

Volunteering in West Swindon

There are a number of volunteering opportunities in West Swindon

Greendown Copse

Once part of the historic Lydiard estate, this small area now sits within Grange Park close to the western edge of Lydiard Park. Volunteers are increasing biodiversity by encouraging English bluebells and other native wildflowers to flourish. Sections of the native hedgerow have been replanted and the informal paths have been woodchipped. They have added a cornfield flower zone, planted snakeshead fritillaries, primroses, wild daffodils, snowdrops, musk mallow, campions etc, and have sown woodland wildflower mixes.

For more information: contactus@lydiardfields.org.uk

Edgehill Haven

This small piece of land in Freshbrook has been seeded with wildflowers and planted with native hedge and tree species. Small ponds and hibernacula have been created; bird and bat boxes have been mounted on the adjacent house. Nesting birds, frogs and hedgehogs have moved in whilst several bee and butterfly and moth species have been observed.

A 'fairy garden' has also been created to encourage children to visit the area.

For more information email: glynishales@gmail.com

Peatmoor Community Woodland

A volunteer group was formed in 1988 to manage the six acre copse close to the newly created Peatmoor Lagoon. The Master Plan for Swindon's growth westwards in the late 1960s recognised the importance of protecting the area as a rare example of a wet woodland, to be preserved as part of a flood storage and environmental corridor linking the farm fields to the west of Swindon's border and the River Ray to the east. It has never been cultivated or built upon, the soil is made up of several metres of accumulated organic material, what is known as a 'carbon sink,' whereby CO₂ is trapped in its structure.



Coppicing is an ancient management technique to provide sustainable wood for agriculture and construction. Nowadays the emphasis is looking after the ecology of the site and maintaining an educational amenity. The woodland is divided into compartments where trees - mainly hazel - are cut to the ground using hand tools to allow light into dark areas to encourage wildflowers, insects and birdlife. This is done in a seven year cycle so that different environments are created while the trees regenerate. Parts of the copse are left untouched to allow nature to take its course.

New volunteers are always welcome to participate in group activities.

Find them on Facebook: [Peatmoor Community Woodland](#)

For more information and to see photographs visit: [peatmoor copse](#)

Swindon Lagoons and Rivermead Community Nature Reserve

Swindon Lagoons and Rivermead Community Nature Reserve are a band of people maintaining a local community nature reserve on the edge of West Swindon. Swindon Lagoons was formerly an integral part of Thames Water's sewage treatment works. Operational use ceased in the mid 1980s. Under an arrangement with the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust the site acts as a significant hub for a wide variety of breeding warbler species during the Spring and Summer. Because of its ecological sensitivity and safety around the lagoons, it is a closed site with access limited to occasional open days.

Rivermead was formed from a flood relief basin through which the River Ray flows. Tree mounds were constructed from the spoil when the basin was excavated and trees planted. In 2005 this part of the Ray was re-engineered from a canalised route to a mirror image of its original meandering and a water meadow was sown.

Volunteers meet on a weekly basis alternating between the reserves. Tasks include activities like brush cutting, tree thinning, mowing meadows, constructing hedges and surveys. No pre-skills are needed, so come along and enjoy a day in the Green Gym.

For more information email: swindonforestmeadows@wiltshirewildlife.org

Swindon Forest Meadows

This is a partnership project between Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Wildlife Trust which aims to create, restore, enhance and better manage habitats across Swindon Borough. Tree planting is a key focus at sites such as Shaw Forest Park and nearby Mouldon Hill.

Through the project other opportunities exist such as the Swindon Community Tree Nursery and the Swindon Tree Wardens Scheme as well as Wiltshire Wildlife Trust projects close to Swindon and in Wiltshire. Find them on Facebook: [Swindon Forest Meadows Project](#)

For more information email: swindonforestmeadows@wiltshirewildlife.org

West Swindon FAB (Flowers And Butterflies)

A group of volunteers are involved in improving access to the wooded area on Shaw Ridge by developing and maintaining woodland paths. Their objective is to increase biodiversity and they are working to re-establish the original hedgerow, encourage more understorey in the wooded area and rewild the meadow for the enrichment of nature and wildlife.

By establishing wildflower habitats, increasing diversity and planting for wildlife, birds and bees, the aim is not only to help the environment but also to encourage others to enjoy their local area and get closer to nature.

Find them on Facebook: [West Swindon FAB](#)

Westlea Park

Volunteers have spent five years tidying up and rewilding areas of Westlea Park, clearing out a pond, planting new trees and wildflowers to create a lovely environment for the benefit of both wildlife and residents. Obstructions and vegetation has been removed from Whitehill Stream to reduce the risk of flooding after extreme rainfall events. Removing litter is a constant task.

To join in, email Suresh Gattapur: bipinsuresh@hotmail.com or Trevor Carlton: trevor.carlton@btinternet.com

Westlea Community Litter Picking Group

A friendly group of people who have met monthly since 2016 helping to keep Westlea and the surrounding area clean and tidy, litter picking from verges, footpaths, hedgerows and parks. Meeting at 9.00am on the first Saturday of the month in Langstone Way by the bus stop by Westlea School. The litter pick lasts for around an hour, however any time you can give will be greatly appreciated. All equipment is provided and everyone is welcome.