



SMPPA Newsletter

July 2025

Communications and Your Feedback!



We are now doing a lot more communication using **WhatsApp** on subjects that are of interest to members, as we only issue general newsletters twice a year, along with AGM minutes which include a detailed summary of the previous year's activities. All newsletters and the minutes are available on our website at www.smppa.org.uk/newsletters.

If you would like to join any of the WhatsApp groups below, please email info@smppa.org.uk stating which group you would like to join. These currently are:

"Pond Life"

For communicating **Anti-Social Behaviour** in the vicinity of the Pond (and more recently A259 speeding issues at the northern end of the Pond). Used for reporting problems as they occur, and any action.

"Pond Work Party"

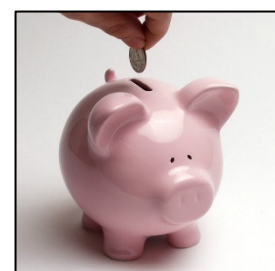
For anyone who would like to **help with maintenance jobs** around the Pond. Jobs may include bank clearance, strimming, manual work on projects around the Pond including the banks, footbridge, tidal gates etc. Work normally takes place in small groups at short notice. *You need to be physically fit to volunteer for this group and ideally able to operate tools and machinery.*

"Dolphin Quay"

For those interested in any **activity at Dolphin Quay** – eg work on vegetation, tree cutting, general updates etc. We are currently evaluating the area and would like to improve the planting diversity.

Legacies in your Will - a gift for future generations

The SMPPA is always extremely grateful for any gifts or legacies received, however small. We are a small charity with very limited funds but very big responsibilities. Bequests to the SMPPA are fully exempt from Inheritance Tax in the United Kingdom. More details at www.smppa.org.uk/donations. We are able to designate funds for specific projects, if you wish.



It has been a busy few months since our last newsletter. This newsletter is longer than usual to cover all the activities, which include:

- **Events:** we held the AGM on 13th March (detailed Minutes emailed separately) and the Broomfield Schools Photographic Competition went ahead in early Spring (see page 7).
- We have been evaluating the land and vegetation at **Dolphin Quay** (p 2).
- We have had various meetings with **Sarah Hughes, Chalk Streams Resilience Officer for the Western Sussex Rivers Trust** to discuss different initiatives relating to the River Ems. A fisherman thinks he has seen a large salmon in the Pond recently (p 10).
- **King Charles III England Coast Path** (KCIII ECP) is imminent for launch with new signage (p 5).
- We have made plans to control the **Phragmites Reeds** at the northern end of the Pond (p 6).
- We have carried out **Flail Cutting/Mulching of the east bank** for the first time, with great success (p 4).
- **Bas Payne Zoologist** has carried out a survey of lagoon cockles and other crustaceans (p 8).
- We have fitted **nesting tubes on the bird rafts** – thanks to Dave Gattrell (p 5).
- We have added a **new information board** on Slipper Mill (p 11).

We are as ever very grateful for the help of everyone mentioned in this newsletter, and to the support of all our members.

With very best wishes to you all.

SMPPA Trustees

info@smppa.org.uk - tel 01243 371134

56 King Street, Emsworth, PO10 7AZ

Committee Members/Trustees

Jo Greenfield (KS - Chair), Christine Hows (SR – Membership Secretary), Simon Dwyer (SR), Simon Eveleigh (KS), Jim Hailstone (SR), Susan Dibden (co-opted Treasurer – SR), where SR is Slipper Road, KS is King Street.

Dolphin Quay

Since the land was gifted to the SMPPA back in 2020, very little has been done in this area. We have recently been looking at the trees and planting in particular. We have removed some “trip hazards” such as unused mooring posts hidden in the grass, and we have also had 2 large ash trees cut down (which had ash dieback) as they were overhanging the southern end of the path and were unsafe. This was done “at cost” by Oliver Lower, a local Arboricultural Consultant and owner of “Fallen & Found”.

We would like to encourage people to walk on the WEST side of the footpath as the path is slowly being “moved” east towards the water’s edge by walkers.

