

Upcoming BIG Survey

SMESTOW VALLEY LNR, WOLVERHAMPTON

Thursday 25th September 2025

For our last BIG survey of the year we've decided to have a visit to the wonderful Smestow Valley Local Nature Reserve where we hope to encounter some of the autumnal invertebrates, which should still be active at this time of year, such as the Ivy Bee (*Colletes hederæ*) which, as the name suggests, uses ivy flowers as its main food resource. This species is a relative newcomer in Birmingham and the Black Country, only arriving here in 2015 and there is a known population at Smestow Valley. As well as ivy bees, lots of other insects can be seen visiting flowering ivy at this time of year, such as other bee species, wasps, hoverflies and butterflies.

The WEC, Turners Field and surrounding area in the south west of Smestow Valley LNR, comprises the area of the former Wolverhampton Environment Centre (WEC), which used to be a tree nursery operated by Wolverhampton Council.

The surrounding areas consist of the meadows of Turners Field, and adjoining plantation woodlands, with the Finchfield Brook forming the western boundary, and the Staffs and Worcs Canal and Smestow Brook to the north east/west. The old disused Wombourne Branch Line, now Wolverhampton railway walk also runs through the reserve. Also located within the area, towards the canal is an old sand and gravel quarry thought to have been used in the construction of the canal back in the 18th century. The whole area is underlain by Permo-Triassic sandstones, that lends itself to slightly more acidic soils. Also on site are notable ponds including the Nursery Pool, and

the Willow Pond, which were both known to be supporting populations of Great Crested Newts.

Time: 10:30 to 15:00

Meeting point: at the gates of the WEC, 76 Westacre Crescent

Postcode: WV3 9AR

OS Grid Ref: SO 88020 98215

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w3w/: [driven.upwardly.risen](#)

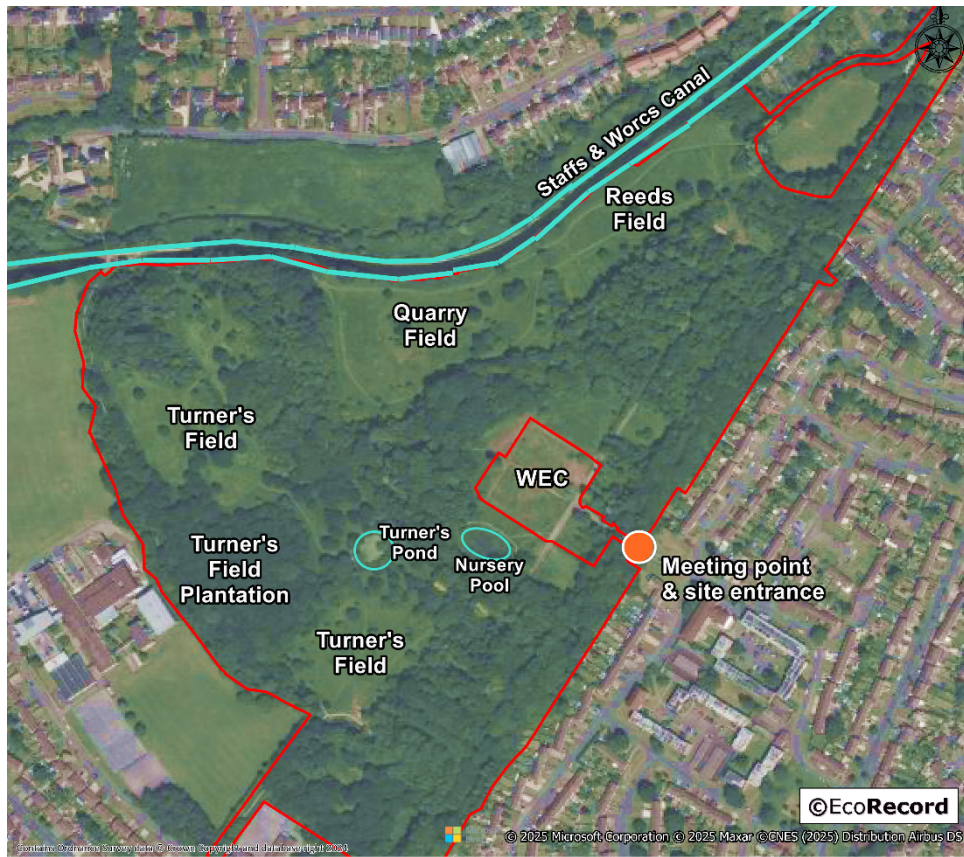
Parking: If you are arriving by car there should be space to park on Westacre Crescent or by the entrance.

