

The Natural Life of Stafford Orchard

Quorn Parish Council welcomes you to Stafford Orchard

The brook running along the edge of the park is called Buddon Brook. It is the most important natural feature for wildlife sustainability in this location. There is evidence that the water is becoming increasingly clean since industrial pollution has diminished.

What to look for

Shoals of brook minnow have recently been seen, something not witnessed in over 60 years. Other fish species known to live in the brook are the Three-spined Stickleback, Stony Loach, Bullheads, Roach and Perch. The village looks forward to the day when salmon might be encouraged back - in 1880 a huge salmon weighing 25lb (11kg) was caught in the brook.

The bird life in and around the park is surprisingly diverse. From the security of the trees on the banks, Kingfishers can be seen on occasion feeding on the insects and small fish. Bullfinches feed on the Guelder-rose (wild viburnum) and a large local population of Jackdaws strut around the park, feeding off any leftovers they can find. Grey Wagtails can be seen on the Green and along the brook banks; the park has its own small breeding population. The more common Pied Wagtail is a frequent visitor. Goldfinch, Greenfinch and Chaffinch feed on the blossom trees.

It is likely that you will see ducks and swans in the brook. Please do not feed bread to them - it is not good for them, can pollute the water and may encourage rats. You might come across one of our volunteer park wardens or groundstaff during your visit; they often have access to appropriate food such as mixed corn. Why not ask? In the rushes and reed bed at the School Lane end of the brook, you may see dragonflies and damselflies - even the Migrant Hawker dragonfly, a relative newcomer to Leicestershire has been spotted here.

Of the wildflowers in the Stafford Orchard, of particular note are the flowering rush, the water forget-me-not and the gypsywort.

Warm evenings can be an exciting time for wildlife spotting - Quorn is well known for its bat colonies and several species hunt

over the park. Pipistrelle, Long-eared and Natterers have been seen and the less common Noctule. Daubenton's bat, a type known to hunt over water has also been recorded. If you are especially quiet, badgers and foxes may be seen.

The park is managed in a way that encourages and supports wildlife. The reed bed at the School Lane bridge has echoes of the centuries old osier beds maintained for willow working now providing a valuable habitat for nesting birds and insect life. Hedgerows and tree canopies provide connected, sheltered corridors for bat foraging. In some areas of the park, the grass is left to grow longer to encourage a greater variety of grasses and wildflowers which in turn will attract wildlife. Village volunteers have planted spring flowering bulbs under the trees and particular attention has been paid to the trees; native species have been selected. In the past Stafford Orchard was well known for its colony of rooks which nested and roosted in the trees surrounding the Dower House. It is hoped that they may now return.

The park management team works hard to be as ecologically sound as possible. We compost our clippings and use them on the park as a mulch. Recycling bins are also provided for park users.

