

### **Yellow rattle**

A couple of weeks ago I attended a workshop at the Braunton Countryside Centre, looking at how to establish yellow rattle in wildflower verges or in a mini-meadow. As you may already know, the enemy of wildflowers in any planting is thick lush grass. This is often a result of too many nutrients in the soil, encouraging the grass to swamp any wildflowers and inhibit, or even prevent their growth. Yellow rattle is a parasitic plant and its importance in a wildflower planting is that it will feed off the roots of many of these strong growing grass types. This greatly reduces their vigour, thereby allowing wildflowers and other more attractive meadow grasses to grow.

If any of you would like further information on this, I have a very helpful factsheet and would be pleased to talk through what I learnt.

### **Taw/Torridge bird life**

The Taw/Torridge estuary is not only a spectacularly beautiful sight right on our doorsteps, but also an important area for overwintering birds. It is their only significant North coast winter feeding ground in the area between Bridgewater bay and Lands End.

Last year a report was commissioned by ND and Torridge District Councils (with Natural England, RSPB and the AONB), to look at the causes of disturbance to these overwintering birds. The report recognises the potential for increased disturbance as a result of the development envisaged in the estuary in the new (2018) Local Plan.

This disturbance report is now available on the NDC website. You can find it by following the path [www.northdevon.gov.uk>council>strategies,plans and policies>local plan>planning policy supporting documents>environment>high tide bird roosts and recreational disturbance in the Taw Torridge estuary](http://www.northdevon.gov.uk>council>strategies,plans and policies>local plan>planning policy supporting documents>environment>high tide bird roosts and recreational disturbance in the Taw Torridge estuary).

The report is quite lengthy, but there is an executive summary at the beginning and it is easy enough to scroll through to the bits that interest you. If you enjoy the estuary's birdlife, it is well worth a browse.

### **The Devon Climate Emergency**

In May 2019 the UK government declared a 'Climate Emergency' in response to international concerns over global warming and consequential loss of biodiversity.

Following this lead, Devon CC declared its own Climate Emergency and issued a '*Devon Climate Declaration*', details of which can be found on the Devon Climate Emergency website at [www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk](http://www.devonclimateemergency.org.uk).

The declaration sets out an ambition to tackle climate change and covers all of Devon, including the people who live, work in and visit the county and those businesses who are based or operate here. The declaration challenges every organisation, business, community and individual to contribute to the ambitions detailed within it. Organisations are encouraged to endorse and sign the declaration to illustrate the growing support for taking action.

To manage and coordinate the county's response to the Climate Emergency, a *Devon Climate Emergency Response Group (DCERG)* has been formed, made up of senior officers from about 25 organisations, including councils, emergency services, business and voluntary organisations. Their stated objective is to

1. Facilitate the reduction of carbon emissions to net zero by 2050 at the latest.
2. Prepare Devon for the necessary adaptations to infrastructure and services to respond to a 1,5 degree warmer world.

One of their deliverables is a *Devon Carbon Plan*.

To deliver this plan the DERG has appointed a *Net-Zero Task Force*. The Task Force has recently issued an invitation – a 'call for evidence' - to all Devon residents, to submit their ideas about how Devon can reduce carbon emissions as quickly as possible.

All residents are encouraged to respond to this call for evidence via the Devon Climate Emergency website. Please contribute any ideas you have as soon as you can.

Following the lead from Devon CC, all of Devon's District Councils and many of its Parish Councils have also 'signed up' to the Climate Emergency. Signing up is an acknowledgement that climate change is happening and endorses the Devon Climate Declaration.

On 26<sup>th</sup> October I represented Ashford PC at the North Devon Climate Action Planning Workshop. At this workshop many ideas on how to prevent, slow down and mitigate against the increase of 'greenhouse gasses' and other forms of environmental pollution were discussed and recorded. The output from these discussions will be used by North Devon Council to make a first draft of its own Carbon Plan, aimed at getting North Devon carbon Neutral by 2030. Many parishes also seem to have adopted the idea of a carbon plan. This basically maps out the carbon footprint of all the activities the parish council is responsible for and attempts to identify means by which they can be neutralised by, ideally 2030.

Ashford Parish Council will be discussing this at the next parish council meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> November.

Mike Moss – APC wildlife warden

