

117

Summer 2024

Price £2 (free to members)



animalwatch

PUTTING ANIMALS ON THE AGENDA OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Please make a note of the events happening in the coming months. The diary will be updated in the next issue as we receive information about other events taking place.

October

Saturday, 5th

Animal Blessing and Thanksgiving Service for Pets, 2pm, St Martin's Church, Mortimer Road, Kensal Green, London, NW10 5SN
Led by the Revd Graham Noyce
For more information, contact animalblessinguk@gmail.com

Sunday, 6th

Animal Welfare Sunday

Annual Service, 10.30am, Bridlington Priory, Bridlington, YO16 7BN
Eucharist with Blessing of Animals.
Preacher: Revd Neil Bowler, Rector, Bridlington Priory

November

Sunday, 10th

ASWA Remembrance Service for Animals in War, The Animals' War Memorial, Brooke Gate, Park Lane, London, W1K 7QF, 3pm.



HELLO AND WELCOME TO ANIMALWATCH

Welcome to *Animalwatch*. In this issue, we focus on pollinators, their role in ecosystems, and how we can help them thrive. We also have interviews with one of our Animal-Friendly Church winners. We will bring you the interview with this year's other winning church in the Autumn issue. This issue also includes our Young Members' Page.

We hope that you enjoy keeping up-to-date with news and information on our website. Do check regularly for resources and information about upcoming events. Please do make a note of the dates in Doris' Diary, especially Animal Welfare Sunday and our Annual Service.

Please send any items for consideration for *Animalwatch* to Revd Jennifer Brown, Editor, PO Box 7193, Hook, Hampshire, RG27 8GT. Email is even better – animalwatch@jenbrown.org.uk. Please note that, owing to space restrictions, it may not be possible to print all contributions. Please refer to the information about contributions to *Animalwatch* for further details and restrictions on submissions.

Jennifer Brown, Editor

The deadline for the Autumn magazine is **Monday 19th August 2024**.

ASWA SPEAKERS AVAILABLE

If you have a group or service that would welcome an ASWA speaker, we would love to hear from you! We often travel a fair distance so please call to discuss it. We usually bring a stall and literature and always liaise with our hosts to ensure the talk is appropriate for their particular audience. Keep the invitations rolling in!

A WARM WELCOME

to our new members. We look forward to hearing from you.

We are pleased to welcome seven new members who have joined since the publication of the spring issue.

To all our new members we extend a warm welcome and we would ask that you, along with our existing members, encourage others who share your concern for animal welfare to join. Introductory leaflets are available from the Secretary.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO ANIMALWATCH

We very much welcome contributions to *Animalwatch* from our readers. We are interested to hear about the positive things being done for animals in your churches and communities. We also welcome informed pieces on specific areas of animal welfare, such as items relating to animal welfare law, the history of animal welfare, and theology. Articles should be submitted to the Editor

either as typed manuscripts by post or by email as Word documents, with any accompanying photos sent as high-resolution jpg files. Items submitted as pdf files or email text cannot be accepted. Submissions must be the contributor's (sender's) own original work, and (unless otherwise agreed) not published elsewhere. Items may be edited for length, readability, and

appropriateness of content. Publication of submitted items is at the Editor's discretion. In submitting an article, the contributor assigns copyright for the piece to ASWA. For items submitted by email, please assume your item has been received unless you get a delivery failure notice. The Editor is unable to acknowledge receipt of individual submissions.

ASWA MERCHANDISE

Available from the ASWA web site

ASWA literature: a range of literature on a variety of animal welfare subjects available.

PAWS for Prayer cards: paw shaped cards with a prayer for companion animals printed on one side. £0.20 each.

Egg Cards: egg shaped cards with a prayer printed on one side. £0.20 each.

ASWA bags: handy cotton shopping bag with the ASWA logo. £4 each.

ASWA badges: show your support for ASWA by wearing a lapel badge with the ASWA logo. £1.50 each.

Sticker sheets & books: Activity sheet with stickers (ravens or bees), £2.00 each.



GOOD NEWS

UK bans live animal exports

On the 20th of May this year, a law came into force banning live exports of livestock from the UK. This is a great step forward for farmed animal welfare, and it is to be hoped that other countries follow suit and also ban the export of live animals for slaughter.

NEWS & NOTICES ASWA NEWS

Don't forget, you can follow ASWA on X (formerly Twitter) – @aswanews

You can also keep up with what's new via our website – www.aswa.org.uk.

Check the web site for the latest resources, including materials for children & youth.



Animal-friendly Church award

Is your church animal friendly? ASWA sponsors the Animal-friendly Church award to recognise those churches that take animal welfare seriously as part of their ministry and mission. Churches can apply at any time and those meeting the necessary criteria will be awarded animal-friendly church status. Information is available on the website or from the Secretary.



ASWA Annual Service

This year's annual service will be on Sunday 6th October at Bridlington Priory, Bridlington, Yorkshire. Please see the Diary for further details.

Keeping in Touch

Interested in keeping up-to-date with what ASWA is doing? Want to hear about campaigns and activities relating to animal welfare? If so, please make sure we've got your email address so that we can send you occasional updates on what's happening. To join our mailing list, please send your email address to aswamembership@btinternet.com.

