



## Introduction

This edition includes an invitation to our 2017 AGM alongside articles about the woodland floor, reptiles and amphibians, and the animals and birds spotted in our woods last year. You will also find important reminders about membership and subscriptions, and an update on our conservation work. We hope you enjoy our Spring Newsletter.

Agy O'Brien

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## 2017 Annual General Meeting – an important message from the Chair

You are warmly invited to attend our  
Annual General Meeting  
14:30 on Sunday 5 March 2017  
Ashenground Community Centre  
Southdown Close  
Haywards Heath RH16 4JR

The meeting will include a review of our activities this year, plans for the coming year, and elections of Officers and Committee members. **We urgently need more volunteers to join our Committee (e.g. a Secretary) and to help out in other ways (e.g. a Newsletter Editor).** If you are interested please let me know (07802 162275 or email [lorraineamaynard04@gmail.com](mailto:lorraineamaynard04@gmail.com)). **Please note that copies of our accounts and the 2016 AGM minutes are available on our website at [www.foabw.uk](http://www.foabw.uk).** After the AGM, ecologist Stephanie Murphy from the Sussex Bat Group will give us an interesting presentation on bats. Thank you very much for your continued support over the past year and I very much hope to see you on 5 March.

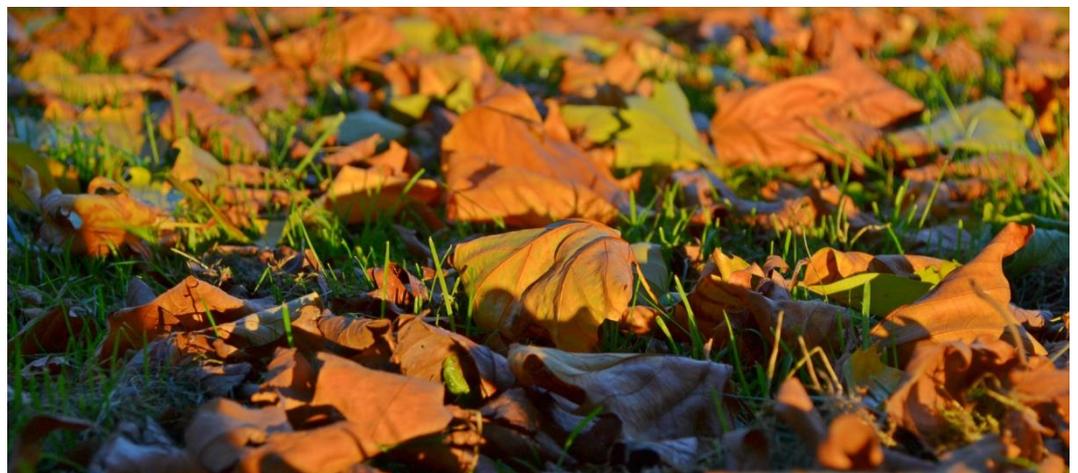
Lorraine Maynard

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## The Woodland Floor

This lovely photograph of the woods covered in Autumn leaves reminded me of how important this natural blanket is to many woodland creatures.

A closer look at the leaf litter reveals the usual suspects – small worms, slugs, woodlice, spiders – but also a host of others.





There are tiny springtails jumping several inches; beetle larvae, centipedes and millipedes, many kinds of shield bug, and a host of other minute creatures. Many spend part of their lives here before heading up to the canopy or out to the bright woodland edge. For all these, the leaf litter and the soil below provide shelter and food. Here too are the seeds and bulbs waiting for the right moment to produce the flowery carpets of Spring or send up seedlings of the forest trees when light levels improve.

Gill Rogers

## Living in Phase 4A of Bolnore Village? We don't want to lose touch.

This newsletter has been delivered as part of an agreement between Crest and FoABW which gives two years' free membership to 4A households. If you enjoy the woods, **we would encourage you now to join FoABW as an individual member** by completing and returning the accompanying leaflet ([www.foabw.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/MembershipFormWeb2012.pdf](http://www.foabw.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/MembershipFormWeb2012.pdf)) to our Membership Secretary, Peter McKerchar (25 Wealden Way, Haywards Heath, RH16 4AF). We hope you will want to support the woods that are so much a part of your Village's setting.

## Reptiles and amphibians

Most of us look forward to the onset of Spring and I am sure our resident reptiles and amphibians are no exception. With the onset of warmer weather, they emerge from months of hibernation and set off in search of food.

Spring is a particularly good time to spot amphibians as they congregate in our ponds to breed. The sight of clumps of frog spawn floating in shallow water is one of those welcome signs that Spring has finally arrived. Toads can be seen heading back to the same ponds every year braving all kinds of hazards particularly road traffic but strings of toad spawn are less easy to spot as toads favour deeper water. A careful look in a pond may also reveal one or more of Britain's three species of newts: the common or smooth newt, the palmate newt or the much larger great crested newt all of which lay their eggs individually on water weed leaves. Sunny days from late Spring through to late Summer are the best time to spot our native reptiles as they bask to absorb warmth. Grass snakes are often found near ponds in search of amphibians and if you are lucky you might even see one swimming.



