

Glenfield Wildlife & Environment Inventory etc (Report updated annually)

May 2016

The Parish Council will strive to maintain the green acreage within the village and preserve the green wedge between the village and neighbouring communities. It is the policy of the Parish Council to actively promote bio-diversity within the village. The Council seeks to protect all areas of its own land recognised for its wildlife importance and to use any influence it may have on other landowners and to promote and support such activities by third parties. The Council seeks to preserve and enhance the wildlife in its locality for future generations.

It is the Parish Council's policy is to actively manage trees on its own property and to use any influence it may have to protect existing trees on other land and to promote the planting of new trees by third parties. The Parish Council wishes to see more and healthier trees in Glenfield; protection of trees against damage whether inadvertent or otherwise and more new trees planted for the future as an essential part of all new developments in the village.

In pursuit of these ends the Parish Council will use its advisory role in planning matters to encourage the Blaby District Council and the Leicestershire County Council in implementing planning considerations, whilst meeting the needs of the community. To this end we have created a comprehensive set of guidelines supporting this policy in regard to trees in particular which is to be regularly reviewed and updated.

The Environment, Sports & Recreation Working Party is tasked to represent the Parish Council at meetings with other agencies and organisations working to the same ends and to respond to consultations in respect of such matters. To this end members attend meetings of various Stepping Stones projects.

BACKGROUND

Glenfield retains the title of village but is in reality a small town. The population is around 11,000 and has grown from about 500 inhabitants in 150 years, with most of this growth being since the Second World War. It has been the site of a settlement since at least 800 BC and was featured in the Domesday Book and in more recent times it played a strong part in the early development of the railways.

As is the case with many villages which have seen rapid expansion and urbanisation, Glenfield is hardly a 'pretty' village but it does have many corners of historic interest or wildlife haven. Unfortunately many of these pockets of land where wildlife does survive are isolated from one another and the domestic gardens need to be sympathetic to wildlife if species are to be able to migrate.

Until the 1900s Glenfield remained very largely a rural community with small developments along Stamford Street, Chestnut Road and parts of Station Road, and with ribbon development along the A50 to the outlying Branting Hill. Glenfield is now contiguous with Leicester and is only separated from Braunstone Frith by the golf course which is now closed and likely to be developed. There is a green wedge between us and Anstey in which two planning approvals exist for close to 100 homes. There is another between the village and Groby, Ratby and Kirby Muxloe but this is much reduced under the Wilson Bowden development. It was largely farmland with no public access but there now to be a number of new footpaths and managed open amenity areas. One specific area has been set aside as a nature area for the great crested newts which inhabit and migrate about the golf course. Most of the Rothley Brook flood plane in this area will be a new amenity area and there is a second colony of great crested newts in this area

Before the advent of the railway Glenfield was primarily a farming settlement with some cottage framework knitting and was centred on the market square (The Square) and the Church and in those days was well separated from its neighbouring communities.

Still in existence but unused, is the mile-long Glenfield Tunnel built by Robert Stephenson in 1832 as part of the Leicester to Swannington Line and then the longest railway tunnel in the world with the line providing the first railway link to the City of Leicester. Passenger traffic ceased in 1926 and the line finally closed in 1966.

The cutting entrance to the tunnel has been a small haven for wildlife for many years but repair work in the fairly recent past has caused considerable disturbance. The line of the track going south west is now a bridle-way (R115) linking the Railway Hotel in Glenfield to the Railway Inn at Ratby and together with Rothley Brook, which it largely follows, it provides both a wildlife corridor and an ideal access route into the countryside between Glenfield and its neighbours. The Parish Council is trying to secure more access to

and from this route and through the adjoining countryside and may be interested in acquiring any land that becomes available along the brook, as additional amenity land if it can be acquired at a reasonable cost.

Glenfield is now bounded on three sides by major roads. The A50 trunk road cuts through its northern edge and the Western Distributor Road (A46) cuts through the west side of the village linking this to the M1 running to the south of the village. This weight of traffic produces pollution, putting the air quality barely within acceptable limits and causing considerable background noise.