News from the AGM

ASWA's AGM was held on 7th May and was an online meeting. In addition to reports on the past years' activities, there was a discussion of possible new ventures, including a monthly online worship service and a podcast. We would be delighted to hear members' thoughts on these proposed new activities. Mr Keith Cottrell has retired from his role as trustee and was thanked for his work on the committee. We are seeking new committee members, so if you feel called to contribute to ASWA's work in this way, please contact the Secretary.

TALKING POINT

The perfect garden?

How do you feel about a scruffy garden? Do you think a weed-filled lawn is unsightly? You might think that a slightly overgrown lawn, an unweeded garden path, or brambles in the flowerbed are signs of a lazy gardener, but these might instead be the signs of a champion for wildlife. Our gardening practices affect the lives of our wildlife, particularly pollinating insects. By removing wildflowers (weeds), keeping grass cut short, and putting in lots of gravel, paving, and decking, we make our gardens look tidier and stylish, but we deprive our insects of food and shelter. And using chemical weed killers and pesticides causes even more harm. Naturally, we want our gardens to be places where we can be comfortable, and where we can grow the flowers we love and maybe also some fruits and vegetables for our tables. So we have to have some weed-free spaces, and we'll want to have at least some of the lawn tidy and maybe a paved or decked area for our own use. But can't we also allow ourselves a bit of scruffiness? Can we forego the easy option of spraying and do some old-fashioned weeding, and enjoy the beauty of daisies and dandelion flowers in the lawn? Can we sacrifice a corner of our outdoor living space to create a suitable habitat for our tiny neighbours who, through their own activities, help our gardens grow?



Photo courtesy of Chris Brown

NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

AUSTRALIA



Bad news, but also good

Plenty of bad news, of course, as usual. But also some very good news.

Government-sanctioned aerial culling of wild horses in the alpine regions of New South Wales is taking place. The animals are shot from helicopters by skilled marksmen, but how often does it result in injury and not instant death? We do not know. The reason for the cull is that there are ever-increasing numbers of the horses, and this encroaches on farmland and also destroys fragile ecosystems, resulting in loss of native plants and contributing to the extinction of native animals. Another example of animals being brought to Australia in colonial days and allowed to run wild. Not their fault!

Members may recall my last News from Australia when I focussed on the killing by a spear fisherman of a Blue Groper, the State fish of New South Wales, and supposedly protected. This large, spectacular, bright blue fish, which was human-friendly, was an icon around the beaches where he lived and the public petition and letters to the Minister of Agriculture in the NSW Government resulted in further protection for these fish (initially on a trial basis, to be reviewed after 12 months). Sigh of relief? No.

The Shooters and Fishers Party in the NSW Government is wanting to overturn the protection. We have to wait and see.

In the week that I write this, in mid-May, Animals Australia has filed proceedings in the Supreme Court of Victoria challenging the legality of suffocating pigs in gas chambers, one of the cruellest killing methods but which is in common usage all over the world.

Now for the good news! The Federal Government has announced that live export of sheep to the Middle East will end on 1st May 2028. Many challenges will need to be overcome to ensure this outcome. After a 50-year campaign to stop this awful trade, we are hopeful.

Also, good news for kangaroos. Nike, Puma, and New Balance intend to stop using kangaroo skin in sports shoes. Adidas is being canvassed to follow suit.

Olga Parkes

SWEDEN



Messengers of Hope

Every action of kindness gives ripples on the ocean of life and love grows. Every kindness to animals, to all sentient beings, does matter. In the Diocese of Uppsala, the three sisters of

Alsike Convent not only provide safety for homeless immigrants, people stuck in the hell of dysfunctional bureaucracy and seekers of the Peace of Christ, but are also compassionate towards animals. They have donkeys and sheep and now some hens and a cockerel whom otherwise would not have had a home at all. The animals need do nothing other than be, enjoying life and in so doing also offer the visitors to the convent solace to their souls and troubled minds, and a strong presence of the divine calling 'just to be'.

In the parish of Ludvika Diocese of Västerås, where I now serve, my vicar is keeping endangered Rya sheep on his grounds. His compassion not only helps this endangered breed, it also inspires others. He is increasing parishioners' awareness of the importance of being in balance with all God's creatures. The two deacons in the parish also have sheep. In the autumn we are planning to have an outdoor church service with an animal theme – all ages and some animals welcome too (though the sheep will have to stay where they are)!

"Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; your judgements are like the great deep; man and beast you save, O Lord" (Psalm 36:6).

Sandra Kinley

ANIMAL FAIR AT HANWELL METHODIST CHURCH, EALING, WEST LONDON

On the 2nd of March 2024, ASWA had a stand at the combined animal charity fair at Hanwell Methodist Church, Ealing. This fair was organised by Marion Garnett, who has been successfully organising animal fairs for over thirty years. It was good to meet up with so many other animal welfare charities and reconnect. We were made very welcome at this well-organised event, which was very well attended. The local Mayor arrived and greeted all the charities and thanked them for coming.

