortunately, it is not possible for anyone other than David to upload to the website. This is just a restriction of the free platform, but it is relatively east to upload content, so if you want us to do this, just send in your material to David or me.

David email address: admin@hartlandnaturesociety.org.uk

Clare email address: chair@hartlandnaturesociety.org.uk

Membership

We currently have 56 people registered as HNS members. We have dropped a few over the year and gained newcomers. A total of 24 members attended the meeting.

The following committee members have agreed to continue their roles in 2026

- Chair – Clare Gurton
- Secretary – Caroline Warnes
- Treasurer – Chris Hannington

In addition, we have Ellen W, Richard H, David and Frannie B as steering committee members, and the following as champions:

Swifts and House Martins	Frannie L, Clare G, Merlyn C
Himalayan Balsam control	Paul R
Litter	Jennie W
Cetacean watch	Lorna H

Butterflies	David and Caroline W
Bees	Clare G
Birds	Richard H
Plants	Clare G & Sarah C

New Projects

St Nectan's churchyard – a wildlife site

We have undertaken 2 bat surveys and a lichen survey at St Nectan's in 2024/5 and agreed that it would be a nice idea to do more and perhaps align with the Devon Living Churchyards project – Caring for God's Acre.

The St Nectan's PCC have been approached and are happy for us to start this project. We already have the swift and jackdaw nest boxes installed and plan to undertake a survey in the churchyard very soon. Also, Cathy Horsley from Devon Wildlife Trust will be visiting and advising on things we might do as part of the project.

Garden show and garden wildlife

Our presence at the garden show last year was well received and so we intend to attend again this year. To make it a little different, we are considering buying some hedgehog cutouts to be handed to children to paint and then erect in gardens close to the road to help raise awareness of hedgehogs and their vulnerability on roads. We will also have DWT attending and providing leaflets on garden wildlife and their garden wildlife award.

Any other business

Subscriptions

2026 subscriptions are now due – we will be writing out to all members regarding subscriptions with bank details etc.

QR code

Richie H also suggested we think about getting a QR code for donations to HNS – we could direct this to a page on the website. We will look into this.

Water quality testing

John W mentioned free training sessions for water quality testing – the dates have now passed but the HNS want to be actively involved in water testing based on the West Country Rivers Trust and will update on this in forthcoming emails.

Finding Nature's Footprints

The Finding Nature's Footprints project ends at the end of March. We hope to continue our relationship with Joe and with NDCNLs

Signed:

Caroline W (Secretary)

Handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Caroline W".

Clare G (Chair)

Handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Clare G".