

# Gwent Wildlife Trust Lottery for Wildlife Update for 2019



## Bridewell Common Appeal

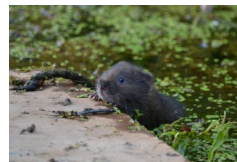
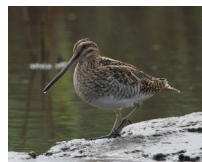
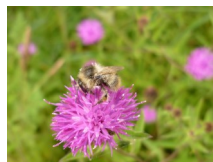
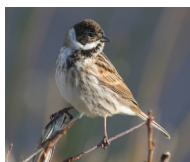
Thanks to everyone that participated in Lottery for Wildlife 2019.

The Bridewell Common Appeal was launched to raise money for the purchase of 81 acres of land known as Bridewell Common to create a new Nature Reserve as part of our existing network, for people and wildlife now and in the future.

Bridewell Common is a cluster of fields within the Magor and Undy Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) that still retain their field system pattern and visible grips from 200 years ago.

The fields contain marshy grassland with a number of indicator plant species such as yellow flag iris and brooklime that make it an important site for conservation. The fields are separated by a series of reens, a significant historical feature unique to the Gwent Levels that offers habitat for insects, birds, mammals and amphibians. Bridewell Common is already home to a wide variety of creatures such as water voles, butterflies, dragonflies and birds like reed bunting.

Open reen on Bridewell Common by Lowri Watkins



## A Wonderful Wild Place for People and a Haven for Important and Rare Wildlife

Every year, thousands of people of all ages from all over south-east Wales visit Magor Marsh to explore the diverse habitats, amongst millions of creatures including rare bugs and beetles and endangered mammals like otters and water voles. We welcome walkers, bird-watchers, photographers, nature experts and amateur enthusiasts as well children coming to learn outdoors, pond-dip or enjoy time with their families in wonderful nature. Bridewell Common will provide a fabulous, expansive, wildlife-rich space for more people to enjoy.

The fields of Bridewell Common are separated by a series of waterways known locally as 'reens' which create this area's unique historical features and offer a perfect habitat for insects, many rare like shrill carder bees and a multitude of birds, mammals and amphibians. This man-made landscape is home to a wide variety of aquatic invertebrates (bugs living in water!) including around 150 endangered species such as the beautiful silver water beetle. The waterways host the world's smallest flowering plant, *Wolffia arrizha*, and our largest native reptile, the grass snake. Plants like water plantain, with its delicate white flower thrive in the clear waters alongside floating-leaf plants like water starworts and frogbit.



Aerial view of Bridewell Common by Rob Waller

# Gwent Wildlife Trust Lottery for Wildlife Update for 2019



## Where has your money been spent?

Thanks to players of Lottery for Wildlife, GWT has been able to boost the funds raised for the land acquisition of Bridewell Common. We set out to raise £250,000 through our fundraising appeal which, together with a generous legacy left by Pat Gorvin, would mean we could purchase the land and begin to transform it into a nature reserve.

This appeal really was an all hands on deck situation with staff taking part in fundraising challenges and runners in the Race for Wildlife raising sponsorship for the appeal. Every bit of funding helped so we decided the money raised from Lottery for Wildlife would also go towards the appeal.



Sunset on Bridewell Common by Lowri Watkins

Thanks to everyone who has supported our Bridewell Appeal, we are delighted to announce that we have raised the funds we needed and Bridewell Common is now in the care of Gwent Wildlife Trust.

## Our plans for enhancing Bridewell Common

The area has not been intensively farmed over the years, but has been neglected. To restore this landscape to its full potential, substantial conservation management is needed on the land and the drainage ditches, in order to make it a home for wildlife on a par with Magor Marsh.

Now purchased, our experienced reserve staff will work closely with volunteers, experts from other organisations and the local area to develop a future management plan for the land. One of the main priorities will be working towards enhancing the dry, scrubbed over field ditches by clearing scrub and re-casting (removing silt and leaf litter). This will enable them to flourish and provide habitat for water-dwelling wildlife. We'll work towards increasing the variety of flora and fauna in the meadows through grazing, wildflower seeding and traditional hay-cutting techniques. We will also attend to the fabulous pollarded Willows, a wonderful feature of the landscape, some of which are already beautifully maintained with others being in danger of toppling. Their survival will mean the continuation of a vital habitat for insects, birds like tree sparrows and our wonderful water vole.



Staff surveying Bridewell Common by Lowri Watkins

If you have ever visited Magor Marsh Nature Reserve, you will know how special and vital that reserve is for wildlife, as result of the conservation work by Gwent Wildlife Trust and our loyal volunteers and supporters. Given time and funds we now have this unique opportunity to create another nature reserve on the Gwent Levels and make Bridewell Common as special for wildlife and people as Magor Marsh is.

So thank you very much for your continued support of this project and indeed all the work we do at Gwent Wildlife Trust.