It was a joyful occasion with live music and refreshments, and in the afternoon some of the charities had the

opportunity to speak and give personal presentations. I found it very interesting to learn more about their amazing work and struggles for animal welfare.

Among the charities who gave presentations were The Jim Cronin Memorial Fund for Primate Conservation, Save the Asian Elephants, Pumpkin's Wildlife Hospital, and many more.

Janet Murphy

ASWA Committee Member



OBITUARIES

It is with sadness that we announce the death of Arthur Allan, a longtime supporter of ASWA, Don Gwillim, founder of CVAUK, and Barry Miles, former ASWA Committee member.

Arthur Allan



Arthur was a skilled surgeon, a compassionate and caring man, and a lover of all animals. He was brought up in a household of dogs, with parents who valued and cared for animals – both domestic and wild. One of his earliest memories was of his elderly father climbing a ladder to rescue an injured bird from the rooftop gutter. The sight of this tiny creature safely nestled in his father's gentle hands inspired Arthur's lifetime qualities of compassion and care. He showed his patients that same empathetic countenance, whilst his family and friends appreciated his selfless humility and burning desire to help the needy and frightened, human and otherwise. Arthur had a particular affinity for rescued dogs, touched by their fears and their desire for love and security. He adopted the neediest and most troubled dogs he could find, giving them the time and devotion needed to transform them into the happy hounds they were meant to be.

A faithful disciple and bold witness for Christ, Arthur was illuminated by his faith during his terminal illness. His faith, his devotion and loving care of humans and animals nourished his final days, finding peace in a life well lived for others and the promises of our risen Lord.

Don Gwillim



The conflict between meat-eating and Christian compassion was initially put to Don Gwillim by his wife Audrie and daughter Tracy. Their reflections led them to become vegetarian in 1990 and vegan in 2002. In 1996, Don retired and he realised that he had a mission to raise awareness of humankind's violence and cruelty towards God's other creatures. He tried to voice these concerns in church circles but was regarded as misguided, and told to 'take his funny ideas elsewhere'. At this time Don became aware of Veg4Lent; he and the founder Tony Neesham (who has since moved to the USA) became a team in 1999. The Veg4Lent campaign involved sending letters to the clergy explaining the benefits of a plant-based diet and requesting they and their congregations consider following a vegetarian diet during Lent, based on the ancient church tradition of abstaining from meat during this period. Don later developed the plan to establish an ecumenical, autonomous organization to provide resources and support to vegetarian Christians in the UK. With the help of the international Christian Vegetarian Association (CVA, based in the USA) and with support from the Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals and Catholic Concern for Animals, he launched the Christian Vegetarian Association of the United Kingdom (CVAUK). Don died peacefully at home on the 24th May 2024, aged 94.

Barry Miles



Barry Miles was a man with many qualities. He was a person of integrity and strength of character. He was someone who was always true to his word. He had a very big heart.

In his professional life he taught history. He served on the ASWA Board of Trustees for many years and he organised and ran, together with supporters, an ASWA stall at the Greenbelt Festival in Cheltenham. He also answered the call to speak on behalf of ASWA at various church services over the years.

Barry supported many animal causes (as well as those relating to human beings) and would always go out of his way to help any creature in need, down to the smallest worm or bee. He was an advocate for Right to Life UK.

Barry loved his church, chess, cricket, and his family and close friends. He genuinely will be very much missed.

BIRDS, FLOWERS, AND THE WISDOM OF CREATION

What comes to mind if I say the word 'pollination'? Flowers yes, but you're probably also thinking honeybees, and maybe butterflies. The pollination of flowering plants (Angiosperms) by these insects represents one of the great collaborations of nature, and while these are indeed important diurnal pollinators in the UK, they are by no means the only animals that enjoy this special relationship. For one thing, honeybees are only one of thousands of bee and wasp species (Hymenoptera) worldwide that make a living through a mutual dependency with plants, and even in the UK, moths can be as important pollinators as butterflies (together comprising the order Lepidoptera). The uniqueness of the angiosperms lies in their dependence on pollinators. Their flower scents have evolved to attract them, and their great diversification in the late Cretaceous (c.100 million years ago) is associated with both the diversification of the Hymenoptera and Lepidoptera, and the emergence of the most biodiverse ecosystems: tropical rainforests, where birds and bats are also significant pollinators, especially of trees.

So important is pollination as an example of life's mutual dependency that it is worthy of theological reflection. In fact I want to suggest that reflecting on pollination can lead us, not only into a deeper perception, and perhaps valuing, of the nature of life, but also to a deeper perception of the character of God. For Christians of course the persona of Christ reveals the character of God, but if our understanding of the world, and life, as creation is correct, we should expect nature to reflect the character of God also. Indeed, since nature's relationships often pre-date the appearance of humans, we might expect them to reflect the character of God rather better than can humanity, which we understand from Genesis 3 to be in some sense broken, or not quite as intended. And so the Book of Job (12.7-8) instructs us, "But ask the animals, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you; ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you," and similarly Jesus tells us to look at the birds (Luke 12.24). It follows that if we misinterpret the character of creation, we shall also misinterpret the character of God.

