



NEWSLETTER



Hello!

WELCOME TO THE THIRD SBN NEWSLETTER!

Well, it's difficult to believe, but we have just celebrated the first-year anniversary of The Solitary Bee Nursery!

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2024

It's been amazing – the number of people who have been so supportive has been incredible. Particular thanks go to Grahame Parsons and all the wonderful volunteers at Friends of New Mills Station, Toby and the Team at the Rock Mill Centre, and the New Mills Community Orchard.

Over the past 12 months we put up three nesting boxes round New Mills, ran a children's workshop to build bee boxes in the Rock Mill Centre, and had stalls at a couple of craft events to raise funds and awareness.

I've also been busy getting autumn/ winter sowing seeds in the ground and taking every opportunity to learn more about these amazing creatures.



*Nest Box in
New Mills
Community
Orchard*

NESTING UPDATE

Normal
Cocoons



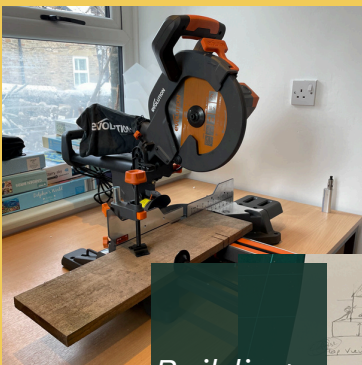
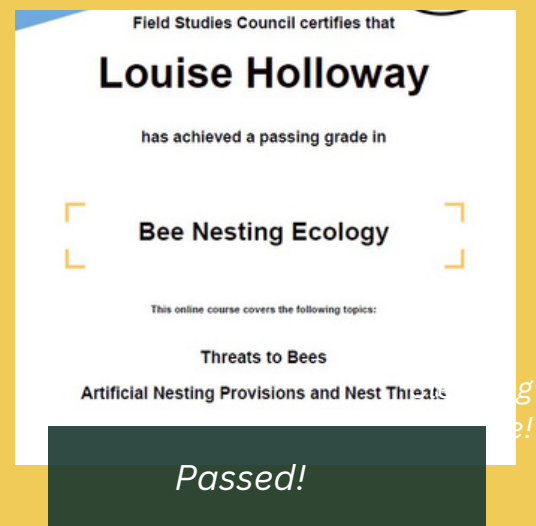
Sadly, 2024 was not a good year for nesting bees. In 2023 I harvested 125 cocoons, in 2025 only 25. Still, some is better than nothing, and hopefully 2025 will be a better year!

We did have one cocoon filled at New Town Station, however the cocoons looked strange – not like the normal Red Mason Bee ones at all. I've still kept them and am looking after them over the winter and will keep a close eye to see what emerges.... It could be that they hadn't fully developed, or it could be a parasitic wasp or other predator..... we will see!

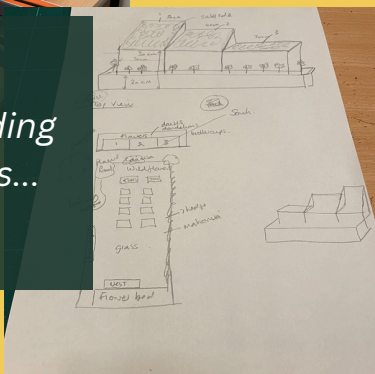
WINTER ACTIVITIES

Despite it being a very quiet time on the wildlife front, it's been a busy few months for the Solitary Bee Nursery.

I wanted to expand my knowledge, so now have certificates from the Field Studies Council on Bee Conservation and Bee Nesting Ecology, which has really helped me to widen my understanding of solitary bees beyond those that nest in bee boxes. I would really recommend the courses; they are online, not expensive and contain a lot of really good stuff.



Building
plans...



This lead me on to designing a nesting site for ground nesting bees, which lead to me doing a carpentry course, which lead to me buying a marvellous new power tool.....I'm building the nest site to go in my garden and will keep you informed of progress. I'm hoping to get Tawny or Ashy Mining Bees, which would be very exciting indeed.

MORE WINTER ACTIVITIES

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I've also been asked to run a workshop in Manchester for a women's group, during which I'll be getting them to build some bee boxes, and hopefully getting them all enthusiastic about our wonderful solitary bees. If it goes well, I'm hoping to run more through the year, again I'll keep you informed.

From the courses I did, I became a big fan of Professor Dave Goulson, so when I saw the opportunity to go on a live webinar that he was co-hosting I had to join The Buzz Club (<https://www.thebuzzclub.uk>) The project is aimed at getting people involved in Citizen Science around bees and other insects. As a member I will hopefully will be able to participate in some exciting research over the next few months.

Oh, and I had a birthday and Christmas since I last wrote – and there was definitely a theme to the presents...I couldn't be happier! Certainly plenty of reading there to get me through the winter.



Loving the theme...

PLANTING FOR SUCCESS

And finally, I've been obsessing with planting for spring, getting some early starting plants in before the snow arrived, which will hopefully be ready for the spring. This year I've added

- Sicilian Honey Garlic
- Dogs Tooth Violet
- Vipers Bugloss
- Selfheal
- English Bluebells
- Honesty
- Greater Knapweed
- Lovage (thanks again to Grahame for the seedlings)
- Field Scabious
- Echinacea

These have all been chosen either to flower nice and early, or to fill in the gaps I already had in my planting. I just need to find somewhere to put them all now.....



Selfheal



*Buff Tailed
Bumble Bee*

BEES YOU MIGHT SEE THIS MONTH...

You might not think that you'll see any bees at this time of year, but the hardy Buff Tailed Bumblebee does fly through the winter, so keep your eyes peeled, you may be luckier than you think!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Once again, I'll be out with the funky knitted hats and bee boxes – this time at the Antique and Maker's fair on 26th January at St. George's Parish Hall. As always, the aim is to raise both funds and awareness, and I'll also be sporting the rather natty birthday present my husband got me, so hope to see you there!

If you have a bee box, then 1st April is a good time to put it out – for more information on where to site it, there is loads of information on my website, so do check it out.

Well, that's it for now. I'll be back in the Spring! Do get in touch if you have any questions in the meantime.



Branded Hoodie!

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