

THE ENVIRONMENTAL CASE FOR A 20MPH SPEED LIMIT

As you may be aware, Darsham has a Speed Indicator Device (SID) which is being moved around the village to monitor and deter speeding.

Although you may not associate speeding cars with the environment, the data we obtain from the SID could help us build a case for reducing the speed limit to 20 MPH at points in the village. Aside from the safety benefits, there are also environmental benefits to consider:

- *A slower, steadier speed lowers fuel consumption and reduces carbon emissions at the local level.*
- *A lower speed limit results in less heavy braking. This reduces tyre and brake wear, which can release harmful brake dust and tyre residue into the environment.*
- *As we shift towards hybrid cars, a lower speed limit becomes more relevant, as 20 MPH is a ‘sweet spot’ where hybrid vehicles are more likely to run in electric mode, again reducing local carbon emissions.*
- *Potential for fewer wildlife fatalities.*

This study is still a work in progress and has to be rooted in community support, so we would welcome all views on this initiative. Please write to darshamenvironment@gmail.com or call Richard on 07983 340721.

HEDGEHOG UPDATES



A huge thank you to Wendy, Yvonne and Roger who rescued this porker of a hedgehog who got himself stuck under the porch of Shingle Cottage in late June. He was taken to the vets in Leiston as a precaution but given a clean bill of health and released back in Darsham the next day. At 1.4kg, he's the largest the vet had ever seen!

Hedgehogs in the hot weather

Hedgehogs are especially vulnerable in hot weather. If you know you have a visiting hedgehog, please leave out a dish of fresh water each night, and, if you can, a small dish of meaty cat or dog food.

If you come across a poorly hedgehog or a hedgehog out during the day, please call Richard for advice on 07983 340721.

**ENVIRONMENT FOCUS
DARSHAM**

Welcome to the third issue of **Environment Focus**, which comes at a time of some incredibly hot and dry weather, which now seems to be the norm each year, rather than an exception. In this issue, we'll take a closer look at the impact of our changing weather, and what we can do to help ourselves and the environment get through it.

As always, if you need a large-print or digital version of the newsletter, please e-mail us. We welcome all your questions and suggestions, so please do get in touch: darshamenvironment@gmail.com

VILLAGE MEETING & OBSERVATIONS

Councillor James Mallinder, Cabinet Member for the Environment of East Suffolk Council, gave an impassioned talk at the Annual Village Meeting on 10 May. He applauded Darsham's environmental efforts and stressed the importance of us all taking just small steps, which together can add up to making a big difference.

Sightings and observations

- There have been reports of **Kingfishers** at Cheyney Green, close to the abandoned nature reserve.
- The number of **Red Kites** in our area continues to increase, having been brought back from the brink of extinction thanks to conservation efforts. This fascinating bird of prey can be seen soaring high in the sky, and making a loud eagle-like screech.
- Bird life seems unphased by Darsham's new homes, with many sightings of **Jays**, **Nuthatches**, **Bats**, and **Green Woodpeckers**, and **House Martins** building nests at Cheyney Green.

DARK SKIES – A HUGE THANK YOU!



We would like to extend a **HUGE THANK YOU** to all of you who are helping to keep Darsham a Dark Skies Village.

Since the introduction of our new signs at the approaches to the village, there has been a noticeable decrease in outdoor lighting being used, especially at Millfields, Cheyney Green, and along The Street.

Thank you, again, for keeping Darsham's night skies dark! Keep up the good work!

ADVICE

Helping ourselves and the environment through a hot, dry summer

It's another hot and dry summer... lovely for our holidays, but not so great for the environment and wildlife. Here are some quick tips for making life easier for us all.

Hedges and verges

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder! We humans like things neat and tidy, but wildlife doesn't mind. Many species actually much prefer untouched hedges and tall verges, which act as a source of food and shelter, especially in hot weather. What's more, a recent study has shown how vegetation, and especially uncut vegetation, actually has a cooling effect. In the image, you can see how the uncut verge is recorded at 19.8 degrees, while the cut verge is recorded at 24.5 degrees, and the road is a blistering 43.8 degrees! So, think twice before paving over your garden, and unless a hedge or verge needs to be cut for safety reasons, consider giving your strimmers and hedge trimmers a rest during the summer to give wildlife a home and help keep things cool.



Water conservation

- Water is scarce after prolonged periods without rain. A quick tip is to use **bark chippings** on beds and borders to retain moisture. Another good investment is a **water butt** - Suffolk Council has teamed up with GetComposting that offers good deals on water butts here: <https://getcomposting.com/en-gb>
- If you have a washing up bowl, why not **save the water from washing vegetables** and even washing your hands to pour into a watering can to then use in the garden. A small amount of soap does no harm to plants, and can help to deter pest insects like greenfly!
- Bear in mind that many plants are more resilient than we give them credit for, so try **reducing your garden watering** and see how your plants get on.

Weed killer, lawn feed, slug pellets, ant killer

Unfortunately, many common products to keep pests away and keep our gardens looking lush are full of chemical nasties that are very harmful to the environment and wildlife. Weed killer and lawn feed are even known to cause chemical burns to hedgehogs when mixed incorrectly. Here are some effective natural alternatives to try this summer:

- **To kill weeds:** Mix 1 litre of hot water with 500 grams of salt and a small amount of white vinegar. Allow to cool and pour into a spray bottle to use on any pesky weeds. Increase the quantity of salt for stubborn weeds.
- **To feed lawns:** Try liquid seaweed, which is readily available from most garden stores.
- **To kills slugs:** Encourage hedgehogs into your garden to eat the slugs! Failing that, why not try nematodes, which are a naturally occurring biological control for slugs.
- **To kill ants:** Mix 500 ml of white vinegar with 500 ml of water into a spray bottle, and spray in any problem locations. This will both kill the ants and deter them from nesting.

REPORT

Teddy Bears Picnic, 2 July

We were treated to some gloriously sunny weather on 2 July for our Teddy Bears Picnic at Darsham orchard, kindly organised by Jasmine Backhouse and Darsham's orchard group.

The picnic was very well-attended, with several kids and kids at heart enjoying an afternoon in our lovely orchard.

After lunch, there were lots of environment-based activities on offer, Linda produced a beautiful display of wildflowers from around the village, and both kids and adults tried to guess their names, with prizes for the winners.

Chris then organised a tree quiz, with the children having to mosey around the orchard to match up various fruit trees with the correct numbers on their sheets. Again, there were more prizes on offer for the clever winners.



The highlight of the afternoon has to be a fascinating hands-on presentation by Darsham's resident beekeeper, Chris Poupard. Several of the children eagerly lined up (without prompting, in height order) to find out about the importance of bees and how they make honey, and to see the structure of a man-made beehive, followed by a taste of some lovely local honey. Thank you to all who attended!