I described pollination as just one of the great collaborations of nature because life is underpinned by numerous such relationships. More foundational than pollination is the mutual dependence of fungi and flowering plants (fungi enhance the function of plant roots, while plants feed fungi with the sugar products of photosynthesis). Similarly, the dispersal of plant seeds is often accomplished through the agency of birds for whom the plant packaged the seed in a tasty berry, drupe, or pome. Most of our favourite fruits originated for seed dispersal by birds. These are just a few of the many examples of 'symbiosis', which we now realise are so widespread in nature that mutual dependency (dare I suggest 'love'?) might be recognised as the foundational character of creation.

But of course there are also predators, seed predators as well as carnivores. For some, the very existence of predators denies the existence of a creator God who is love itself. Charles Darwin was so influenced by ideas of predation and competition, that in the famous description of a 'tangled bank' that ends the Origin of Species, he perceived the pollination of flowers by insects as a community that, in reality, was at war with itself. This led biologists to the corrosive description of plants 'using' insects as pollinators, and insects 'using' plants as nectar food sources. But reality has many levels, and if we step out just a little, we might focus more holistically on the mutual dependency that truly exists between flower and pollinator. We might also understand that this utilitarian language reflects a particular cultural perception (a cultural construction of nature), and it is truly one that originates in the cynical distrust of humans for their Creator. It is through this lens of distrust that we focus on the suffering inflicted by predators. But if we step out a little and see the ecological impact of predators we find that, despite being vastly outnumbered by herbivores, they are inordinately beneficial to their communities. The Yellowstone National Park in the USA, for example, flourished in a way not seen for 80 years after wolves were reintroduced, controlling the number, behaviour, and distribution of Elk that were destroying the vegetation that was foundational to all life in the park – and note that starvation is not without suffering either.

The wisdom in creation here demonstrated is nowhere better observed than in tropical rainforest. In the Americas, hummingbirds are amongst the most evolved and specialised pollinators. The biodiversity of these forests reflects the exquisite specialisation of each species to a particular ecological niche. Here, one square-kilometre of forest holds 400 species of tree, and every tree only exists surrounded by members of other species. While this has the benefit of reducing leaf predation by specialist insects (whose existence incidentally has led to the evolution of volatile secondary plant compounds that cause it to rain), it presents the challenge to the trees of how to get their pollen to the flowers of another tree. The answer for many tree species is hummingbirds. With wings beating at 70 beats per second, hummingbirds, uniquely, can manoeuvre with precision in three dimensions, but this high-energy lifestyle requires high-octane fuel – nectar. Over millions of years, hummingbirds and their specific flowering trees have co-evolved to specialise to a sufficient degree that pollen isn't wasted on the stigmata of the wrong species. So, across the 300+ species of hummingbirds, bills have evolved to different lengths and curvatures to fit the specifically-shaped and sized corolla tubes of different tree flowers. Hummingbird-pollinated flowers are also typically red, because hummingbirds are specifically drawn to the colour red. Many years ago I visited the high Andes of Ecuador. Walking a forest path at altitude I was, by chance, wearing a red hat and red gloves. Suddenly a hummingbird that had been quietly perched 50m away shot across to me and hovered an inch in front of my face inspecting my hat. Moments later, two more, one on each hand, were inspecting my gloves. I can tell you, to be transfixed by hummingbirds is truly to engage with the unrolling journey of mutual dependency that is the love of creation.

Revd Prof Andrew Gosler
Professor of Ethno-ornithology
University of Oxford



Photo sourced from pixabay.com

PROVIDING FOR POLLINATORS



Imagine trying to travel around Britain without our road and rail network. Or imagine if nine out of every ten miles of road just didn't exist – life would be impossible! Well for much of our wildlife this is the reality. It is confined to tiny fragments of habitat and unable to move across the countryside as our climate and landscape rapidly change.

Why do we need action?

Our bees, butterflies, and hoverflies have suffered badly over the last 50+ years due to changes in land use as a result of modern farming methods, urban spread, and new transport links. Since the Second World War, 97% – that's over 3 million hectares (1.5 times the size of Wales) – of wildflower-rich grassland on which pollinators are dependent, have been lost, reducing pollen and nectar sources.

The UK's insect pollinators are in a critical state. Populations of half of our bumblebee and solitary bee species, two-thirds of our moths, and 71% of our butterflies are declining. These insects are vitally important as they pollinate one in three mouthfuls that we eat and eight out of ten wildflowers.

Pollination is worth over £0.5 billion per annum to the UK farming sector and replacing it with hand pollination would add over £2 billion a year to our food bills, targeted on fruit, peas, beans, soft fruits, cucurbits (squashes, courgettes, cucumbers, etc), and similar.

What are B-Lines?

B-Lines are an imaginative and beautiful solution to the problem of the loss of flowers and pollinators. The B-Lines are a series of 'insect super-highways' running through our countryside and towns, along which we are restoring and creating a series of wildflower-rich habitat stepping stones.