Glenfield is just outside the Charnwood Forest Regional Park area which is itself, now part of the developing National Forest. The boundary of this forest is less than one mile from Glenfield and footpaths afford opportunities to walk out into it and an additional route is to be created from the Wilson Bowden development through the area of amenity land to be created alongside Rothley Brook, over a new footbridge and then along a new cycle path to the cemetery between Ratby and Groby on Sarcheveral Way.

The proximity of these nature areas does give a gene bank from which Glenfield's natural corners can be populated. If this is to remain the case it is essential that the green corridors and green wedges be maintained.

Our ecology will to an extent, reflect that of the nearby Charnwood Forest which contains rocks laid down during the Precambrian Period and date from around 560-600 million years ago. At this time, what is now England lay within the southern hemisphere and material erupting from volcanoes accumulated forming the tough rocks of the 'Charnian Supergroup', which is at least 3.5 km thick and has been subject to much quarrying activity on our doorstep.

Primitive life began to evolve about this time; the fossils of which can be found throughout Charnwood Forest. During the later Cambrian Period the volcanoes were worn down by erosion allowing the sea to advance and Swithland Slates represent the muddy material laid down on the sea floor then. The collision of two continental plates approximately 420 million years ago caused the formation of mountains, the remnants of which today form the Charnwood hills.

Over more recent millennia sediments were laid down in seas which covered part of the area giving us some Carboniferous Limestone. As the seas receded they were replaced by a large delta, containing humid swamps and rainforests, in which the Coal Measures accumulated. The very existence of old coal workings which needed restoration played a major part in bringing the new National Forest to our neighbourhood and the continuing quarrying does provide grants which we can utilise to fund our environmental actions.

In less distant times the development of rivers has formed flood plains floored by clay and silt, and later sand and gravel extraction has also tailored the nearby landscape.

The topography of Charnwood Forest is distinct and varied. The central area is high and rocky. Land in the rest of the area is gently rolling or undulating and small streams and brooks transect the area creating localised changes in topography. Rothley Brook flows into the River Soar and also forms a flat floodplain that separates the south-eastern extent of the Charnwood Forest area from the urban area of Leicester and smaller communities including Glenfield.

A number of smaller brooks and streams carve through their way through fields and woodland from the higher land of Charnwood Forest and they tend to be small but provide ecological interest and influence the character of the landscape surrounding them. These are largely unpolluted, fast flowing and well oxygenated. Species include brown trout, minnow, crayfish and much invertebrate life.

To our side of Charnwood we have Groby Pool which is an SSSI, as are the nearby Swithland and Cropston Reservoirs; all of which are important nature reserves for wetland birds and support a rich population of aquatic flora and fauna, making a major contribution to the needs of wildlife and bird life.

Charnwood Forest contains a wealth of ecological habitats and species which, because of the upland topography, wetter and cooler climate and poorer soils, are rare in other parts of Leicestershire. These include heath and acid grasslands and heathers. Cross-leaved heath and bilberry are prevalent and a wide variety of associated vertebrate and invertebrate species are common. These habitats are at risk however from natural woodland regeneration without some intervention by man. Meadows are to be found with fragrant orchid, meadow buttercup, meadow saxifrage and many other associated species

The area has many valuable woodlands. There are areas of semi-natural ancient woodland, as well as some woodlands which are known to have been present since the Domesday Book of 1086. This is largely because they sit on the pre-Cambrian spine which has made the area unsuitable for agriculture.

Within the Forest here are 20 Sites of Special Scientific Interest; both ecological and geological, covering what equates to almost 12% of the area (according to English Nature's Charnwood Forest Natural Area Profile). There are also locally designated wildlife sites including three Local Nature Reserves, Woodland Trust sites, Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust sites and the Country Parks. Charnwood Lodge is designated as a National Nature Reserve due to the pre-Cambrian rocks which are visible as jagged peaks protruding through the overlying Mercian Mudstones.

