

Wednesday Volunteers

On Wednesdays, a group of volunteers meets at the Interpretation Centre on Instow Rd to carry out conservation work in and around the Maiden Erlegh Nature reserve. The work is organised and supervised by Earley Town Council Park Rangers, and all tools and equipment are supplied. Everyone is welcome to come and join in – please meet at 9:30am at the Interpretation Centre, or contact Earley Town Council for more information.

A flavour of some of the activities undertaken in the last year

January

- Planted several Spanish Elm trees to encourage the white-letter hairstreak butterfly.
- Scattered gravel through the woodland footpaths to improve surface traction.

February

- Remedial works to improve the drainage to the footpath around the lake and cut back adjacent vegetation to widen access.
- Cleared the Instow lake margins and removed newly grown saplings to improve light levels.

March

- Removed vegetation adjacent to the footpath at the bottom of the meadow and dug a drainage trench to prevent run-off saturating the path.
- Dug over the wildflower bed at the Lakeside and the Butterfly Garden bed.

April

- Rejuvenated the wildlife area at Radstock Primary School.
- Cut up branches from a downed Ash that were used to create a head hedge to improve biodiversity.
- Installed barley straw sausages into the lake inlet, in preparation for the summer.

May

- Cut back vegetation around the lake margins to create a wildlife dead hedge.
- Installed insect interpretation boards throughout the nature reserve.

June

- Assisted in the annual invasive species programme by removing Himalayan Balsam.

July

- Constructed a post and rail fence around the Gemini Oak tree.
- Removed weed growth from the orchard trees and applied fresh woodchip.

August

- Pared back the hedge around Lakeside and raked the meadows.

September

- Cleared the wildflower beds of unwanted vegetation and dug over the beds.

October

- Removed weeds from around the tree bases in Paddock Drive and applied fresh woodchip.
- Assisted in the autumn litter pick along the Thames.

November

- Eliminated the Culver Lane allotments of invading Marestalk.
- Constructed new raised beds at Culver Lane and created adjacent footpaths.

December

- Constructed a new bird hide to accompany the new bird feeding station
- Coppiced Holly and Hazel to encourage ground flora.
- Indulged in a festive lunch at the Toby Carvery.