

County Life

Planners work out ways to embed wildlife in new schemes

Planners and consultants have discussed new ways to embed wildlife and their habitats into the planning system at their largest Suffolk gathering to date.

The East Anglian Planning and Biodiversity seminar, which took place at the University of Suffolk in Ipswich, brought together a record 150 people – the largest in the event's history – on November 14.

The past year has seen local authorities implement unprecedented environmental measures, including declaring a climate emergency, passing emergency motions on biodiversity loss and vowing to help protect wildlife, reflecting widespread public anxiety about the environment.

Simone Bullion of Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Darren Tansley of UK Water Vole Steering Group, and Jan Collins of the Bat Conservation Trust showed how species that live in wet habitats can be protected, including through species surveys.

SARAH CHAMBERS

sarah.chambers@archant.co.uk

They recommended building resting places, tunnels, ledges and ramps for otters, eradicating predatory non-native mink for voles, and retaining roosts in bridges, trees and buildings, installing sensitive lighting schemes and maintaining open waterways with bankside plants for bats.

Sue Hooton of the Association of Local Government Ecologists explained the new Environment Bill. "The Bill is key to delivering the government's 25-year Environment Plan," she said.

Conservation covenants would enable landowners to legally secure long-term environmental benefits on their land, and 'Biodiversity Net Gain' would ensure developments leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than before, she said.

Sarah Scott of the Environment



From left, Speakers David Diggins (Norfolk Rivers Trust), Jan Collins (Bat Conservation Trust), David White (Norfolk County Council), Sarah Jane Scott (Environment Agency), Simone Bullion (Suffolk Wildlife Trust), Sue Hooton (Association of Local Government Ecologists), Martin Sanford (SBIS), Gareth Dalglish (Natural England), Darren Tansley (UK Water Vole Steering group), Gen Broad (SBIS)
Picture: HAMISH JACKSON

Agency was positive about how it would play out.

"Hand on my heart, I really think this is going to work," she said. "The system is transparent and efficient, bringing together river restoration and nature recovery networks."

Among the schemes discussed were the Norfolk Rivers Trust's innovative ideas for natural wastewater treatment solutions and a wet woodland planted by Scottish Power Renewables in a Bramford sub-station drainage scheme.



Speakers
Michael
Hotze and
Emma
Browning
(Scottish
Power
Renewables)

Picture:
HAMISH
JACKSON