Whilst we are just outside this area the wildlife it supports is accessible to us and does allow for spreading into the green wedge areas which border our village and our gardens experience a very diverse population of wild life as a result.

OPEN AREAS ETC.

In addition to the linear corridor provided by Rothley Brook, a good part of its flood plain is still given over to pasture providing the wedge between Glenfield and neighbouring villages.

This corridor also helps link other pockets from the Sports Ground in the north to the M1 in the south. Mink and kingfishers are known to patrol these reaches.

Our Sports Ground is about 14 acres in all and as well as the football pitches and the cricket square, it includes a brook-side walk where specie bushes and small trees have been planted in recent years together with wild flower islands to create a wild life haven. There is also the confluence of Rothley Brook and a smaller stream running from the vicinity of the superstore. In the triangle formed by these two waterways, additional wild flower seeding has been undertaken and mowing regimes have been changed to aid the development of wildflower meadows.

Glenfield Meadows Wildlife and Recreation Area lies to the west of the brook and its flood plain pastures, and is on slightly higher land. This has also been re-seeded including wildflower mixes and some damp-loving plants have been introduced into a scrape. Additional hedging has been planted, copses created and wildflower plugs inserted. This nine acre meadow has grass paths mown through what is otherwise natural grassland which will only be mown each autumn after seeding is complete. Where possible it is our ambition that the cuttings will be removed from the area to help impoverish the land to the benefit of the wild flowers. We have acquired a new road worthy mower to assist us in this regime and will keep the work in house rather than use contractors.

This area is part of what used to be the village sports ground before it was cut in two by a new road. The flood plain between this and our present sports ground is a combination of silt and clay loam and is primarily semi-improved, neutral grassland which has been used as pasture in recent years. There are low lying hollows which remain fairly wet after periods of rain. It is the ambition of the Parish Council to acquire this area creating additional sports facilities on the higher areas and enhancing the wildlife plantings along the brook itself and possibly creating a sizable pond in the lower area.

The Millennium Green (4 acres) is the other side of the A50 from this site and is the other part of that old sports ground and is planted with bulbs, shrubs and many memorial trees.

Gynsill Nature Area is made up of two blocks either side of Stella Way each of about three acres. To the north side there is a pond, an arboretum and wild flower areas and to the south, a natural wildflower meadow, copse and specie trees. This adjoins the grounds of what is now the Gynsills pub and restaurant which contains numerous mature trees including a pair of notable Giant Sequoia. Close to the Gynsills, County Hall itself has extensive grounds, including some scrub and sports grounds. It includes the County Hall Oak Local Wildlife Site and some fairly rare trees. The wildflowers in the area have been denuded because of an unsympathetic mowing regime by Blaby. We have ambitions to create a burial ground on part of this site and manage the wilder areas ourselves.

Even the central reservation of the A50 at this point has a series of mature trees and a superb specimen of a horse chestnut. Glenfield is thought to have few genuinely ancient trees. There is one just over the border into Anstey and off Gynsill Lane. This is a gnarled oak which must be many hundreds of years old.

Moving south through the village there is Station Park (0.8 acres) comprising of two open areas surrounded by shrubs and mature trees with a footpath through the middle. Between the two areas and beside the path, there is a splendid mature specimen of a sycamore. Considerable sums have been spent by the Parish Council to turn this area into a quiet corner with some wildflower seeding and the planting of rare native trees. Unfortunately these were all lost to vandalism. We have attempted to secure the elevated path by some scrub planting

To the east of the village the grounds of the Hall School are backed by an avenue of mature protected trees separating Glenfield from Leicester. Amongst recent sightings in this area are greater spotted woodpeckers. An avenue of Lombardy poplars also runs along the foot of the gardens on the south side of Clovelly Road and green woodpeckers are resident.

In the centre of the village we have Ellis Park (6 acres). With its children's play area, floodlit multi sports pitch, and bowls green the levels of disturbance do not encourage much wild life but it does provide another sizeable amenity open space. Between this and the church, are school playing fields including some trees and these two blocks, together with the churchyard and the neighbouring allotments, create a large 'green' area. The Churchyard itself has numerous trees of various varieties protected by a tree preservation order including many mature Limes. The site and remains of the original church also provide cover for numerous creatures.