Over the winter we are hoping to develop a strategy to provide more vegetation diversity in the area, in particular removing dominant plants such as hemlock water dropwort and bay trees so that more wildlife-friendly plants can seed and grow. We are working with Jonathan Robertson, Caroline & David Richards, Barbara Melrose and the Wardles and wish to enhance the area without affecting its overall “secluded” feel. **Do join the Dolphin Quay whatsapp group (see page 1) if you would like to be involved.**



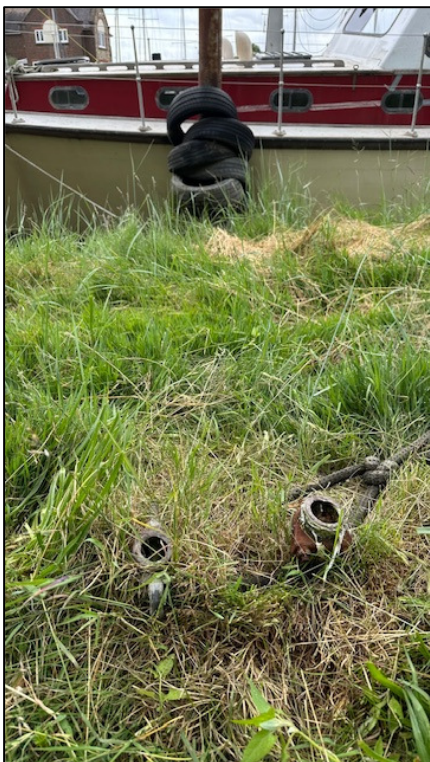
2 ash trees with ash dieback



Removing the tree trunks



Free firewood for local residents



Mooring post trip hazards hidden in the grass



Simon Eveleigh removing a post using a farm jack



Post removed – 6ft long!

East Bank Cutting and Vegetation



East Bank Flail Cutting by Nigel Jordan (Agricultural Contractor) – July 2025

*Top left - Sharon Corbett
Top Middle – Jim Hailstone
Tractor with Flail-Cutter/Mulcher*

