

The Parish Council met with two representatives from the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust on the Riverside Meadow in January 2023. They fully supported the recent management of the meadow and the recommendations set out in the ecology report commissioned by the PC in 2022.

They also offered the following advice that the PC will be implementing:

- *If any of the trees along the river bank need to be dealt with on safety grounds, consider 'monolithing' them. This leaves standing deadwood, which develops hollows and other features that provide excellent homes to wildlife, such as bats and saproxylic invertebrates.*
- *As stated in the BRCC report, the dense vegetation along the river bank is excellent habitat, that I'm sure is frequented by charismatic species such as otters and kingfishers, so do keep as much of this as possible. Obviously this has to be balanced with amenity needs of the local residents.*
- *No one part of the hedge should be cut every year, as fruit is normally borne on the previous year's growth. A minimum time between cutting should be every two/three years. The ideal cutting time is in early February so that the hedge has time to bear fruit and provide a vital food resource during the winter months.*
- *The plan for allowing the grass to grow between the hedges and narrow the entrance is a good one. Ideally in the future, native hedge species will be planted to more effectively close the gap and provide a wildlife corridor.*
- *Liaise with the local school who are forest school trained, who I'm sure have good ideas on how to engage children in the area. A small dedicated area to provide activities would be good to ensure that the rest of the grassland is left relatively undisturbed, and things like bug hotels dotted around the edge of the site would be an engaging activity for them.*