

Town: The Urban Environment

Many of the town's wetland habitats can be found in the urban area. Former reservoirs such as Sutton Mill Dam and Thatto Heath Dam are the legacy of bygone industry but today provide habitat for waterfowl such as ducks, coots and moorhens. Newton Lake, created by damming Newton Brook, is now heavily silted. The mud banks now provide a feeding area for large numbers of overwintering Teal. Prescott Reservoir on the eastern boundary of the Borough is similarly supports a range of water fowl.

Parks that incorporate areas of long grass, trees, wildflower meadows and wetlands are extremely valuable such as Sherdley Park where the woodlands support tawny owls and buzzards and the wetlands are home to great crested newts.



Water Vole

The town's greenway network and important areas for wildlife and provide wildlife corridors. Of particular importance is the Sankey Valley, a 15-mile corridor stretching from Carr Mill to Spike Island in Widnes. The waterways of the St Helens Canal and the Sankey Brook form the key spines of this ecologically rich area, providing habitat for water voles.

There is around 14km of private garden space in St Helens, much of which will provide habitat for a range of species of birds such as Robin, Blackbird and mammals including fox, bank vole, wood mouse and pippistrelle bat.

Some familiar and much loved urban species such as the house sparrow have declined in numbers but can survive in the suburban areas of the Borough.

Hedgehogs, another garden favourite, have also declined in number nationally. Factors thought to be behind the decline in urban areas include road deaths and fragmentation of the garden habitat by fencing restricting movement across the area.



Hedgehog @Richard Burkmar