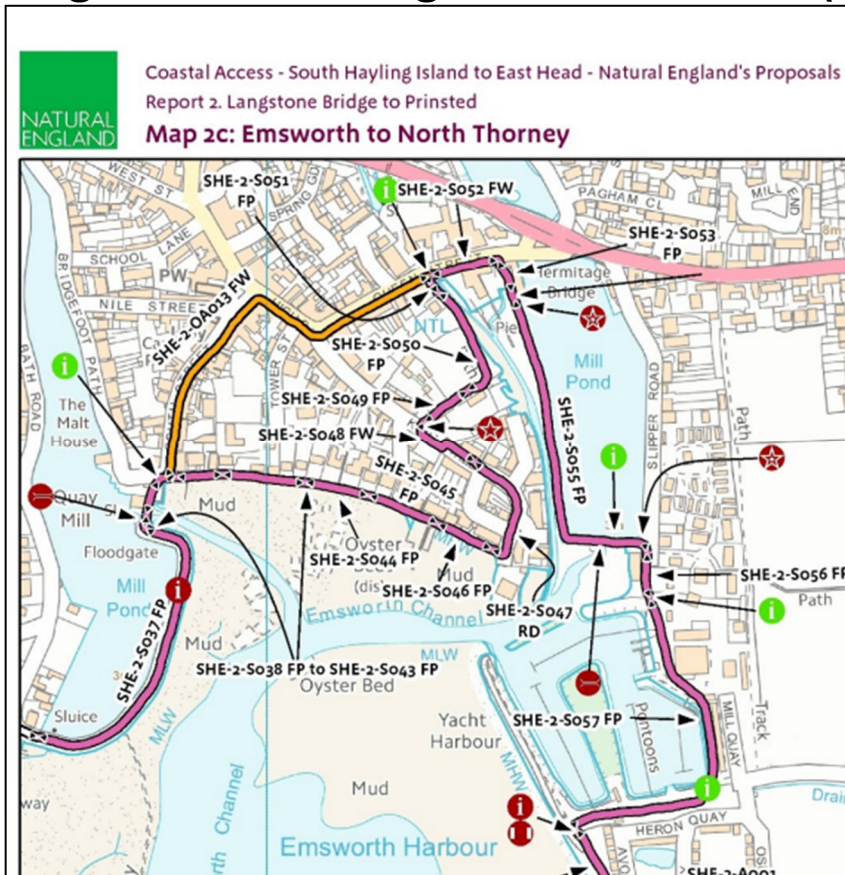


This year we have for the first time hired a contractor to flail cut the east bank. Jim Hailstone and Sharon Corbett cleared and marked around the plants and areas to be avoided, and a small workparty tidied up the road afterwards. As the flail-cutter mulches the arisings, it means that they do not need to be disposed of separately (which has historically required a lot of time and effort by volunteers, including multiple tip runs or the hire of a skip at nearly the same cost as the hire of the flail-cutter). It also means that volunteers do not need to do the tiring physical work of strimming and clearing.

This new approach is considered a success so another will be carried out in the autumn, with cuts planned twice a year going forward. It means that we will probably no longer require an October workparty - any jobs will be carried out by smaller groups as and when required. **If you are physically fit and would like to volunteer to join smaller workparties, please email us at info@smppa.org.uk and we will add you to the WhatsApp group (more details on page 1).**

In May, Sharon Corbett, Catherine Jones and Jo Greenfield dug up a number of hemlock water-dropwort plants along Slipper Road, with Jonathan Stamper kindly taking several black bags of the arisings to the tip. We will keep an eye on these plants early next year, as they are easier to remove when they are smaller. Sharon has also fitted tree protectors round several saplings and is once again expertly pruning any plants that need attention.

King Charles III England Coast Path (KCIIECP)



When officially opened (due later this year), the South Hayling Island to East Head section of KCIIECP will go **through Dolphin Quay and along the west and south banks of the Pond.**

Two routes will be signposted according to the tides: the low tide route (shown in pink) is along the Emsworth beach, up King Street and through Dolphin Quay (past Wharf House), while the high tide route will go through town and along Queen Street (avoiding DQ) before turning south along the west bank of the Pond.

We have met with Alison Perry (project manager Hampshire) and Kevin Dewitt (West Sussex) and voiced our concerns about the likely effects of increased footfall on these paths, particularly as we are expecting more large groups wearing heavy boots. Hampshire County Council cut back some vegetation in Dolphin Quay in February – making the path 1.2m wide, and also cut back some overhanging trees at the north end.

Although Chichester Harbour Conservancy is responsible for the **footpath surface** (delegated to them by WSCC and HCC), the SMPPA as the land owner holds overall responsibility.

Wildlife and New Nesting Tubes

We always enjoy the new arrivals to the Pond - we seem to have had plenty of Canada geese, coots and mallards successfully breeding here this year. Dave Gattrell from Peter Pond kindly donated 2 nesting tubes which Simon Dwyer and Simon Eveleigh fitted on the northern and southern rafts. The southern raft has sometimes been disturbed by swimmers trying to remove the tubes, but the coots nesting have not been deterred.



Young Canada Geese - Photo thanks to Graham Taplin



New nesting tubes on northern and southern bird rafts

Phragmites Australis - Reeds Management - update

For a detailed update please go to www.smppa.org.uk/plants. Following the extensive investigations done by the Reeds Subgroup (Rob Turner, Leigh Charlton, Tim Hollins, Trena Nicholls and Jane Smith) followed by numerous meetings with various contractors (Jim Hailstone and Rob Turner), the Committee has agreed to go forward with using a licensed systemic, non-toxic herbicide (chosen because it doesn't harm wildlife) to reduce the reed areas in the northernmost and middle sections (a method used by the SMPPA several years ago).

We have received Environment Agency approval for an external contractor EnviroAqua to undertake the work. It will require a cut back of the selected areas in late August, with the herbicide due to be applied in September.

