

Pan Mill Meadows 29<sup>th</sup> April 2026

10 people, ages ranging from 9 to 88, gathered by the River Medina in the car park at Shide, We saw hundreds of tiny Mousetail plants growing in the gravel behind the gate; it's an uncommon species on the Island and thrives in trampled ground. We recorded our first birds of the morning: Dunnock, House Sparrow, Carrion Crow, Herring Gull, Robin, Wren and Blackbird.



Bellflower, Cornsalad and Ivy-leaved toadflax were growing out of the walls along Shide Path. Looking over the railings to the river, we saw Yellow iris and Hemlock water-dropwort in flower. A beautiful Grey Wagtail, a species that requires unpolluted water and plentiful supply of aquatic invertebrates, flew up from the channel.

From the footbridge over the river, we saw a Moorhen holding territory and a pair of Mallard. Along the riverside path, we could hear the song of Blackcap, Chiffchaff, Great Tit, Chaffinch and Blackbird. Male Orange-tip butterflies were patrolling, and the females (without orange tips to their wings) were laying eggs on Hedge Garlic plants.

The trees along the path were flowering well: Horse Chestnut 'candles', the Wayfaring-tree and Sycamore. We found 'currant galls' on the catkins of an Oak tree, each containing the larva of a tiny wasp. When the larva hatches into an adult, it will lay eggs in the underside of oak leaves; these will develop into Spangle galls in the autumn. A delicate Holly blue butterfly, with fine black spots on the underwing, came down from the tree-tops to find nectar in the Red Campion flowers. A buttery yellow male Brimstone butterfly passed by, while a Blue Tit sang in the trees and a pair of Bullfinches called out in unison.



We identified 88 plants, 17 birds, five butterflies and a variety of other insects, including a fruitworm beetle. These will be entered into national databases as our contribution to recording the biodiversity of the site.