The other major wildlife block surrounds and includes Western Park Golf Course to the south west and only partly in Glenfield. It is well provided with copses including Oakmeadow Spinney and New Plantation, but it has a few water features. Its western boundary is a narrow belt of very old woodlands known as Fishley Belt and its boundary with Glenfield itself is block of woodland and a large mound covered with bramble and other undergrowth. This is also backed up by an open area of grassland and shrubs off Peartree Close which we are trying to acquire off Blaby to protect it from development and secure links between the various footpaths which run into and by it.

The new Wilson Bowden development will in fill much the area between the golf course and the road to Kirby Muxloe but Fishley Belt is protected a the footpath through this has been formalised and now links to a footpath crossing the development and linking into the wider countryside. This path is in a green corridor separating the new residential area from the new commercial area. Whilst we will of course loose a large slice of farmland they are to provide other wildlife corridors with pathways which will allow both wildlife and residents to better access the open countryside beyond.

We have made overtures to the City Council about acquiring some parts of the golf course when it closes to ensure we can maintain some green separation and wildlife corridors and recreation areas. We have had it declared a Community Asset.

Within the wider new development a long lozenge of amenity land has been landscaped with a grass path. It is elevated and provides a bund hiding the motorway but does provide a wide green corridor linking other wilder areas. There is also an extensive amenity area being created along the brook and we have taken over a small area adjoining this as an informal play area which will be managed sympathetically to wildlife needs. It is prone to flooding and we may consider a small pond to aid drainage and provide a different wildlife habitat. Kingfishers are seen at this point along the brook.

There are in addition several other ponds around the village. A number of flood relief lagoons are included within the development and there is a fairly sizeable one between the houses on Fairfield Crescent and those on Steyning Crescent. This is not accessible to the public but has mature trees around it and has been home to a pair of herons for several years. Similarly enclosed within gardens there is a smaller pond within the triangle formed by Salcombe Drive and Victor Road. There is another small pond off Blackthorn Road in the trees on the edge of the golf course and another off Wheatfield Close. Further small ponds can be found near Gynsill Court; by Gynsill Hall and in the gardens in the corner of Gynsill lane and the A50.

WHERE ARE WE NOW AND WHERE ARE WE GOING

A wildlife and environment audit was taken in 2009 as a snapshot of the situation in the village as known to the members of the working party and as a yardstick against which to measure any changes. This was primarily aimed at the natural environment but the environment as a whole has potential concerns for the residents of the village.

The brook is edged by tangled shrub and mature trees, providing cover and a corridor for wildlife. In the gravel beds, crayfish have in the past been found and various species of fish inhabit the waters which themselves attract kingfishers. There have been two sightings of otters in recent years as these creatures make something of a comeback. They do migrate over substantial distances and these

were probably just passing through. Mink have been seen but not for some time and water voles were present but not apparently now. These two issues are probably related. Great crested newts have been seen in two nearby locations. Numerous other species of bird have been seen, including some less usual species such as tree creepers, green woodpeckers, bullfinches and little and tawny owls. It is some years since we were aware of any sightings of field voles but in the recent past, bats, hedgehogs, foxes and a weasel have been seen in this area. In 2016 a young badger was killed at the junction of the A50 and Glenfield Frith Drive. We know of no reports of rabbits present.