Broomfield Schools Photographic Competition – Spring 2025

The competition was launched in February and the Prize-Giving took place on 2nd May at Emsworth Community Centre; further to the fire on 18th March that destroyed the Assembly Room roof, they kindly allowed the display to take place in the Corridor. We received 97 photos from 50 pupils across the 6 participating schools. More details on our website at www.smppa.org.uk/photographic-competition.

Maurice's son Nick Broomfield, who has sponsored the competition for the last 2 years, joined us again (along with his son) for the prize-giving. Jonathan Stamper did an excellent job of presenting the prizes in Gilbert Park's absence.

Sadly, 2025 may be the last year that we hold the competition as we have not been able to source additional volunteer help with admin and co-ordinating, in spite of many requests. Running the competition takes up a vast amount of time spread over several months – work mostly carried out by Jo Greenfield and Maire Park, as well as the judges (Jonathan Stamper, Gilbert Park and Claire Dwyer).

2025 Prize Winners

In 2025 we received 97 photos from 50 pupils across the 6 participating schools. As ever, the standard was excellent, making the judges' job very difficult!

In addition to the 8 overall winners (1 for each subject per year group), the judges awarded 16 "Certificates of Merit".



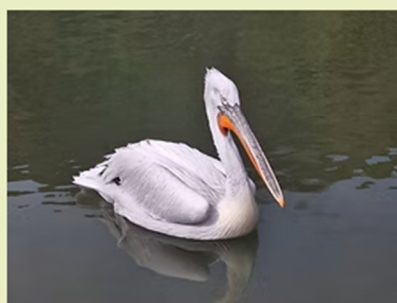
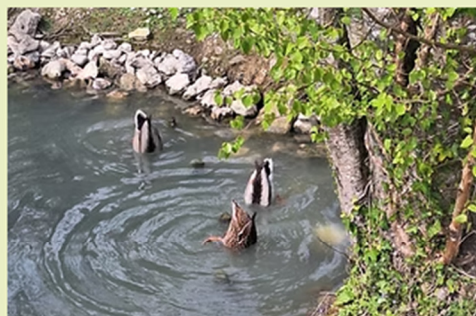
2025 Overall Winning Photo - Local Nature
"Love Is Everywhere" by Mia Forbes - Year 3 -
Emsworth Primary School



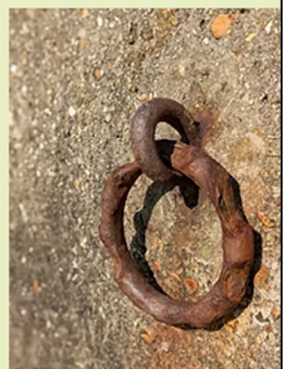
2025 Overall Winning Photo - Any Subject
"Dazzling Dove" by Agatha Benini Wraight -
Year 3 - Southbourne Junior School



Year Group Winners - "Local Nature"
Year 4: "Where's my Panda?" - James Chaffer - St James
Year 5: "Bottoms Up!" - Florrie Seery - St James
Year 6: "Juicy Fruits" - Charles Harman - Southbourne



Year Group Winners - "Any Subject"
Year 4: "Inside the Hive" - Alex Turner - St James
Year 5: "PeliCAN you Believe it" - Florrie Seery - St James
Year 6: "Echoes of the Past" - Charles Harman - Southbourne



Collecting cockles from Slipper Mill Pond (words by Bas Payne, Zoologist)

Lagoon cockles (*Cerastoderma glaucum*) were for a long time thought to be ordinary Common cockles (*Cerastoderma edule*) with shells that were just a bit thinner and darker, and that they looked a little different because they lived in muddy saline lagoons. DNA has shown that they are a separate species, and that they probably don't interbreed; but distinguishing them reliably is difficult, which makes it difficult to be sure about knowing where they live, how rare they really are, and whether we need to be concerned about their conservation. DNA tests need live specimens, cost money, and take time, so we need to find ways to identify them reliably in the field. To try to do this, I have been visiting sites where lagoon cockles have been reported in the past to collect and study samples of shells, and take DNA samples so that their identification can be checked.



