

The Close

*Trees
Bughouse
Wild flowers*

Community Orchard & Nature Reserve

Latest News

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Pitton Nature Trust

Registered Charity
No. 1203375



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Pittonnaturetrust.org.uk

Welcome to 2025

It is the time of year when every one is thinking about their plans for the New Year. At Pitton Nature Trust the last few months have been a particularly busy time as we ready ourselves for 2025. This edition of our newsletter provides exciting news on our plans to create a new Community Orchard and Nature Reserve on land at Roundbarrow Farm, plus there is an update on the work already undertaken to create a biodiverse habitat in The Close.

To date the trustees and a few volunteers, have been able to undertake the practical tasks in the management of The Close. We are encouraged by how many people have offered their assistance and as you will read later we will definitely be asking for your involvement in delivering the next stage of the projects.

We have also been fortunate in securing funding from a range of sources, this coupled with some generous donations has helped establish the charity, but as we move forward additional funding will be required. If you feel able to support the charity with a charitable donation you can do so via our newly created JustGiving page which can be accessed on our website.

Finally a big thank you for all those who undertook nature surveys for us in 2024, in particular Carole Smith for the butterfly, grasses and wildflower surveys she undertook in the Close.

Our First Event

Pitton Nature Trust's inaugural event on 25th October was a sellout. Thank you to everyone for their fantastic support.

The main speaker was Patrick Cashman from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds who talked about the work of the RSPB at Winterbourne Down and their plans to create a nature reserve on land at Roundbarrow Farm.



During the evening some of the trustees provided updates on the development of the charity and our current projects.

Rosie Lane provided an update on the work undertaken to create a biodiverse natural habitat in The Close and explained why to the casual observer things in The Close might not look much different from the previous year.

Matthew Judd spoke about the plans to create a Community Orchard and Nature Reserve on approximately an acre of Wiltshire Council land on Roundbarrow Farm. In early 2025 Wiltshire Council will transfer the land to the Parish Council and the charity will have a long-term agreement with them to manage the land.

Patrick Cashman from the RSPB then provided a highly informative presentation on the charity's Winterbourne Nature Reserve, the RSPB has recreated wildlife-rich habitats, once typical of most downland farms, to provide a safe haven for Stone-curlews and Lapwings and a marvellous variety of chalk-loving plants and insects.

The transformation of fields once used for crops into flowering grasslands is having a beneficial impact on the wildlife – plenty of bugs have moved in to make the most of the nectar-rich fields. They have also built south-facing butterfly banks, packed with flowers favoured by the Small Blue and Brown Argus. The site also has Skylarks, Lapwings, Yellowhammers, Linnets and Grey Partridges which are all making the most of the fields and healthy hedgerows.

Chalk grasslands are a really biodiverse habitat, bursting with different plants and animals. In the UK, we've lost 80% of them – so this newly-restored area is really important. A key feature of the site are the mysterious and rare Stone-curlews. Though still vulnerable, their numbers have begun to recover in restored spots like this, so it's a great place to see them. Winterbourne Downs' colourful hedgerows and scrubland are perfect for secretive woodland wildlife such as Blackcaps, Whitethroats, Barn Owls and the Brown Hairstreak butterfly.

It has taken a number of years to create the habitat to attract such a variety of species, but the intention is to deliver something similar on Roundbarrow Farm. Patrick stressed that transforming intensively used farmland into a nature reserve is a gradual process, but the outcomes are incredibly rewarding.

Feedback after the event showed the evening was a great success and we will look to run similar evenings in 2025.

Community Orchard & Nature Reserve

At a meeting of Pitton and Farley Parish Council on 16th December the Council agreed the Heads Of Terms with Wiltshire Council in relation to the land transfer, on a 125 year lease, of an acre of land on Roundbarrow Farm.

Pitton Nature Trust have been in discussion with the Parish Council with the aim of having a long-term management agreement for the charity to create and maintain a community orchard and nature reserve on the site.

We are awaiting confirmation from Wiltshire Council on details of the area of land on Roundbarrow Farm which will be transferred to the Parish Council for the creation of a Community Orchard.



We have been successful in obtaining £4,843 in grant funding from the Coronation Living Heritage Orchard fund, some of this grant is for the planting of five fruit trees in The Close, but the remainder is for the orchard and nature reserve. This fund is administered by Wiltshire Council and celebrates the Coronation of King Charles III.

We have also secured 420 hedge whips from the Woodland Trust which will provide approximately 100 metres of hedging on site.

In the coming weeks a fence will be erected to separate the Community Orchard and Nature Reserve from the new 5 metre wide permissive bridleway which will run from Pitton to Firsdown.

Once the fence is up the work will start on planting the new hedgerow and twelve fruit trees. This will be followed by the erection of a small information shelter which will provide scope to capture water on the site. In dry spells the new fruit trees will require approximately 10 litres of water each per week.

Volunteers

We are grateful to everyone who has already offered to volunteer to help us deliver our projects.

If you would like to help please contact one of the trustees or email us at volunteering@pittonnaturetrust.org.uk

Donations

As we develop our projects we will require additional funding. If you would like to make a donation to support our work visit our [JustGiving page](#) from the link on our website pittonnaturetrust.org.uk

The Close

Pitton Nature Trust have now been managing The Close for a year. During 2024 a number of surveys were undertaken to identify the flowers, grasses and butterflies in The Close, these will provide a good benchmark for future years. An area of top soil was stripped and wildflower plugs were planted, we wait with interest to see what emerges in that area in the spring.

Towards the latter part of the year native bulbs were planted including daffodils, snowdrops, crocus and cyclamen and some Yellow Rattle seed was spread. These should start to emerge over the coming months and will increase the biodiversity of the area.

A bug house has been constructed in one corner, a big thank you to Pitton Guides for their involvement in collecting material for the bug house.



In the coming weeks five fruit trees will be planted, two cherry trees, a crab apple, eating apple and pear.

The Trustees presented their Annual report on the management of The Close to the Parish Council on 22nd January. You can read that report and five year Close Management Plan on our website

Our Trustees

Paul (Fred) Fredericks (Chair)

Lindsay Thompson (Secretary)

Lyn Fredericks (Treasurer)

Rosie Lane (Safeguarding lead)

Suzie Gutteridge

Matthew Judd

Caroline Loader

Our website contains more details about our trustees

Pitton Nature Trust Website

pittonnaturetrust.org.uk

Use our QR code for quick access to our website and to read our latest news!

