

# BRIDE Project Newsletter

*Feb 2019 Issue*



**BRIDE Project**  
*Farming with Nature*

## PROJECT UPDATE

At present your maps are still being assessed and the first batch of 15 should have their BMA (Biodiversity Managed Area) calculated by next week. Quotations are being sought for hedge planting and all of the other measures that will be available to you as part of the improvements you can make to your farm. As we have veered away from the traditional hedgerow mixture of previous environmental schemes, it is more difficult to source some of the species that we want for planting. If planting hedges is one of your options we are hoping to pay in full, part of the hedge planting, perhaps 100 or 200m depending on other options you may choose.

Apologies to those of you who have logged onto our website – it is still a long way from being finished but we have recently made a start on it and hopefully you will notice some changes in the next couple of weeks and as time goes on.

One of our project partners has been in touch and is keen to engage with any beef farmers in the group with a view to supplying them. Contact us if this is of interest to you.

### Project Promotion

Since our meeting in December the Project continues to receive very positive media coverage. Our feature on Eco Eye gave it a great boost and the BBC Radio 4 farming programme "On Your Farm" which aired on January 27<sup>th</sup> also received some very positive comment.

The last 2 Monday editions of the Irish Examiner featured the Project also and we were invited to Brussels in mid-Jan to present to the EuroDAIRY farming group. This is a group of farmers and industry leaders from all over Europe that promote a more sustainable and viable milk production system in Europe.

## WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR...

**Buzzards** - February, especially bright days with a little wind will see the first "soaring buzzards". Keep an eye in the sky as these recent arrivals (2004) pair up and look for the best territories. There may be 2 or up to 10 birds circling high in the sky, usually between 11 am and 1pm but could be anytime. Most areas of the valley should have them at this stage.



**Red dead nettle** is one of the earliest wildflowers that is out at the moment – take a few minutes from your busy spring workload and see if you can spot it. It likes waste ground and is an excellent early food source for bumblebees.



**Frog Spawn** – During survey work on 30 farms in the Bride Valley last summer, frogs were noted on only 2 of the farms. Scarcity of frogs may have been due to the unusual weather conditions of 2018. We are keen to hear of any sightings of frogs and in particular frog spawn at any location in the Bride Valley over the coming weeks – please email details of sightings. Frog spawn is most usually found in drains, ditches and ponds.



## MONTHLY REMINDER

Ensure that all your **hedgerow maintenance** is carried out **before February 28<sup>th</sup>**. Recommended BRIDE Project practice is to flail a hedge as shown in the image below. The top half is left untouched to allow trees to flower and fruit benefiting pollinators and birds. The lower half of the hedgerow is flailed to prevent scrub encroaching into the field or field margin. This allows light into the base and encourages wild flowers and plants to grow.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO ...

A simple and inexpensive means of attracting birds such as Great Tit, Blue Tit and Starling to your farm is to drill holes in a cavity wall. Holes should be located approximately 2-3 metres from the ground to avoid cat predation. The hole size drilled will determine the potential species – guidelines are Blue Tit & Coal Tit (25mm), Great Tit & Tree Sparrow (28mm), House Sparrow (32mm), Starling (45mm).



## BRIDE Project

### Contact Details

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