



**Scottish  
Wildlife  
Trust**

# Lothian Talk

Scottish Wildlife Trust: Lothians Group Newsletter

## Dates for your Diary

### Guided walk: **Musselburgh bird walk**

- Saturday 11th November
- With ranger, Kristian Purchase

### In-person talk: **Protecting the rivers of the Forth valley**

- Thursday 16th November
- With Charlotte Neary, senior project officer, Forth Rivers Trust

### In-person talk: **Nextdoor Nature and the Scottish Wildlife Trust: breaking boundaries and enriching environments**

- Thursday 18th January
- With Lola May, Scottish Wildlife Trust

## Future Talk Dates

- Thursday 15th February
- Thursday 14th March
- Thursday 18th April

Unless otherwise stated, all talks run from 7.30-9pm and are free of charge.

In-person talks are held at:

The Cornerstone Centre  
St. John's Church  
Princes Street  
Edinburgh EH2 4BJ

**Full details of all events can be found online at**  
[swtlothians.org.uk/events](https://swtlothians.org.uk/events)



*Stripy cinnabar moth caterpillars on ragwort by Jo Doake*

## Nextdoor Nature: Community project making window-boxes for pollinators

The Lothians Group has secured funding through SWT's Nextdoor Nature initiative to run an exciting project in collaboration with the Grassmarket Community Project (GCP).

The project will involve GCP's wood workshop group designing and building wooden window boxes. The GCP's gardening group will then fill the boxes with hardy plants that are good for pollinators, before the boxes are distributed to the local community.

The aim of the Nextdoor Nature initiative is to deliver actions for nature in partnership with existing community groups or organisations embedded within communities. It is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

## With thanks

The Lothians events sub-committee is the group of volunteers who organise the events and talks programme advertised on the previous page. They also manage communications, including this newsletter.

For the past five years, Allan Mathieson has chaired this group with great energy. Due to time pressures, he will continue to be involved in the events organisation but has stepped down as chair.

Jo Young has built our social media presence up from nothing. Thanks to her work, we now have an active Facebook and Instagram pages.

We thank them both for all they have contributed to the work of this group and wish them well.

We would also like to welcome newest members, Catherine Sturrock and Alison Edelsten, and look forward to working alongside them.

New members are still needed for the roles of chair, social media content creator, and editor of this newsletter.

*For more information about volunteering with us, or if you have anything you would like to contribute, please get in touch via [editor@swtlothians.org.uk](mailto:editor@swtlothians.org.uk)*

Our project will benefit both the local community and nature in a number of ways. The GCP welcomes and supports those who are in transition in life throughout Edinburgh, creating opportunities for people who are dealing with challenging circumstances. The members involved in the assembly of the boxes will have an opportunity to build skills and confidence, increase their knowledge of pollinator-friendly gardening, and foster connections with others.

As well as providing food for pollinators, the boxes will be positive additions to Edinburgh's Nature Network, helping green our urban space and increase community awareness of conservation efforts.

The project will be delivered over the next eight months and we look forward to providing further updates as it progresses.

*by Catherine Sturrock*



*Bumblebee on rosebay willowherb by Jo Doake*

## Planning Matters

### City of Edinburgh Council

A team of reporters from the Scottish Government's Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) has been examining the next Local Development Plan "City Plan 2030" since February this year, and the plan, including any recommended modifications, should be adopted early to mid 2024.

We were very supportive of the plan for Edinburgh biodiversity as it managed to include all the good biodiversity crisis policies in the then-imminent National Planning Framework 4 (which has since become law).