If you are interested in attending the survey could you please email

David (the walk leader) to let him know. His email address is

David.h@bbcwildlife.org.uk

If you need to contact David on the day his mobile number is 07719 031709.



IVY BEES

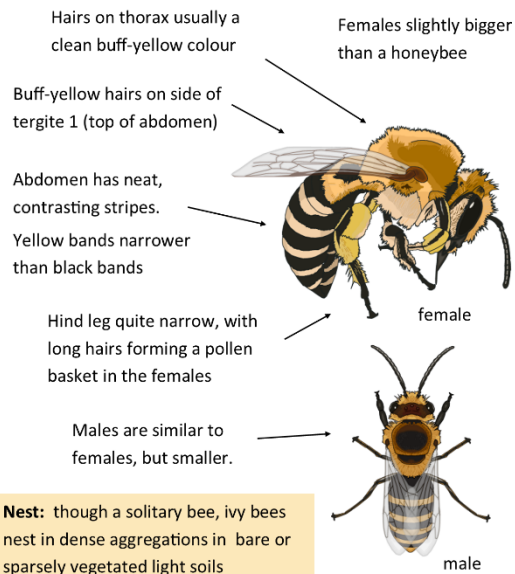
QUICK ID GUIDE



An interesting species to look out visiting Ivy flowers is the **Ivy Bee**, which is a solitary bee species that feeds mainly on ivy pollen. The species is fairly easy to identify, and the main species you may get it confused with at this time of year is the Honey Bee, so below is a guide on how to distinguish between them.

IVY BEE

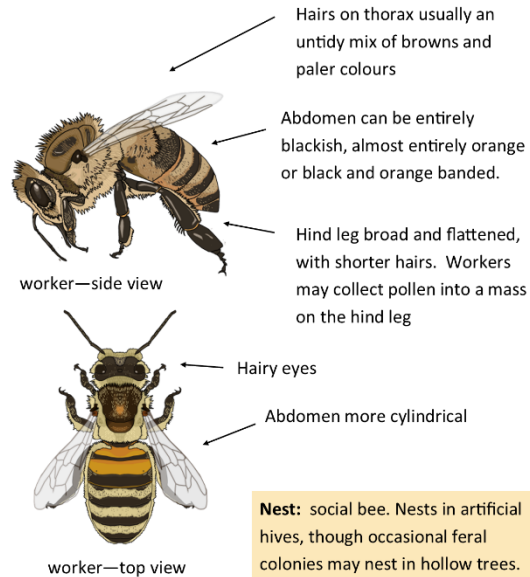
Colletes hederæ



Nest: though a solitary bee, ivy bees nest in dense aggregations in bare or sparsely vegetated light soils

HONEY BEE

Apis mellifera



Nest: social bee. Nests in artificial hives, though occasional feral colonies may nest in hollow trees.



Birmingham & Black Country
Wildlife Trust



Smestow Valley Local Nature Reserve

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🌿 A Big Week for Conservation at Smestow Valley! 🌿

This week's volunteering session was full of activity and collaboration! We were thrilled to welcome the Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust along with the Birmingham and Black Country Invertebrate Group, who carried out a fascinating invertebrate survey led by David Howard.

Notable finds included the common carder bee (*Bombus pascuorum*), ivy bee (*Colletes hederarum*), and even a screech beetle (*Hygrobia hermanni*). 🐝 🐞

Meanwhile, the dedicated team from Finchfield Waterside Care continued their brilliant work along the brook – litter picking and de-silting the culvert to help improve water flow and reduce the risk of localised flooding. 💧

Joining forces, the Friends of Smestow Valley and Jordan, Smestow Valley's Conservation Officer, got stuck into habitat management near the Tolkien Gates, tackling the spread of pendulous sedge to help restore the balance of the grassland. The Friends group also carried out some path maintenance and hedge line work.

Another fantastic day of teamwork, biodiversity monitoring, and hands-on conservation across the reserve!

[#smestowvalley](#) [#wildlifeconservation](#) [#volunteeringmatters](#) [#invertebratesurvey](#) The National Lottery Heritage Fund

