

Chris Packs'em in

Over 80 guests came to see the wildlife expert and television presenter, Chris Packham, officially open Amwell's Dragonfly Trail in July. Set within an area of wet meadow next to Hollycross Lake, the trail is the first of its type in the county, featuring over 76 metres of boardwalk that take visitors out over the water and sections of reedbed and other wet vegetation. This allows excellent opportunities to see dragonflies and damselflies as they develop, hunt and breed in the best habitat and conditions available to them.

The former flooded gravel extraction site has been benefiting from over £450,000 of improvements for visitors (including new hides and accessible pathways) with funding from the

East of England Development Agency and Growth Area Funding through Green Arc.

Chris entertained guests with observations about dragonfly behaviour, the state of wildlife conservation today and the need to inspire the next generation of wildlife watchers. He declared the boardwalk a 'triumph of engineering' and added that Amwell is just the sort of resource needed to encourage people to get outdoors, away from their televisions and computers, and to see spectacular and special wildlife really close up. In the afternoon he gave an enthusiastic 'thumbs up' to the White Hide as he guided two groups around it.

The launch of the trail represents an enormous achievement for

everyone who has been involved in working on the Amwell NR enhancement project. We would not have been able to realise our dreams and vision for this site without the help of a great number of supporters, funding partners and wildlife enthusiasts. We are extremely grateful to all of them for helping to create such a promising future for Amwell Nature Reserve, and to Chris Packham for getting years of exploration and discovery on the trail off to such an enthusiastic start.

The dragonfly trail will remain open until the end of September, when it will close for the Winter and Spring to allow wintering and breeding birds the peace and quiet they need. The trail will re-open again in May each year.



Chris Packham on Amwell dragonfly boardwalk