B-Lines bring a range of benefits to wildlife, people, and agriculture, including:

- Helping conserve our native pollinators and a range of other wildlife and contributing towards biodiversity targets
- Helping our wildlife respond to climate change by making it easier for them to move around
- Increasing the number of insect pollinators and the benefits these bring to our farming sector
- Bringing nature to people
- Giving opportunities for everyone to play their part and help create the B-Lines network

B-Lines have been mapped across the whole UK. You can see where the B-Lines are developing on our interactive map (<https://www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/b-lines/>) and you are welcome to add your information when you create pollinator-friendly habitat so we can track the B-lines growing.



Gardening for pollinators

Gardening is a great pastime that provides light physical exercise and relief from stress. It helps to keep you healthy in body and mind. It can also be a source of fresh vegetables, fruit, and herbs, all of which can add to its health benefits.

A key to healthy gardening in terms of the food generated and the stress-free feeling is to ensure we garden in a planet-friendly way. Do not resort to insecticides and herbicides but practice hands-on weeding.

Include a pond with at least one edge shallow enough to enable bees to be able to drink and escape. Ponds are also great for hoverflies to breed (key

pollinator). If a pond is not suitable then consider a shallow bird bath so at least the bees can drink

Solitary bee homes are great for boosting solitary bee numbers and they are key pollinators for fruits so install them south facing close to planned fruit areas.

Fruit bushes and trees are generally best planted as bare root plants after the leaves have fallen. Pick a day when the ground is not frozen to plant these out relatively closely to aid pollination and be prepared to stake trees in the early years to prevent wind damage. Sadly in year one it is best to remove fruit early to encourage the plants to establish. That way, in years ahead you should reap the benefits of bumper crops.

A herb bed is a great addition as some are available all year round and virtually all provide an abundance of pollinator-friendly flowers. Most herbs can be grown either from seeds or cuttings so are generally inexpensive. If growing mint, you may wish to keep in a bucket or similar to prevent vigorous spread.

Remember to attract in the pollinators that are so essential for good crops you need to also ensure a good supply of attractive flowering plants. This is where having a herb bed helps but you could also include some wildflower patches, or popular pollinator annuals such as the Poached Egg Plant, single flowering calendula (marigolds), or try some more exotic flowering vegetables such as Cardoon, or Globe and Jerusalem Artichokes.

Remember that pollinators such as butterflies and moths also require larval foodplants. All but one of the common garden butterflies need stinging nettles for this purpose so consider growing a small patch in a metal bucket to prevent spread.



Paul Hetherington

BugLife

Images courtesy of BugLife

REINTRODUCTION OF DORMICE BOOSTS POPULATION

You may be surprised to learn that dormice can act as pollinators. As they feed on hazel catkins and some spring flowers, pollen collects on their whiskers and is transported from flower to flower. (Editor)

In early June 2024, ten rare hazel dormice were reintroduced into a Bedfordshire woodland to bolster that county's only existing population. This will increase genetic diversity in the Bedfordshire population of hazel dormice. The reintroduction was led by wildlife charity People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES), and builds on a release which took place in 2001 in the same woodland. Since the original release, this dormouse population has thrived, extending their range beyond the original release site, and they will now be joined by another ten of these tiny, beautiful animals.

Managed by PTES since 2000, the annual dormouse reintroductions are part of Natural England's Species Recovery Programme. Several organisations are involved in the hard work that goes into a reintroduction, including the Common Dormouse Captive Breeders Group (including Wildwood Trust), Paignton Zoo, and ZSL. The woodland in which this year's release took place is managed by Forestry England and supported by the Greensand Trust. The dormice will be monitored by volunteers from the Bedfordshire Mammal Group to ensure the population thrives.

After being released into their new home, the dormice are allowed time to acclimatise to their new surroundings

from the safety of their nest boxes, which are gently placed within larger mesh cages filled with foliage, buds, berries, nuts and water. They are checked daily by local volunteers, who also top up their food and water. After 10 days, a final health check from ZSL's DRAHS team takes place, and if all is well, the cages are opened to allow the dormice to venture out into the wider woodland. Once they have dispersed into woodland and hedge areas, the mesh cages will be removed.

To find out more about PTES' dormouse conservation work, visit www.ptes.org/dormice.

People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES)

Photo courtesy of People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES)



PET SERVICE AT HOLY TRINITY & ST ANDREW'S, ASHE

Ashe is a small rural parish in North Hampshire. It is now one of the six rural parishes that make up the Overton Benefice, created in April 2024.

Holy Trinity & St Andrew's has held services of thanksgiving for pets and other animals in alternate years for the last decade. These have been held, at various times, in the field opposite the church, in the churchyard and, on a particularly wet day, in the church itself (animals and all). The services have always been well supported, not only by the parish, but by the neighbouring parishes of Deane and Steventon.

It was only recently, through the good offices of the Revd Ken Bell of Overton, that the churchwardens became aware of ASWA. The proceeds of last year's pet service were donated to ASWA.

The PCC has now decided to hold a pet service every year and this will take place in September 2024. Our neighbours at Deane have decided to hold a pet service too. We think that there is room for both in the calendar!

