

## Friends of Sunbury Park – update Spring 2026

Spring is always a wonderful time of year in Sunbury Park. New signs of growth across the grassland and woodland are an indication of what is to come. The recent rains have also helped. It was around this time last year that the drought began and the resulting lack of vegetative growth was soon apparent. This year seems quite different. A casual walk across the park will highlight Buttercups, Lesser Stitchwort, and Cow Parsley as well as Cornflower and Daisy in and around the enclosures. Meadow Foxtail grass can also be seen in large numbers blowing in the wind as it turns a golden yellow. We are also lucky in having small colony of Pignut in the park.

A walk along the edge of the wildflower and pollinator area adjacent to Thames Street is also worthwhile. A recent walk showed that Poppy, Ox-Eye Daisy, and White Campion is currently in bloom. Corncockle is just starting to flower, and the entire area should be a mass of colour in the next few weeks. Pic below.

In the woodlands, birds are singing as the breeding season continues. In amongst the regular sounds, Blackcap is regularly calling and a patient wait could result in hearing Cetti's warbler. Initial observations indicate that some of the small bird nest boxes erected last autumn are being used. Unfortunately, not the kestrel or Owl box. At least for this year.

As the evenings get shorter, a walk along the woodland edge adjacent to Green Street may provide views of Pipistrelle Bats. Usually appearing about 20 minutes after sunset, they can be seen flying in a fast, zig-zag pattern, catching insects in mid-air.

On a less pleasant note, May- July is the time when Oak Processionary Moth might be observed on Oak trees in the park. The park does have a history of discovering small colonies of this pest. It is important not to come into contact with oak processionary moth caterpillars, hairs or nests as their tiny hairs can cause skin rashes, eye and throat irritations and breathing difficulties in people and animals who come into contact with them. If you do see a web like nest on an oak tree, do not touch it but report it to Spelthorne Council on 01784 451499 or email [environment@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:environment@spelthorne.gov.uk). More info is available on Spelthorne Council website.

The cows will soon be returning. There has been suggested for 2026 that a slight change in management is made. The cows may possibly be introduced slightly later and will stay for longer. The idea is that by a later introduction, the flowers will have had a chance to bloom and set seed before being eaten. By staying later, with any autumn rain they will churn up the sward creating new open areas for plants to colonise.

The other suggestion is that, following the 2020 report, the south facing slope by the haha is the most floristically diverse part of Sunbury Park. As such, it is thought that it might be temporarily fenced off, again to allow the flowers to bloom and set seed. This idea is still under discussion as there are negatives as well as positives from conducting such actions. Coarse grasses can be extremely competitive in driving out wildflowers.

As part of the general improvement programme, we understand that finance has been made available to update and improve the children's play area in Orchard Meadow. Talking of Orchard Meadow, the cowslips again made a great show this Spring. Credit to Spelthorne Council Parks dept for sympathetically managing the meadow. It gets better every year and is a wonderful amenity for the local community.