Edible (left) and lagoon (right) cockles from Denmark. These look very different, but both species are rather variable, overlapping in shape and in colour, and varying with age and in response to local conditions.



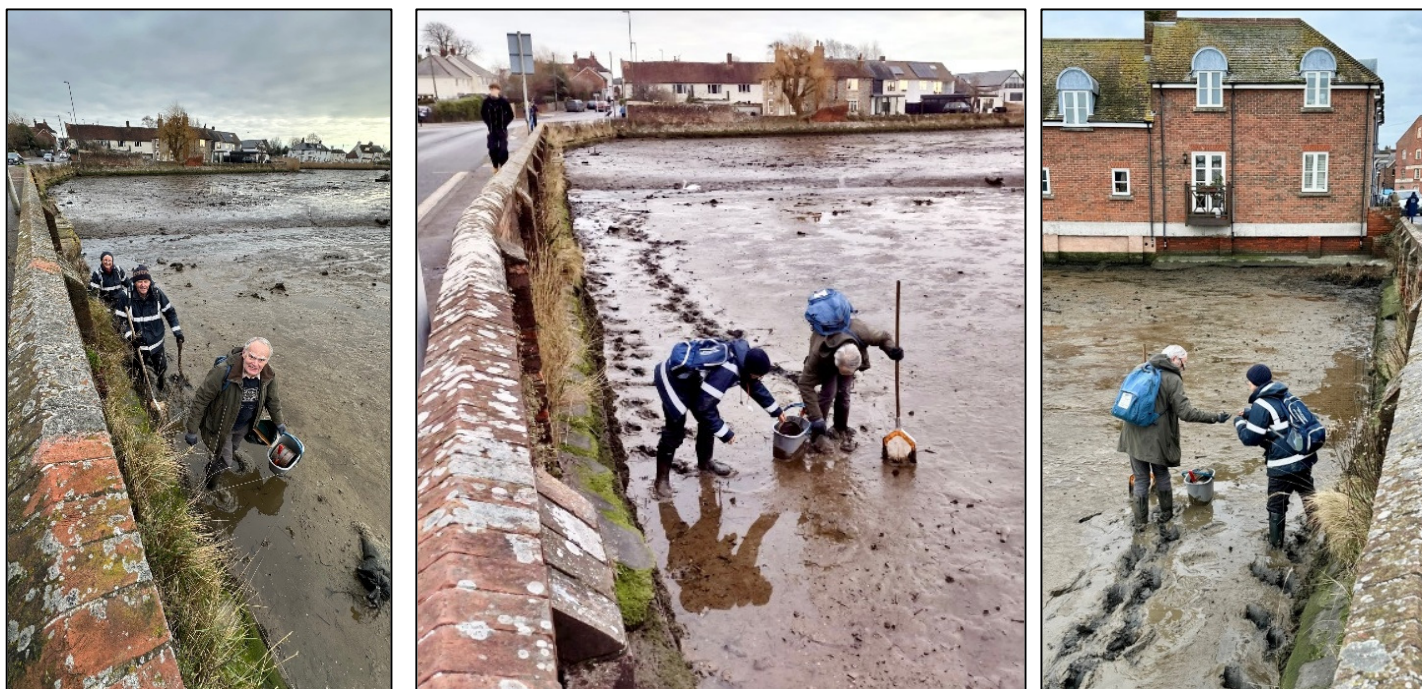
Lagoon cockles were reported in the 1990's from Slipper Mill Pond in Emsworth; so, with Jo Greenfield's kind permission, three of us visited the Pond in January, on a day when it had been drained, walked round the Pond looking for cockles on the exposed mud, and climbed down into the exposed channel from the bridge at the north end, and from the tide gate at the south end, to take samples of the mud to sieve to look for cockles and other molluscs.