The photo attached, taken by one of Ashe's parishioners shows an assortment of dogs and their owners/carers from the 2023 service (with the kind permission of the people featured).

Sue Headley

Churchwarden, Ashe



INTERVIEW WITH ANIMAL-FRIENDLY CHURCH WINNER

St Barnabas, Horton-cum-Studley, Oxford

We invited the two churches who were joint-winners of Animal Friendly Church 2023 to talk to us about winning the award. Here we share the responses to our interview questions from Revd Anthea Beresford and Ms Carol Welch of St Barnabas Church, Horton-cum-Studley.

Congratulations on winning this year's Animal-friendly Church award. What does it mean to you that your church has received this award?

We feel happy to receive this award because animal-friendly Church and love for all of God's creation is important to St Barnabas church. To be joint winners is hugely encouraging.

Is being an animal-friendly church something that is important to a majority of the congregation?

It probably wasn't important to everyone at the start, but all change is started by one or two people and then changes start to happen and those who were not so 'on board' realise it is a good thing they had not previously thought about. Then more people get on board until the changes made are owned by the majority, not just the person who had the first idea. Two examples would be that before animal-friendly church there was sometimes a dog in church but it may have felt a little tentative, with the owner concerned that the dog behaved and was not a nuisance, but now we have regular dogs who are simply accepted as part of the congregation and owners can relax and focus on the service knowing their dog is welcome even with the odd bark or wander around the church. Also, to start with, plant-based options were only thought about by vegan members of the congregation but now others also bake plant-based cakes and biscuits for coffee mornings, meetings or other gatherings as people now think in different ways.

Has winning this award helped to raise the profile of animal welfare in your church? Has it had any impact on how your church is viewed in the community?

Yes, it has had an impact. Both within the church and in the village. We are a very small church, so it has had to be a whole church effort to some degree from the start although as individuals we were at different starting places of understanding how animal welfare and Christian faith are connected.

Animal-friendly Church really does provide opportunities for demonstrating that our faith extends to all of God's creatures and involving the wider community.

We have had a box in the church porch for over two years for donations of newspapers, towels and cat or dog food for Tiggywinkles Wildlife Hospital. This is well supported from the wider community.

At the start of the Ukraine war, we had a two-day collection in the church porch for a charity taking animal supplies over to Ukraine and we had a good response of dog beds, crates, leads, blankets etc.

We have a new bell ringer, and her dog is important to her. Knowing her dog is welcome and can sit on her blanket at the back has made all the difference to her becoming a part of our church.

We have started a community pop-up pub/social in the church once a month. This has attracted villagers who do not come to church, along with their dogs. Five dogs came to the last one and it is a really good community event with dogs as welcome as neighbours so no-one feels left out or that they cannot come because of leaving their dog. A non-congregation villager who comes to the social has named it 'The Dog and Collar' which is a great name and fitting with our animal-friendly Church.

We are lucky to have a wild area in our churchyard where we sited our bug hotel. It was a great activity because six children from three families who do not come to church helped to build the bug hotel and each went away with an *I-Spy Creepy Crawlies* book so they could visit the bug hotel to check on bug progress and to learn about God's smaller creatures. It may spark an interest later on. It was a gentle and safe introduction to some of the church family.

The bird boxes which were placed as part of the project throughout the churchyard were donated to us by a neighbour of the church.

The local BBC Oxford radio read about animal-friendly Church in the parish magazine, so we were contacted and interviewed about it on a Sunday afternoon show. This hopefully shared the aims of ASWA more widely as well as sharing how Christian faith and animal welfare are connected. Hopefully that interview may even have sown the seeds for another animal-friendly church in our area – we hope so.

People travelling a distance to attend funerals in church have been surprised to hear they can bring their dog into church rather than having to leave them in the car and the water bowl and dog treats have been very welcome too.

The animal welfare and blessing service is well supported by the community. The 'animal-friendly' activities have helped us make gentle connections with the wider community.

Can you tell us about some of the animal-friendly things that your church does?

Some have been discussed in responses to previous questions, but these include an animal welfare and blessing service; bird feeders, nesting boxes, a bug hotel, and wild areas in the churchyard, and also ASWA prayer cards on the welcome table, and we use animal-friendly cleaning products. We keep a Tiggywinkles wildlife hospital donation box and have their emergency number on the notice board. A bowl of water and dog 'toy library box' (see below) and treats are kept by the lychgate. Animal welfare is regularly included in intercessions – for example praying for the live export animals at sea for weeks on the Australian MV Bahijah and more recently thanking God for the end to Live Exports in UK. We have plant-based options available at events, and display a purple 'Remember the Animals' banner at Remembrance service.

What advice would you give to other churches that want to be more animal friendly?

The application framework is very well laid out so look through it and you may find you already cover some categories. Tackle the easier categories first! For instance, we were lucky that our then Churchwarden had been the key organiser of an animal service for several years, so it was already an event on the church calendar which we have now changed into the animal welfare service held on the Sunday nearest the Feast of St Francis in October.

