



Friends of Saltwells Nature Reserve

# Saltwells Seasonal



## Winter 2025

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## Welcome

We must start with an apology to those of you who have purchased our 2025 calendar as it has come to our attention that an error was made by the printers of the calendar, which led to two dates (31st August and 29th November) being missed out. We hope that these errors do not take away from the pleasure brought by the delightful photographs from around Saltwells Nature Reserve over the next year, however if you would like to have the error rectified, please contact us and we will return your calendar to the printers who will replace the affected pages.

2025 will see the Friends of Saltwells Nature Reserve continue to work closely with the wardens at Saltwells to care for and improve the nature reserve and to bring you a host of events at Saltwells and beyond. See the last page to find out what we have planned during the next 3 months.

If you no longer wish to receive a copy of this newsletter and other events information, please notify us by email at [friendsofsaltwells@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofsaltwells@gmail.com) and your details will be removed from our mailing list within one month.

## The Blue Monday Antidote

The third Monday in January has become known as Blue Monday as it is generally recognised as 'the most depressing day of the year', but it is also used to inspire positive change and motivation. While not scientifically proven, Blue Monday has become a symbolic time to acknowledge the common feelings of sadness or slump many experience in January and to promote mental health awareness and self-care.

At Saltwells we have therefore come up with the 'Blue Monday Antidote' to help you through this potentially gloomy time. We'd love you to join us on **Monday 20th January** when we have a range of activities to choose from. **The Friends of Saltwells Nature Reserve along with Dudley Countryside wardens are leading the activities at Saltwells Nature Reserve between 10am and 2pm** to promote positive mental wellbeing. Join us for guided wellness and bird watching walks, forest bathing sessions (known as Shinrin-yoku) or come for a hot drink around the campfire, all within the natural environment of the nature reserve



No booking is necessary and all activities are free.



## The King's Award for Voluntary Service

*The MBE for volunteer groups*

# The King's Award for Voluntary Service

As you may have seen on our social media or in the local press, The Friends of Saltwells Nature Reserve are one of 281 local charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups to have been awarded The King's Award for Voluntary Service for 2024. This is the highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK and is equivalent to an MBE. The King's Award for Voluntary Service aims to recognise outstanding work by local volunteer groups to support their communities.

Friends of Saltwells Nature Reserve Chair, Les Drinkwater said: "All the volunteers are enormously proud to have their hard work and dedication to Saltwells recognised in this way. The volunteers have such a wide range of skills, combined with energy and enthusiasm inspired by this special place. We want to share everything Saltwells has to offer the local community and conserve it for generations to come. I am so grateful for all their hard work and commitment and delighted to share this recognition with all of them."

If you would like to find out more about the award or see which other groups have been recognised, go to <https://kavs.dcms.gov.uk/>



## News from the wardens

During the last few months of 2024 things continued to be busy here at Saltwells, along with looking into our workplans for 2025.

We've spent the last few months concentrating on woodland improvement works, scrubland management on Netherton Hill and upgrading some of the infrastructure across the reserve. You may have seen some of the areas in the wood where we have been carrying out thinning work to improve habitat, establish new glades and provide more light for ground flora. Timber felled has then either been used to create new invertebrate habitat or for fences to protect some of the bluebell glades.



Scrubland management on Netherton Hill continues to provide a mosaic of differently aged vegetation that will support a huge range of wildlife throughout 2025. As always, our resident herd of Exmoor ponies will continue to graze across the north of the site as part of our meadow management.



We've also installed new stock fencing along the bottom of Netherton Hill as part of the Countryside Stewardship scheme to help protect the sensitive habitats found there.

Our thanks as always for all your support and Happy New Year to you all. See you in 2025.

# The RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch 2025



Once again, the Friends group will be joining in with the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch, holding birdwatching sessions in the Education Garden at the Wardens' Base over the weekend of 25th and 26th January. See the back page for times.

Come along and join in, there is no charge to attend. Binoculars, telescopes and Identification charts will be available to help you identify the birds you spot. You can even make your own bird feeder to take home to attract birds into your garden.

**The Big Garden Birdwatch is the world's largest garden wildlife survey. Every year, hundreds of thousands of nature lovers take part, helping to build a picture of how garden birds are faring.**



In the 2024 survey, around 9.7 million birds were counted, with more than 610,000 people taking part.

The House Sparrow was the most commonly spotted with 1,442,300 sightings. It has been top of the pecking order for 21 years now, however their numbers have significantly declined over that time.

## What were the top five birds spotted during the Big Garden Birdwatch in 2024?

- House Sparrow
- Blue Tit
- Starling
- Woodpigeon
- Blackbird



Source: RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch

To find out more details of how you can take part in your own garden follow the link to the RSPB website at <https://www.rspb.org.uk/whats-happening/big-garden-birdwatch> where you will be able to download your own ID charts, tally charts and details of how to add your sightings to the national record.



## What's happening at Saltwells Nature Reserve...

We are once again planning a host of walks, talks and events for 2025.

Plans for January, February and March include:

### January 2025

**Wed 8th Jan FOSNR Litter Pickers** 9.30am– 12 Meet outside the Warden's Base

**Sat 18th Jan Conservation group** 10am-12noon

**Mon 20th Jan The Blue Monday Antidote** 10am-2pm

**Sat 25th Jan Bird Watch at the Base** 10am-3pm RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch

**Sun 26th Jan Bird Watch at the Base** 10am-3pm RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch



### February 2025

**Wed 5th Feb FOSNR Litter Pickers** 9.30am– 12 Meet outside the Warden's Base

**Sat 15th Feb Conservation group** 10am-12 noon

**Sun 16th Feb Come and See** 1pm-3pm **A winter walk**

**Tues 18th Feb Come and Create** 11am-1pm Join us for free crafts during half term

**Sun 23rd Feb Come and Explore** 10am **A perimeter walk around Saltwells NNR**

### March 2025

**Wed 5th March FOSNR Litter Pickers** 9.30am– 12 Meet outside the Warden's Base

**Sat 15th March Conservation group** 10am-12 noon

**Sat 22nd March Come and Create** 1pm-3pm Adult and teen needle felting

**Fri 28th March Come and See** 6.30pm– 8.30pm **An evening bat walk**

**Sat 29th March Come and See** 6.30pm– 8.30pm **An evening bat walk**

Email us at [friendsofsaltwells@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofsaltwells@gmail.com) for further details and to book a place.

You can also find us on our Facebook page [@FriendsOfSaltwellsNatureReserve](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfSaltwellsNatureReserve)

or on our website at [friendsofsaltwellsnaturereserve.org](http://friendsofsaltwellsnaturereserve.org)