The mud round most of the pond looked unusually empty – no seaweed and no shells to be seen; however there were dead cockles and other shells lying on the mud at the north-west corner. The mud was generally soft, deep and very sticky, but by keeping close to the edge, where the mud was shallower and there was reasonably solid footing, it was possible to collect a good sample of shells: as well as hundreds of empty cockles – mostly old, white and rather weathered, there were a few weathered shells of other species: Sand Gapers (*Mya arenaria*), Slipper Limpets (*Crepidula fornicata*), Winkles (*Littorina littorea* and *L. obtusata*), a Peppery Furrow Shell (*Scrobicularia plana*) and very decayed Native Oyster shells (*Ostrea edule*). Samples taken from the mud at the side of the channel at the north end contained smaller cockle shells, including two very small live cockles, many tiny live Laver Spire Snails (*Peringia ulvae*), and a few dead shells of terrestrial and fresh-water species which had probably been washed down from upstream. Sampling by the tide gate was less useful – lots of dead leaves and other

decaying plant matter, and very few shells. The dead cockle shells appeared to be mostly lagoon cockles – there were a few probable edible cockles as well, which could have been older subfossil shells or dropped by seagulls.

I returned to Slipper Mill Pond in May to try to find more live cockles for DNA testing. Using a small boat kindly lent by Simon Dwyer, and a long-handled fine mesh pond net, I sampled in about a dozen places all over the pond. I found a very large number of old dead cockle shells – again probably lagoon cockles, but, sadly, no live ones; four small paired cockle shells roused hopes, but proved to contain mud and shell fragments, so had been dead for some time. Other dead shells found were much as before; the only live molluscs found were two Laver Spire Snails (*Peringia ulvae*).

I have summarised what we found and compared it with earlier records, and with molluscs found in Emsworth Town Mill Pond (another site reported to have lagoon cockles, but where no live ones were found this year). The number of species found live in both ponds was small, and the list of species found rather variable - only one species, the laver spire shell, was regularly found live in Slipper Mill Pond. It is usual to find relatively few species in saline lagoons, and for populations to boom and crash, and for species to vanish and then reappear. The small numbers of live molluscs found in the Emsworth ponds this year might have been caused by episodes of low oxygen, or low salinity – salinity this May in Slipper Mill Pond was rather low, varying from 1-5 parts per thousand (seawater is usually around 35 ppt, and records of salinity in Slipper Mill Pond are variable, depending probably mainly on rainfall and stream flow, and on evaporation).



Bas Payne Searching for molluscs on foot with colleagues (January 2025)

This doesn't mean that there are no live lagoon cockles in Slipper Mill Pond, a few may still be there, waiting to multiply again when conditions allow, and even if they are absent now, they may recolonise – lagoon cockles are good at colonising new sites, as shown by their recent arrival in a newly-created lagoon at Medmerry in West Sussex.



and by boat (May 2025)



A Fisherman's Tale – Salmon sighted on 22 July!

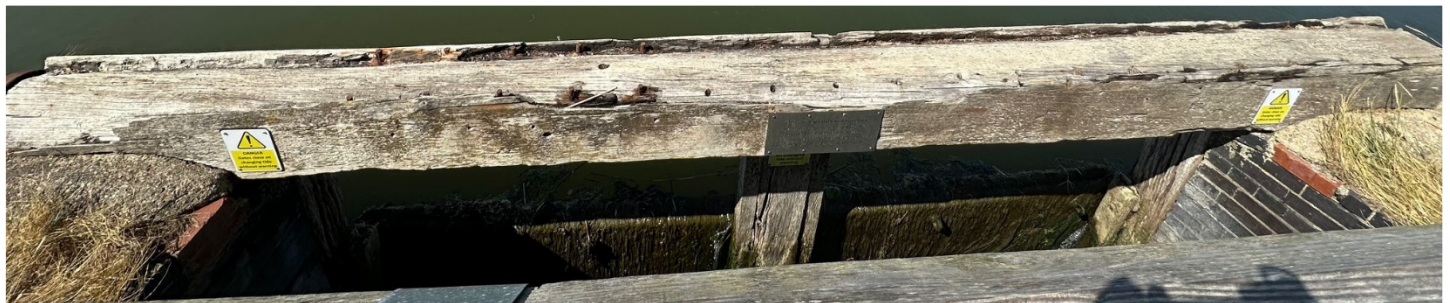
“Around high tide this morning I saw a Salmon (or sea trout) in the pond close to the sluice at the south end. Fish was about 24” and was active but looked “spent” from spawning - had damage along dorsal fin. Maybe it was waiting for high-tide to cross gates. Couldn't get a picture as light and reflections were bad. However, I'm an experienced angler and having caught both (and mullet, bass etc.), I suspect it was a salmon. Nice to see !”