Be open minded to all viewpoints. Some people may not understand what being an animal-friendly church means and think it is just about having pets in church and have reservations and not want the noise or disruption they may cause. Sharing the application form categories at an early stage clearly shows that it is not just about having dogs in services. That is a tiny part, if appropriate, but it goes much deeper and wider into how our Christian faith affects our care of and compassion for other creatures. People may have reservations about introducing plant-based options and even prayers for animal welfare but a gentle and open-minded approach to all viewpoints can

help to share our love for all of God's creatures in a peaceful way. It helps to raise the profile and helps people realise how much they may already be doing, as well as giving ideas for what more might be possible.

Don't rush it. It took us about three years from start to finish and it was a really enjoyable to put our Christian faith into action with care for God's creatures.

Does the church have any plans to expand what they do for animals?

I think it will be more of a gradual development. This has been the case since we first achieved animal-friendly status as the examples in the previous answers illustrate. It has raised the profile and created a safe space for more open conversations around animal welfare and our role as Christians.

The animal-friendly church 'banner' can help with confidence about sharing our Christian faith. For example, a cat in the village went missing recently and I had the courage to ask the owner, who does not come to church, if she would

like me to pray for the safe return of her cat and to share it with the ASWA prayer circle and she said she would like me to. Being recognised by the community as animal friendly, maybe can give us as a church a broader connection and relevance within the village and helps our neighbours see that as Christians, we don't just go to church on Sundays, but our faith directs our actions every day.

New ideas are welcome as they come along – a younger neighbour to the church introduced a dog toy library, a box of dog toys under the lychgate for dogs to pick a toy.

Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your church?

St Barnabas is a small village church with a congregation of 12 –15 for a typical Sunday service. We have no facilities such as kitchen or toilets so some of the categories were tricky but we fulfilled all we could.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity and framework to become an animal-friendly church.

PUMPKIN WILDLIFE HOSPITAL AND REHABILITATION CENTRE

It was good to speak to Ana Lamaze-Mendez, founder of Pumpkin Wildlife Hospital, and find out about their work, their vision, and their futuristic approach in the way they connect with local community and share their resources. The charity is located in Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, they are a relatively new wildlife Hospital. They work towards providing the best possible veterinary care and rehabilitation for Britain's injured, sick, and orphaned wildlife. They do this through building strong partnerships with local communities, rescue charities, and veterinary partners to give their patients the best chance possible of release back to the wild and to protect their habitats for the future. The team at Pumpkin Wildlife Hospital also share their knowledge and expertise with the veterinary community through training and work experience opportunities to develop the skills and awareness needed to drive change across the country.

Their Story

The idea for a wildlife project started back in 2005 when their founder, Ana, volunteered at the Audubon Zoo in New Orleans, in the USA. She fell in love with wild animals but knew that she didn't want to treat them behind a cage. As Ana established her own veterinary career in London, she began to take on wild animal patients alongside her own private veterinary practice.

Pumpkin is a female red fox that was hit by a car and badly injured but, because her rescuer feared she might be euthanised, she wasn't taken to a vet immediately. This delay to her treatment left her with severe disabilities which made her release back to the wild impossible. Pumpkin finally got to Ana, and after prolonged treatment and recovery, Ana promised Pumpkin that she would do whatever she could to prevent this kind of thing from ever happening again. This was the moment when a dream became a

vision. So, Ana and Pumpkin created a team and together they created Pumpkin Wildlife Hospital. For further information regarding donations or volunteering, just contact them via their website, www.thewildlifehospital.org.uk.

Janet Murphy
ASWA
Committee
Member



YOUNG MEMBERS' PAGE

Welcome to our young members' page. This page features in the summer issue of *Animalwatch* each year. We'd like to make this your space, and to do that we need contributions from our under-18s readers. We want to hear from you! And if you have a suggestion for a feature to add to this page, do let us know.

DIVING INTO THE BIBLE



We're going to dive into the Bible to learn more of what it says about animals. As we look at the Bible passage, younger readers may want to read the story and think about these three questions:

1. What is this passage about?
2. What does it tell us?
3. Why is it special?

Older children and teenagers may want to dive deeper and tackle the questions that follow the reflections on the passage. The important thing is to think about the story and what it means for your life and our life as a Church today.

Genesis 1.20–25

And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across

the dome of the sky.' So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.' And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.' And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

These verses are part of the first creation story in Genesis. They describe God's desire for the earth to be full of living creatures, including some that we today know to be pollinators (birds and insects, or 'creeping things', as Genesis calls them). When Genesis tells us that 'God saw that it was good' we're not told in what way it is good, but we can think about the many ways in which different creatures are good – how different species together create healthy ecosystems, how insects,

birds, and even some reptiles and mammals, act as pollinators, helping plants to produce fruit and seeds, how even the dung from animals puts important nutrients back into the soil, enabling plants to grow. When everything on our planet is working as God intended, things work together so that life can flourish.

- It's easy to like birds and mammals, but how do you feel about 'creeping things?' If you don't particularly like them, does reading this passage from Genesis and the fact that God saw that they were good change your mind?
- Many creatures today, including many kinds of insects, are in danger of becoming extinct. Genesis tells us that God wanted his creatures to 'be fruitful and multiply', in other words, for the world to have many of them. How do you think God feels about animals becoming extinct or being at risk of extinction?

