

Supporters and volunteers at Wheatlands Educational Woodland release two hedgehogs back into the wild



Take the woodland trail

by John Wheatcroft

THEY say that there is nothing new under the sun and Barry Otley of Wheatlands Educational Woodland would agree.

Barry, who set up the woodland on five acres of his land at Wheatlands Farm in 1999, says: "I wanted to put something back into the area. The aim was to provide a woodland habitat for future generations, an important conservation habitat for flora and fauna in an area where woodlands are scarce."

Almost 5,000 native broadleaved trees and shrubs have been planted there, including oak, birch, ash, holly and hazel.

It all dovetails neatly with Defra's current initiative on sustainability, in which Barry, at Dutton Farm, near York, has long been a firm believer. His tenants have to farm with sensitivity to the environment in mind.

School children visit educational trails, and members of the public can wander along specially-cut paths. The City of York Council and the Forestry Commission are among the organisations supporting and funding the woodland.

There are more 75 types of wildflowers, than 30 bird boxes, six bee hives and an ancient hedgerow. Nineteen kinds of butterflies, more than a quarter the number of species to be found throughout Britain have been spotted there and catalogued by volunteers.

Everything is maintained by the woodland group and Barry says: "We are committed to education. There was a need for trees and landscaping here – and we wanted to get

involved with the community. We have some great helpers and volunteers. I had the idea and it has been my job to co-ordinate people, but without them we could not have done it."

Visitors to Wheatlands Educational Woodland can follow a self-guided tour which highlights points of sustainable interest on the way. They can also pick up on fascinating habitat facts from leaflets along the trail.

Barry, a member of the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), says: "For example, a third of our food supply relies on bees for pollination. Many people just do not realise the importance of these issues. Often they are things that they might have once learned at school and long forgotten."

There's a nature walk on Thursday, May 19 at the woodland (7pm-8-30pm), at which children, individuals and groups will all be welcome.

Wheatlands can be found off the A59, alongside the A1237 ring road, behind Wyevale Garden Centre in Northfield Lane, Upper Poppleton.

Anyone interested in joining Wheatlands Educational Woodland can clip this advertisement or copy details on to a piece of paper and send to the address opposite.



Wheatlands Educational Woodland joining coupon

I/We support the aims of the Wheatlands Educational Community Woodland (not for profit group) to renew my/our membership

Family membership - year (£7.50) Family life membership (£100) Corporate membership (£20)

Name of IndividualOr

Name of Corporate Body or Organisation:

Please indicate the name of the nominee of the organisation, and alternative if required:

For all members

Address

PhoneEmail:

SignedDate

Please return this form and your cheque (made payable to B Otley/Woodland) to:

Dutton Farm, A59 Nr Hessay, York YO26 8JU

If a VAT receipt is required please indicate: Yes No

In association with