Signage Update

We have added an additional information board on Slipper Mill – do take a look!



And the 2 yellow warning signs on the beam above the Tidal Gates have been renewed (they had been ripped off).



WANTED



We are delighted that Christine Hows (Membership Secretary) was approved as a Trustee at the AGM and that Susan Dibden has also now joined the Committee as (co-opted) Treasurer. We are always looking for people to help out (you do not have to be on the Committee).

Maire Park resigned as a Trustee this year, and we have not replaced her position as Social Secretary. We would like to thank her for her contribution over the years.

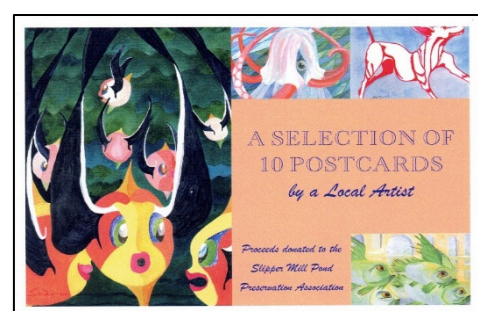
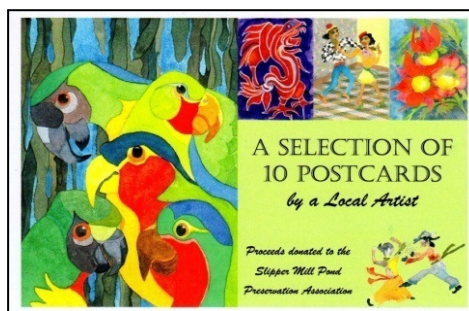
In particular, we are looking for:

- **help and ideas for entertainment for the Annual Dinner** (27th November)
- expertise/knowledge of **civil engineering** (for bank monitoring)
- people or organisations to do **Wildlife Monitoring / Studies**, or to monitor water quality
- any interesting photos or stories for the website and newsletter

New Members are very welcome, particularly residents new to the area who may not be aware of the work that we do. Please pass our details on to them.

Useful Contacts (also available on our website)			
Enquiries/Chair	Jo Greenfield	01243 371134	info@smppa.org.uk
Membership	Christine Hows	membership@smppa.org.uk	
Instagram page	www.instagram.com/slippermillpond/		
Police Emergency 999 Disturbances 101	Call 999 for a “Crime in Action” or 101 to report anything else. The more calls, the more likely the police will respond. Online reporting is at www.sussex.police.uk/ro/report/ - select “antisocial behaviour”. Hampshire Police have the same online reporting – see www.hampshire.police.uk . Join the “Pond Life” WhatsApp group for information sharing.		
Wildlife	Downland Surgery - 01243 377141 RSPCA - 01239 667541 Our Rural Crime Officer is Colin Booker (PCSO / Wildlife Crime Officer, Chichester and Arun Areas). Call 101.		
Pollution	Call Southern Water on 0330 303 0368 or email pollution@southernwater.co.uk		
Diesel Spillages	Call 999 or 112 and ask for the coastguard as they have 24 hour coverage for this kind of incident.		
Environment Agency	All incidents 0800 807 060 Flood line 0345 988 1188		
Fishing Policy	Updated information and signage clarifying our Fishing Rules are on the Slipper Mill notice board and around the Pond.		

Publications – Available to purchase – please email info@smppa.org.uk



*Notelets - £5 for 6 (incl envelopes)
by local artist Marian Forster*

Postcards - £5 for a pack of 10 by a local artist

Dates for Your Diary	Event
Thursday 27th November 2025	Annual Dinner – Emsworth Sailing Club
As required	Work Parties – please join the WhatsApp group