Bible quotation from the New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicized Edition ©1989, 1995 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

MAKE SPACE FOR WILDLIFE IN YOUR GARDEN

Would you like to create a space in your garden for pollinating insects? One of the best ways to do that is to do...nothing! Leaving a patch of your garden wild, with long grass, wildflowers, and even nettles, provides a perfect space for insects, especially butterflies, to feed and to lay their eggs. A wild patch in the garden also provides great habitat for

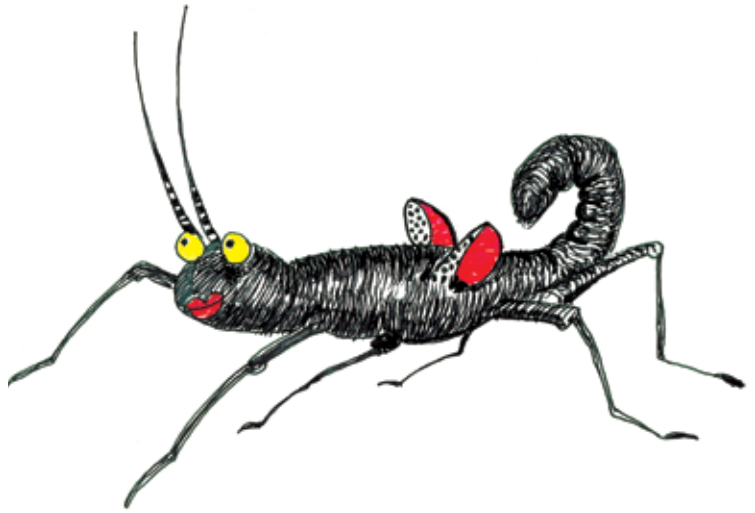
small mammals and some reptiles, like grass snakes, and amphibians. Just be careful of those nettles, and take care where you walk, so you don't disturb any wildlife that might be hiding there! If you want to make your wild patch extra friendly for wildlife, provide a water source. You may not be able to dig a pond, but a mini-pond can be created using a washing-

up bowl with some large pebbles or something else to act as a step that any creatures that fall in can use to get back out. It's important to make sure your mini-pond is kept topped-up with water, preferably rainwater. Just a couple of pond plants in your washing-up-bowl pond will create shelter for aquatic insects.

HILDA'S HIGHLIGHT

World's Largest Pollinator

If you had to guess which animal is the world's largest pollinator, what animal would you pick? You might guess a fruit bat, or a bird, but you'd be wrong! The world's largest pollinator is actually a lemur! According to the Duke Lemur Center at Duke University in the USA, Madagascar's black-and-white ruffed lemurs are the world's largest pollinators (<https://lemur.duke.edu/discover/meet-the-lemurs/black-white-ruffed-lemur/>). They pollinate the island's Traveler's Palm trees. When the lemurs feed on the trees' flowers, pollen gets stuck to their fur and then transferred to other flowers. Sadly, the black-and-white ruffed lemur is a critically endangered species.



Below is a poem about pollinators, in which the first letter of each line when put together, spell 'pollinator'. Why not try writing your own pollinator poem? You can try this style, using the letters of the word 'pollinator', or any other style of poem – if you'd like to see it in the magazine, send it to us with your name and age and we'll print it in next summer's Young Members' Page.

Pollinator

- Pretty flowers
- Offer nectar
- Loved by all kinds of creatures
- Little hummingbirds, even mammals, and
- Insects of many kinds
- Navigate to these feeding stations
- Attracted by scent and colour
- Touch down (or hover) and gather pollen
- On their legs or faces
- Relocating it to other flowers



photo sourced from pixabay.com

THEY ALSO SERVED

Remembering the Animals of War



Join us at the Animals War Memorial,
Park Lane, London

Sunday 10th November – 3.00pm

Speaker from Nowzad

Further details:

Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals

Tel: 01252 843093 **Email:** secretary@angsocwelanimals.net

www.aswa.org.uk

ANIMAL WELFARE SUNDAY 2024



ASWA Annual Service

Bridlington Priory, Bridlington YO16 7BN

Sunday 6th October at 10.30am

To include Eucharist and Blessing of Animals

Preacher: Revd Neil Bowler
Rector, Bridlington Priory

All welcome

For further details, please visit our website

www.aswa.org.uk

or by post PO Box 7193, Hook, Hampshire, RG27 8GT, UK.

E: secretary@angsocwelanimals.net

ARE YOU AN ANIMAL FRIENDLY CHURCH?



Christians have a sacred duty to care for God's Creation

The Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals is now awarding 'Animal Friendly Church' certificates to churches which practise and promote a compassionate attitude towards God's creatures.

Applicants will also be automatically entered into our annual '**ASWA Animal Friendly Church of the Year Award**'
The Winner will receive a hamper full of ethical and useful goodies for your Church and a plaque to display on your wall.

For further details visit our website

www.aswa.org.uk

or apply in writing to: PO Box 7193, Hook, Hampshire, RG27 8GT

E: secretary@angsocwelanimals.net

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