Urban foxes are common in Glenfield and bats can be seen throughout the village. There are 18 species of Bats found in the UK, all being insectivores. The Parish Council is not aware of any scientific survey of species present in the village but sightings, or the lack of them, suggest a significant decline in the past fifty years, presumably due to loss of, and damage to, roosting sites such as old buildings, mature trees, and underground structures (mines, tunnels, cellars, etc). Loss of suitable insect-rich feeding habitats such as wetlands and deciduous woodland cannot have helped and neither can modern agricultural practices. A major problem for them is the removal of commuting routes between roosts and feeding areas. They like to follow features such as tree-lines and hedgerows making another case for protecting our green corridors. Bats being difficult to locate, makes assessing our bat population very difficult. Some species hang in obvious locations, such as the timbers near to the apex of a roof; others roost in cracks and crevices, such as the gaps under tiles, and as such can be very difficult to spot. The Leicestershire Environmental Resources Centre previously at Holly Hayes had details of identified roosts and species but some recent sightings have been positively identified as either common pipistrelle or soprano pipistrelle. Unfortunately with the cuts these central records are no longer being maintained making our own inventory even more important

Hedgehogs are seen fairly regularly but the perceived wisdom is that they are scarcer than they used to be. Whilst they can climb surprisingly well, householders could assist them by ensuring small gaps in fences wherever possible.

Gardens do make up the major source of habitat for most species and fortunately many properties within the village have very large gardens. We are however seeing infill development at an increasing rate and this will have an impact on suitable habitats for wildlife. A casual survey over recent years in one road in the village has identified the presence of the following species, some quite regularly and some very occasionally and some just over flying: Blackbird, black cap, bull finch, buzzard, chaffinch, fieldfare, green finch, gold finch, collared dove, crow, goldcrest, dunnock, sparrow hawk, several species of gull, heron, kestrel, little owl, house martin, swallow, swift, magpie, redwing, red legged partridge, greater spotted woodpecker, green woodpecker, siskin, robin, house sparrow, starling, missal and song thrushes, pied wagtail, wren, wood pigeon, tree creeper and blue, coal, great and long tailed tits.

Also recorded were the following butterflies and moths: Six spot burnet, common blue, red admiral, brimstone, comma, gatekeeper, green veined white, large white, meadow brown, orange tip, painted lady, peacock, speckled wood, small heath, small tortoiseshell, small white, herald and wall.

Also seen in these gardens were unidentified bats, foxes, hedgehogs, smooth newts, frogs, toads, grey squirrels, several species of darter, damselfly and dragonfly, centipede, millipede, mice, numerous beetles including stag and devils coach horse and countless other flying insects perhaps the most notable of which were a snake fly and a hornet. The road where this survey was carried out is in the geographic centre of the community, being as far from open country as is possible within Glenfield.

Further surveys have identified various plant species in the area either side of Rothley Brook, comprising our sports ground, brook-side walk, Gynsill Park and Glenfield Meadows. A few of these have been introduced by ourselves and may not remain resident. The identified species were:

Alder (<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>)	Hedge Parsley (<i>Torilis japonica</i>)
Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>)	Holly (<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>)
Beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>)	Honeysuckle (<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>)
Betony (<i>Stachys officinalis</i>)	Horse Chestnut (<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>)
Birch, Silver (<i>Betula pendula</i>)	Ivy (<i>Hedera helix</i>)
Blackthorn (<i>Prunus spinosa</i>)	Lady's Bedstraw (<i>Galium verum</i>)
Bog Asphodel (<i>Nathecium ossifragum</i>)	Lesser Knapweed (<i>Centaurea nigra</i>)
Bramble (<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> egg.)	Lords and Ladies (<i>Arum maculatum</i>)
Broad-leaved dock (<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>)	Marsh Bedstraw (<i>Galium palustre</i>)

