

## Environment Report - March 2023

It did appear in February that West Sussex might have been heading for an early spring, but the colder spell of weather has put a damper on that - Broad beans and some different varieties of tomatoes, germinated in pots, will have to wait. But the lengthening hours of daylight, has encouraged a number of birds to become active in the garden, including wagtails, robins, a wren and blackbirds, all darting about.

On a recent stroll, I sighted a herd of ten deer grazing to the west of the Lavant behind Maplehurst Road. In times gone by they would have entered the remnants of ancient woodland, Summersdale Copse, where the does gave birth each year, before going further west and south towards Fishbourne. Even three or four years ago three deer disrupted the Stagecoach 50 Service, by running along Winterbourne Drive/ Maplehurst Road. Sadly this migration route is blocked by fencing. Perhaps the establishment of a Wildlife Corridor running SW, across open fields, to link to Hacketts Rew will provide a substitute route, thus preventing wildlife populations becoming isolated which will reduce their chances of a healthy survival.

The sale of properties often leads to building works and changes to garden landscaping, this is presently occurring along Hacketts Rew an Ancient Monument, which has seen recently a great deal of tidying; trees felled or lopped, bushes and shrubs removed or cut back, new fences erected which has altered the habitat with repercussions for fauna and flora. Hopefully new plantings will retain our insects, bats and wildflowers.

Many issues regarding the Madgewick/ Lavant Linear pedestrian and cycle route remain undecided, although I did receive notification of further surveying activity recently. Certainly the increase in housing in the area is putting pressure on the pathways and countryside enjoyed by residents for many years.

The SRA are working closely with the successor to the Chair of Friends of Brandy Hole Copse, (FBHC)The group exist under the auspices of the CDC, who in return represent the landowners . The roll and responsibilities of landowners, councils and FBHC in the Management of this Local Nature Reserve is being reviewed as well as the policies of the FBHC,- data protection, H&S, constitution. It is hoped that the group can be re- launched by calling an AGM April/May.

Ray Carter  
8th March 2023