Male smooth newt



Slow worm



Grass snake

All the reptiles and amphibians mentioned above are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside

Act 1981 with great crested newts additionally protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. **Patrick Burke**



## Life of the woods

Spring 2016 brought another spectacular display of bluebells. It also brought visitors: Blackcaps, Chiff Chaffs, Redwings, Nightingales, Swifts and Redpolls. For some it was a fleeting visit, but the woods gave a welcome feeding stop on their journey onwards. Spring and Summer flowers were a welcome sight for the many bees and insects visiting the meadows. In a time when

bumblebees and honeybees are under threat, they were seen in large numbers throughout the meadows and woods. A mild Autumn meant many birds were still breeding in the early part of September as were dragonflies in the ponds in Pond Meadow. It is a spectacular sight to see flashes of blue and gold as the skim at great speed up and down the length of the ponds.

The list of wildlife living in and visiting our woods is impressive: in the space of just 10 months, we have seen:

**BIRDS:** Blackbirds, Blue Tits, Bullfinches, Blackcaps, Barn Owl, Chiff Chaffs, Coal Tits, Collard Doves, Common Buzzards, Crows, Dunnocks, Feral Pigeons, Greater Spotted Woodpeckers, Great Tits, Goldcrests, Greenfinches, Grey Wagtails, Green Woodpeckers, Gold Finches, Jackdaws, Jays, Kestrels, Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers, Long Tailed Tits, Magpies, Mallards, Mistle Thrushes, Moorhens, Nuthatches, Pied Wagtails, Red Kites, Robins, Rooks, Song Thrushes, Sparrowhawks, Starlings, Swallows, Swifts, Tawny Owls, Tree Creepers, Woodpigeons, Wrens.

**MAMMALS:** Bats, Rabbits, Badgers, Foxes, Hedgehog, Roe Deer, Dormouse, Stoat.

**INSECTS:** Buff Tailed Bumblebees, Common Carder Bumblebees, Parasitic Wasp, Bombus Terrestris Bumblebee, Tree Bee, Grasshoppers, Ladybirds, Shield Bugs, Hoverfly, Fungus Gnats, Soldier Beetles.

**REPTILES:** Grass Snakes, Slow Worms

**AMPHIBIANS;** Frogs, Newts



Grey Wagtail – photo by Joanna



Badgers – photo by Alison



**Broad Bodied Chaser - male** – photo by Lorraine

### DRAGONFLIES/D

**AMSEFLIES:** Broad Bodied Chasers, Southern Hawkets, Large Red Damselflies, Azure Damselflies, Blue Tailed Damselflies, Pond Skaters.

**BUTTERFLIES/MOTHS:** Brimstone, Common Blue, Orange Tip, Large White, Small Tortoiseshell, Speckled Wood, Silver Grey Moth, Holly Blue, Small Copper, Green Veined White, Comma, Gatekeeper, Red Admiral, Painted Lady, Peacock, Hummingbird Moth, Silver Y Moth, Cinnabar Moth Larvae, Six Spot Burnet Moth, Ruby Moth.



**Broad Bodied Chaser - female** – photo by Kim Lorraine Maynard



## Conservation Update

Over the last few months some of you may have spotted FoABW volunteers carrying out vital woodland management activities. Winter is the optimum time for this as the trees fall dormant and the previous season's growth dies back.

Our main tasks are coppicing and mowing. Coppicing means cutting broad-leaved trees right down to the ground to promote regeneration. Each old stump will develop many fresh new stems, extending the life of the tree and encouraging wildlife. Hazel coppice is a particular favourite of the increasingly rare dormouse.

Mowing, using a specially adapted and somewhat fearsome looking mower kindly loaned by Mid Sussex District Council, allows us to cut back the undergrowth a few centimetres above the ground. It's key to managing the buffer zones on the woodland edge. Both these activities enable vital sunlight to reach the ground and this helps encourage a wealth of plant and animal life.

We have been lucky enough to have a local ecologist from the Natural History Museum carrying out a bryophyte survey in the woods. Better known as mosses, liverworts and hornworts, bryophytes are the oldest land plants on earth and have been around for 400 million years or more. We look forward to the survey findings.

Last year's records include a number of bird species on the Birds of Conservation Concern lists showing just how important a habitat our woods are. Some birds and animals are less easy to spot than others, particularly those which emerge at night. Last summer we held a very popular and successful bat walk with sightings, or at least hearings, of five different bat species: common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared, noctule and Natterer's. If you would like to learn more about these wonderful creatures, please come along to our AGM.

**Patrick Burke**

### 2017 Subscriptions Reminder

The annual subscription renewal fell due on 4 January 2017. The Committee is very grateful to those who pay more than the minimum of £5. Paying by standing order reduces our administration costs. If you do not already pay in this way, we have enclosed an addressed envelope. Please do one of the following:

- Set up a standing order by requesting the appropriate form from me.
- Send me a cheque, payable to FoABW.
- Pay by bank transfer to account no. 10021310, sort code 60-10-26, giving your surname & initials as reference.

Many thanks for your continuing support.

**Peter McKerchar, Membership Secretary & Treasurer**