Broad-leaved Willow-herb (<i>Epilobium montanum</i>)	Marsh Cinquefoil (<i>Potentilla palustris</i>)
Buckthorn (<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i>)	Marsh Woundwort (<i>Stachys palustris</i>)
Bulrush (<i>Typha latifolia</i>)	Meadow Cranesbill (<i>Geranium pratense</i>)
Butterfly bush (<i>Buddlei davidii</i>)	Meadowsweet (<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>)
Cleavers (<i>Galium aparine</i>)	Musk Mallow (<i>Malva moschata</i>)
Clover (<i>Trifolium repens</i>)	Nettle (<i>Urtica dioica</i>)
Clustered Bellflower (<i>Campanula glomerata</i>)	Nettle Leaved Bellflower (<i>Campanula trachelium</i>)
Common chickweed (<i>Stellaria media</i>)	Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>)
Common reed (<i>Phragmites australis</i>)	Oxeye Daisy (<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>)
Common Toadflax (<i>Linaria vulgaris</i>)	Poppy (<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>)
Cow parsley (<i>anthriscus sylvestris</i>)	Primrose (<i>Primula vulgaris</i>)
Cowslip (<i>Primula veris</i>)	Privet (<i>Ligustrum sp.</i>)
Crab Apple (<i>Malus sylvestris</i>)	Purple Loosestrife (<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>)
Creeping buttercup (<i>Ranunculus repens</i>)	Ragged Robin (<i>Lychnis flos-cuculi</i>)
Creeping cinquefoil (<i>Potentilla repans</i>)	Ragwort (<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>)
Cyprus tree (<i>Cupressocyparis sp</i>)	Red Campion (<i>Lychnis chalcedonica</i>)
Daisy (<i>Bellis perennis</i>)	Ribwort plantain (<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>)
Dandelion (<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>)	Rosebay Willow-herb (<i>Epilobium augustifolium</i>)
Devilsbit Scabious (<i>Succisa pratensis</i>)	Scots Pine (<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>)
Dog rose (<i>Rosa canina</i>)	Self-heal (<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>)
Dogwood (<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>)	Shepherd's purse (<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>)
Dropwort (<i>Filipendula vulgaris</i>)	Skull Cap (<i>Scutellaria galericulata</i>)
Duckweed (<i>Lemna sp.</i>)	Snakes Head Fratilliary (<i>Fritillaria meleagris</i>)
Elder (<i>Sambucus nigra</i>)	Sneezewort (<i>Achillea ptarmica</i>)
Field Maple (<i>Acer campestra</i>)	Snowberry (<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>)
Field Scabious (<i>Knautia arvensis</i>)	Sow thistle (<i>Sonchus arvensis</i>)
Flea Bane (<i>Pulicaria dysenterica</i>)	Spear Thistle (<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>)
Globe flower (<i>Trollius europaeus</i>)	Spindle (<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>)
Goat Willow (<i>Salix caprea</i>)	Teasel (<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>)
Goatsbeard (<i>Aruncus dioicus</i>)	Wild Carrot (<i>Daucus carota</i>)
Goundsel (<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>)	Wild Cherry (<i>Prunus avium</i>)
Great Burnet (<i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>)	Wild strawberry (<i>Fragaria vesca</i>)
Greater Knapweed (<i>Centaurea scabiosa</i>)	Wood avens (<i>Geum urbanum</i>)
Guelder Rose (<i>Viburnum opulus</i>)	Yellow Loosestrife (<i>Lysimachia vulgaris</i>)
Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>)	Yellow rattle (<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>)
Hazel (<i>Corelus avellana</i>)	

This audit was neither intended to duplicate the detailed records of the Leicestershire Environmental Resources Centre, nor to form our own bio-diversity action plan in the way that the County Council had formulated its own. As the County Council is scaling back its work in this area it is imperative we now keep such records as we can.

We see promotion of public access to wildlife habitats and the countryside as contributing to the health, wellbeing and standard of living of our residents and seek the creation or adoption of footpaths to facilitate this. We wish to increase awareness of the importance of wildlife corridors and the need to link fragmented habitats. We will continue to work to preserve, protect and enhance the areas we control with the ecology and environment very much in mind. We seek to raise public awareness of the importance of bio-diversity and the contribution which individuals and businesses can make to its conservation and enhancement.

We are conscious of the impact of climate change on the environment and ecology and to this end Glenfield Parish Council has signed up to the 'Leicestershire Together' declaration on climate change. By doing so we undertake to contribute to the delivery of the UK Climate Change Programme which aims to achieve as a minimum, targets for carbon dioxide emissions reduction by 2020 and 2050.

