

# Summary of PACE Meeting 1 February 2024

## Gardening for Nature

45 people enjoyed the talk by Shirley Sampson which was held at Foundry Court, Manningtree. Shirley, from RSPB Flatford Wildlife Garden and Wolves Wood in Suffolk, shared her experience on how to encourage wildlife in gardens. She explained the Food Pyramid based on the importance of soil health and the multitude of creatures that breakdown compost and mulch which can support a diverse range of plants, many of which are food to herbivores and detritivores (feeding on dead plants). These in turn support the primary predators like Bluetits, Robins, Songthrushes – indeed most of our garden birds and without them we won't get the top predators like the Sparrowhawk. Shelter is another crucial element: shrubs, hedges, longer grass, dead hedges and dead wood habitats – so don't tidy up in early winter – leave it to the end of February. Some garden species are under threat, and we can provide for them: Songthrushes need insects and fruit; Stag Beetles need dead wood; amphibians need a pond – no matter how small; reptiles love a warm compost heap of leaf pile; Hedgehogs need to travel between gardens – so leave a gap in the fence for them (12.5cm hole is enough). Pollinators are also in trouble – not just the Honeybee but the 18 species of Bumble Bees and over 200 species of solitary bee, therefore choose plants that provide early nectar like Primrose, Mahonia, Violets and others that are late flowering like Cosmos, Sedums and Ivy. The diversity of plants in your garden is what's important not just for pollen and nectar but for food for a diverse range of insects and their predators which all go towards creating a well balance community in your garden. It's this diversity which keeps pests in check without the need for chemical controls. Shirley shared her lists of her favourite plants for supporting wildlife and looking good in the garden.

Iris Marr thanked Shirley for her super talk and thanked the volunteer team who organised the event, the refreshments and the raffle.

**PACE updates** John Hall, Chair of Trustees, covered various other points about PACE:

- PACE is now a registered charity and has 12 Trustees who meet at least bimonthly to plan and support the work of the charity.
- An Annual Report and Accounts has been agreed and is on the PACE website [www.pacemanningtree.org.uk](http://www.pacemanningtree.org.uk)
- PACE volunteers ran about 20 Projects in 2023 and raised over £10,000 to support these – there is currently just over £1700 in the PACE bank account.
- PACE is considering how we go forward with existing Projects, and also ideas for new Projects – if you have suggestions, please Email [manningtreepace@gmail.com](mailto:manningtreepace@gmail.com)
- PACE has been nominated for the King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAWS) and two assessors will come and meet 3 Trustees and 4 volunteers in February – successful awards are announced by King Charles in November,
- We are pleased the Repair Café is underway in the Red Lion – next one is Sunday 11 Feb 12 noon. Are there two volunteers who could help set up that day?

## Future PACE Meetings

A small team of PACE volunteers are developing a Programme of Speakers for these PACE Supporters Meetings which will normally be on the first Tuesday of each month: speakers during short winter days, and several outdoor visits during long summer days to different venues such as A Solar Farm, A Regenerative Farm, A Recycling Centre etc.

**Next PACE Meeting Tuesday 5 March 7.30pm at the Function Room at The Crown.**