*Carmina Cazan*

### East Lothian

**Local Development Plan:** We are very pleased to report that the 'Design and Test' of a methodology to check and confirm the biodiversity condition of the currently designated Local Biodiversity Sites (LBS) in East Lothian (EL), ready as evidence for the new Local Development plan, was completed at the end of September. We fund-raised for this work and persuaded the head of planning to match this funding in order for the design and testing on three current LBS' to be completed in time to be evidence for the Local Plan. The test is considered to be a success and next year EL will ask all its known botanical volunteers to help survey the condition of the habitats that were declared to be of importance for the LBS' when the current boundaries were defined no later than 2013. These volunteers will be provided with a manual on how to appropriately, in the EL context, survey such habitats which will be written by the local ecological consultant Ben Averis employed on this project. Just like in the late seventies/early eighties when SWT Lothians volunteers surveyed the whole of the Lothians for candidate LBS' (they were called listed wildlife sites then) it is hoped by EL that all the survey work can be done by volunteers and I ask that anybody not already doing such work in EL and who is interested to come forward and join me to volunteer! There are still 54 of the 57 sites to be checked and not just habitats need checking – species noted of high conservation importance for the LBS designation such as notable plants and more mobile things like badgers, water voles and red squirrels (all may have disappeared from a site since the designation 10+ years ago) also need checking in separate visits. The methodology should allow the Local Development Plan planners to include the LBS' in the next, just starting to be written, Local plan for East Lothian. As in every council that has LBS these LBS form the core of the 'Nature Network' that every council now has to create due to recent planning legislation.

**Levenhall Links consultation:** East Lothian Council is currently running a consultation of the future use of Levenhall Links, and it would be good to ensure there is as big a response as possible to this. The consultation period ends on 3 November but they might be prepared to take views after that, as this consultation is run by the Countryside service not the Planning service. For more information, see the [East Lothian Council website](#).

**Musselburgh Flood Prevention scheme:** A highly related issue is the on going – no decisions made yet – on the proposed Flood prevention scheme for Musselburgh and whether or not it should be a Nature Based Solution or mostly a wall (the two may not be mutually exclusive). This scheme can be found on [www.musselburghfloodprotection.com](http://www.musselburghfloodprotection.com)

This first vision of the Outline Design was presented at the Public Exhibition in June 2023. The design is currently moving forward, developing through your feedback.

To view all the event materials showcasing the design, including design maps, information boards and the 3D animation, please visit '[Public Exhibition No.2 – June 2023](#)'.

The Project Team are holding Drop-in Sessions at the Brunton Hall from August to December. Please visit '[Further Drop-in Sessions Announced for Brunton Hall](#)' to find out dates and times.

**Planning volunteers:** The planning team wish to thank Ian Whittaker, our planning representative for East Lothian who retired recently from this role, for all his efforts. We are now looking for a volunteer replacement based in East Lothian who is interested in doing this crucial role (with appropriate training and tools, which are available). Meanwhile I shall cover East Lothian until a replacement is found. Please contact me in the first instance if you wish to explore this voluntary role.

*Dr Tim Duffy*

## Midlothian

In the last Planning Matters we mentioned the Council's intention to prepare an updated Local Development Plan (LDP). This is being referred to as Midlothian Local Development Plan 2 (MLDP2). Some early consultation took place in May and June. An Open Space Strategy Survey was available to look at and complete until 31 October. The LDP team and the Ranger Service also consulted with local countryside volunteers including the Midlothian Paths Group on greenspaces and path networks in Midlothian.

The next stage is to collate all the information from consultations which will help prepare an Evidence Report on which to base the new plan. If you are interested, look on the [Midlothian Council's website](#) and perhaps sign up for the Newsletter.

Penicuik Estate is progressing its plans for new visitor facilities. It has submitted an application for a new visitor hub at Carswell Steading just off the main road from Penicuik to Biggar. This is still to be approved by the Council.

*Susan Manson*

*Dr Tim Duffy SWT Lothians Planning Secretary - [timrduffy1@gmail.com](mailto:timrduffy1@gmail.com)*

### Contacts For Planning Matters Affecting Wildlife Sites

**Midlothian:** Susan Manson - [mansons@castlesteads.net](mailto:mansons@castlesteads.net)

**East Lothian:** Tim Duffy - [timrduffy1@gmail.com](mailto:timrduffy1@gmail.com)

**West Lothian & CoEC:** Carmina Cazan - [carminacazan@outlook.com](mailto:carminacazan@outlook.com)