In the process we have explored the potential of Solar Panels but our usage pattern does not make this a viable proposition on Council buildings but our new sports pavilion does include a large number of 'green' features. We have installed more environmentally beneficial boilers and are switching our lighting systems.

We further undertake —to work in partnership the County and District Councils to develop and implement policies to attempt to achieve these targets; to encourage all sectors of our community to take any opportunities that arise to take actions to reduce any detrimental impact on our environment and to adapt to the impacts of climate change; to become environment conscious in our day-to-day activities making sustainable choices in energy sourcing and use, travel and transport, procurement of goods and services, water management and waste production and disposal.

In monitoring the impacts of climate change and other influences on the environment and ecology of the village we wish to support a partnership approach to obtaining bio-diversity information by involving any tree wardens or other activists already working in this field. We seek the creation of new wildlife sites through partnership or acquisition. We seek to raise awareness of environmentally sensitive issues whenever possible.

With the assistance of the Stepping Stones Project, members have produced a book of walks in and around Glenfield. We occasionally also lead villagers on one of these walks.

We continue to meet with Stepping Stones and other agencies, contributing where we can. In the recent past members have been involved in a 'Clean Air' forum but recent enquiries have discovered that this forum still exists but now only involves County and District Councils and we feel that the Parish Council should press for our air quality to be checked again as at the last count it was only marginally within the deemed acceptable level.

Climate change effects on our environment

Evidence from the UK Climate Impacts Programme shows that the climate in our area over the coming century, is likely to become warmer and wetter in winter and hotter and drier in summer. In addition, rainfall intensity will probably increase bringing flooding to parts of the village. Extreme events such as heat waves, droughts, gales and storms are predicted to increase in frequency and severity, resulting in crop failures although the farmed land within the village is shrinking rapidly.

The most significant impacts of climate change are predicted to be:

1. A change in the species and communities that occupy habitats; for example cold water fish species may find the areas they can survive in are much reduced or disappear all together. The only water feature of note within the village is Rothley Brook and it is likely to see lower levels and hotter water for parts of the year. Very low river levels affect river oxygen levels leading to a reduction in biodiversity.
2. There are more insects colonizing from southern Europe, some welcome butterflies etc but mosquitoes etc less so. Some species we currently support may be lost as they migrate further north. Other essential species are struggling with mites etc coming in from Europe, bees being a classic example.
3. Changes in the timing of seasonal events like flowering, breeding and migration and reduced winter 'rest and recuperation' periods leaves trees weakened and more prone to disease and pest attacks.
4. Hot weather brings an increase in fire risk, including garden environments.
5. Prolonged dry spells will cause desiccation and have an impact on the shrink-swell properties of clays which underlie much of the village with a risk of increased damage to buildings.
6. A loss of mature trees in the landscape as these succumb to extended droughts, pests, waterlogged roots and more severe storms; depleting roosts for birds and bats.
7. Greater risk of heat stroke and sunburn as average summer temperatures increase and peak temperature events become more frequent; longer term increase in skin disorders.
8. Changes in the viability of some plant varieties that are less able to cope with drought conditions;

It is important to remember that climate change will not be the only change over the coming century. Changes with the economy, population patterns and cultural values will also affect the natural environment.

What can Glenfield Parish Council do at a local level to mitigate potential problems?

9. Improve the condition of existing habitats to improve their resilience and expand their extent. Make more effort to plant pollen producing plants into our amenity areas.
10. Restore and create habitats by extending existing areas of semi-natural habitat; creating new areas where land can be acquired and linking existing pockets to assist migration of species. To this end our existing policy of working with partners to protect and enhance the Rothley Brook corridor and extending existing habitat networks is the best way to safeguard the greatest number of species. We must take advantage of the opportunities the Wilson Bowden development affords us.
11. Provide shade and drinking water at recreation sites.
12. Promote a variety of tree species to eventually replace existing mature trees and safeguard against susceptibility to drought and storms. Our existing comprehensive tree policy should be reviewed and given higher prominence.
13. Use the planning system to maintain due regard for the natural environment. Encourage porous drives etc.