

Easton Village Newsletter

November 2025

Issue 241

Easton Fauna - The Polecat (*Mustela Putorius*)

Charles Nixon



Whilst the name may seem somewhat exotic, Polecats are around in Easton. We know, as one left a scat on our patio a few weeks ago! They used to be rare but have recovered in numbers and can now be found in central, southern and eastern England. However, they are not easy to see in the wild because they are nocturnal and, unlike badgers, are unpredictable

in their movements and behaviour.

Polecats are generally dark brown, with a pale underbelly and creamy underfur that shows through, and have a distinctive 'mask' on their face.

A member of the mustelid family, which includes the stoat and badger, the polecat is roughly the size of a ferret but bigger than a stoat or weasel as the picture overleaf from Derby Museum (with a polecat in the bottom right hand corner) shows. Polecat dens are commonly found in rabbit burrows, especially in summer, but they frequently move into farmyards in winter, when they may make their den in hay bales, under sheds and in rubbish tips. They have one litter of five to ten young a year in early summer. Polecats have territories that vary in size according to habitat and food availability. For males they have been measured at 16 - 500 hectares, and for females about 25 - 375 hectares, using radio-tracking. Territoriality seems weaker in polecats than other mustelids, perhaps because they move around more to exploit seasonally abundant food

sources. There are often piles of scats near den sites, but little evidence that scats are left around the territory to defend its borders.

Perceived as bloodthirsty animals, polecats were declared vermin during the reign of Elizabeth I and the name 'polecat' was used to refer to vagabonds. Despite their reputation as killers of poultry, polecats eat small rodents, rabbits, frogs, birds and snakes during their nocturnal hunting forays. They are beneficial for conservation due to their role as a natural pest control, particularly of rabbits and rodents, and their ability to help maintain healthy

ecosystems.

The name polecat may be derived from the early French expression poule-chat (chicken-cat), a reference to its perceived liking for poultry. The polecat's Latin name *Mustela putorius* means 'foul-smelling musk bearer', referring to the pungent smell which the animal releases as a defence when it is frightened or injured. This also explains the polecat's old English name 'foulmart' which



distinguished it from the 'sweetmart' or pine marten that has no defensive 'stink'. Not surprisingly, the name polecat is sometimes used in North America to refer to a skunk.

New Location still required for Defibrillator

Parish Council

The Parish Council is still looking for somewhere to locate the Defibrillator for the village. It needs to be visible on a wall and installation will of course be paid by the Parish Council. If you think you may be able to help, please contact the Parish Clerk at clerk-eastonpc@yahoo.co.uk

59 Club

John Maith

The August winner was Mike Baker with number 34 and the September winner was Clare Hindmarsh with number 59. Congratulations to both. The next draw will be on Saturday 25th October and will be the bonus ball from the National Lottery. Good luck to all.

Beware of scams

EPC



Huntingdon District have reported a number of scams currently taking place.

This is an example of a text you may receive. Please note that genuine applicants will not receive texts like the one shown.

It is advised to delete any emails or texts like this immediately.

Past Newsletters and Photos

A warm welcome to all the new people who have recently moved into Easton this year. Should you wish to know more about the history of the village or see historic village photos or read any of the past newsletters from the very first one published in 2004, you can visit our website www.eastonpc.co.uk

Fireworks in the village

Please could we ask villagers for their kind consideration for those who live in thatched cottages in the village? On Bonfire Night rockets can often be blown off-course, even in the slightest wind, resulting in sparks raining down on nearby thatched roofs. Also, dogs, cats, horses and other animals don't understand what fireworks are – all they know is that there are loud, frightening explosions, and their instincts kick in, telling them they need to run and hide for safety. These blasts can leave animals confused, disorientated,



lost, in a state of severe shock, or even injured. At one time pet owners used to be able to prepare for Bonfire Night, but nowadays the celebrations can be anytime over a two-week period or more.

If any villagers are planning on having fireworks, a message on the village Facebook page would be greatly appreciated by many pet owners. There are three local organised displays at [Huntingdon Racecourse Saturday 25th October](#), [Grafham, Saturday 8th November](#) and at [Kimbolton School Friday 7th November](#). Thank you.

Church Services in October/November

Sunday 26th October Easton 9.30 am Morning Worship

M.O'Callaghan

Sunday 9th November Easton 6.00 pm Remembrance Service

Revd Howson

Sunday 23rd November Easton 9.30 am Morning Worship

Wardens

For more local services go to the following website

<https://www.kymchurch.org.uk/wp2/index.php/church-services>

And finally--

-Next Coffee Morning is Monday 3rd November 10.30 am St Peter's Church

-All the A14 overnight roadworks should have finished on 25th October

- Big Breakfast Sat 8th November 9.30 – 11-00 St Peter's Church

Deadline for next Newsletter is November 23rd