



Tower Habitats Newsflash

Latest news on nature conservation and wildlife in Tower Hamlets

November 2020

Wildflowers in Shandy Park – the Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park’s “Nature and Us” project has worked with the local community to plant flowering bulbs and wildflower plugs, sow wildflower seeds, and rake off cut grass. A contractor was hired to remove an area of disused tarmac in the park, which the community then planted as wildflower meadow. [Read more about this project](#), which resulted in the creation of over 3000 square metres of flower-rich grassland.

Wildlife habitats at Harbinger School – wildlife habitats have been enhanced at Harbinger Primary School, thanks to a [Tower Habitats grant](#) from the Tower Hill Trust. Habitats around the school’s pond were improved by planting native species, and boxes for birds, bats and insects were installed around the school. [Read more about Harbinger’s wildlife enhancement project](#).

Cemetery Park and Mile End Park beetle lists grow – local naturalist Edward Milner’s ongoing surveys of beetles at Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park and Mile End Park have yielded six additions to the Cemetery Park list, and two new species at Mile End Park. These bring the total number of beetles recorded at these sites to an impressive 459 and 445 respectively. [Read more about these beetles and see photos](#).

More nectar for bees in Victoria Park – the Victoria Park gardening team has replaced annual bedding with nectar-rich perennials around the Burdett-Coutts fountain, increasing the amount of forage in the park for bees and other pollinating insects. The team has also increased the number and diversity of flowering perennials in the Old English Garden, with bulbs and flowering shrubs to follow soon. [Read more about the new nectar rich planting in Victoria Park](#).

New meadow at Stepney City Farm – the Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park ran a training course on creating wildflower meadows at Stepney City Farm in the spring. During the six-week course, participants created 120 square metres of new wildflower meadow, completing the project just before the first national lockdown. [Read more about this exciting project](#).

Greening the Regent’s Canal – the Lower Regents Coalition was one of the first community groups to get projects moving again after lockdown, restarting their regular litter picks in a Covid-19 safe manner in July. They followed this in September with a two-day project to install 75 square metres of floating planters of native wetland vegetation into the canal between the Ben Jonson Road bridge and Johnson’s Lock. [Read more about the project](#), which was funded by a grant from the Mayor of London’s Greener City Fund.

Bulb planting boosts bees in Weavers Fields –the Parks Service arranged for the planting of a nectar-rich bulb mix, specially devised to benefit bees and butterflies, in the north of Weavers Fields. This will provide a colourful display, and source of nectar for pollinating insects, throughout the spring from February to May. [Read more about bulbs for bees](#).

Centipedes in Cemetery Park – three new species of centipede have recently been identified at Cemetery Park. This brings the total for the site to eight species of this little-studied group of invertebrates. These include one nationally scarce species, *Henia vesuviana* (because so few people study them, centipedes don’t tend to have common English names). [See photos and read more about Cemetery Park’s centipedes](#).

Tree planting in Mile End Park – Trees for Cities worked with the local community to plant trees in two areas of Mile End Park. Five new trees were planted on Agnes Green, at the southern end of the park, along with a mixed native hedgerow. A further 16 trees, mostly native species, were planted around the edges of the Woodland Walk on Haverfield Green to expand the woodland. [Read more about the project](#).

For more information on these and other stories, see www.towerhabitats.org

If you have news on wildlife or biodiversity conservation in Tower Hamlets, please e-mail the Biodiversity Officer john.archer@towerhamlets.gov.uk or phone 020 7364 7478