



Newsletter - March 2011



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Chairman's Introduction:

It is with great pleasure that we are able to announce that the West Bank has been repaired and strengthened, and that its path has been resurfaced. This issue briefly describes the long drawn out process to achieve this - and it's thanks to all our Committee Members and our supporters over many years that we have been able to accomplish the seemingly impossible. The work will ensure the safety of our pond and its ecosystem for future generations.

We look forward to a productive year with plenty of birds, plants and fish and hopefully, the new planting taking root.

Nick Madinaveitia

Wildlife Report March 2011

Gavin Millar reports:

“The first, and main, part of this report is hardly a description of life in the wild, more an account of our attempts to emulate Capability Brown by judicious “improvements “to the East Bank. First we gave a cut to the grass at the SE corner of the pond and the area just south of the Arbutus so that we can, at the end of the year, assess the relative merits of cutting ,or not cutting the grass in the autumn, as agreed at the A.G.M. Similarly, as agreed on that occasion, we have planted some trees including a Hawthorn and two (tiny) Holly seedlings, courtesy of the Chairman, two Sorbus, and a beautiful pot-grown Willow kindly donated by Kay and Les Douglas. Finally we have planted some wild roses -3 each of *R.canina*, *R.rugosa*, and *R. rubiginosa*. Time will tell whether they like it there, and whether their presence will add to the charms of the bank and soften the impact of the structures behind.



Rosa rugosa

Bird life has been fairly typical for the winter period, with numbers of over-wintering coots, moorhens, dabchicks, lots of (mainly black-headed) gulls, a few cormorants and the usual Mallards and Mute Swans. I had thought the cold spell before Christmas might bring some unusual visitors from the north, but apart from, as last year, a small group of Tufted Ducks and a brief appearance from a Pochard, there were no great surprises. Despite flocks of up to 17 Red-breasted Mergansers in the Emsworth channel we saw none on the pond itself.



Now we are seeing signs of spring, with Periwinkle and Lesser Celandine in flower for a bit now and Daffodils just coming out. With the contractors for the West Bank works (a very friendly and professional group of people) moving out as I write, we can, with luck, look forward to a peaceful and fruitful summer.“

Sea Buckthorn - berries

West Bank Refurbishment

The banks of the pond have always been attentively cared for. Many repairs have been carried out in the past particularly in the 1980s by the Conservancy and the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers. Routine inspection in 2003 highlighted various issues, leading to the current cycle of repairs.



Initially holes in the surface of the bank were the immediate cause for concern, and the Association filled them with concrete. Further deepening hollows in the path prompted a ground radar survey, commissioned with the help of the Conservancy to check if the problems were localised.

Detailed examination of the outside face showed that some bags were breaking up and sections being undermined particularly by seepage. An enthusiastic work-party was formed and the worst was made good by patching and underpinning sections of the outer face.



The initial inspection had revealed that the inside face of the pond had serious problems. The sandbag face had been installed without any foundation in many places and the wear and tear of wave action, seepage and the tides meant that they were in poor condition. The problem was addressed in two ways.

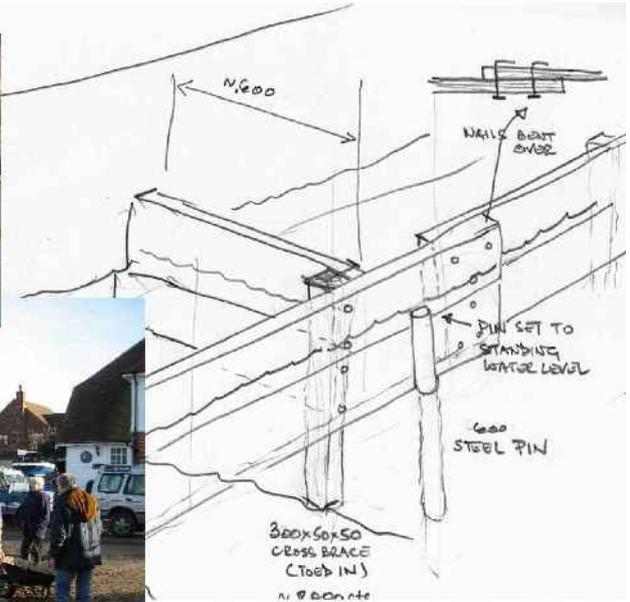
Firstly the worst places were underpinned and the rotten sandbags replaced. A 'Workday' was called and some 15 volunteers helped carrying materials, preparing foundations, mixing concrete and reinforcing the wall.



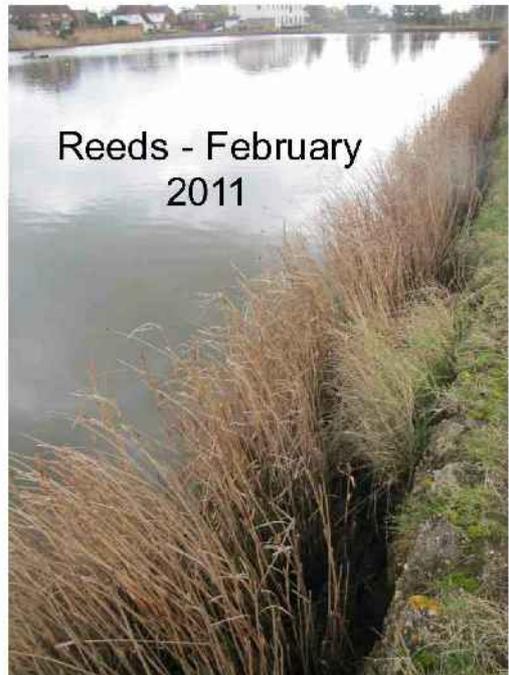
To provide a longer term solution a fringe of sea club rush reeds was planted in timber frames filled with topsoil at pond water level along the bank.



Experiments a year earlier had confirmed the viability of the solution. The Association was most grateful for the support and financial help from the Conservancy and West Sussex County Council.



Reed Planting - 2007



Reeds - February
2011

Attention now turned to the stability of the bank itself. Preliminary analysis identified problems at the South end and a portion of the central part of the bank. The scope of the work and the risks involved were too great for even the keenest of SMPPA volunteers to undertake. Enquiries revealed that when the gabions were installed in the 1980s in the section immediately to the north of the critical part enthusiasts had withdrawn timbers from the mud which prompted the core of the bank to gradually collapse. The contractor involved at the time



Concrete Repair Critical Section

resolved matters with a concrete footing. Further analysis and risk assessment showed that major works were required and needed a professional approach as, in addition to the obvious problems of a failure blocking Dolphin Creek, there would be a serious risk to volunteers working in a tidal situation with an unstable bank.

The central section was showing obvious signs of distress; being washed out and the bank starting to sink.



Red clay washing out from core

The SMPPA appointed Ove Arup Consulting Engineers to carry out a geotechnical investigation and put forward recommendations. The first stage, late in 2005, was followed by detailed testing

early in 2006. Their report confirmed that the sections identified earlier were seriously at risk, and put forward outline solutions involving the refurbishment of the foundations of the outer face of the bank.



Many contractors were approached for estimates on a ‘design and construct’ basis and only a very few responded. Eventually it became apparent that an overall budget cost of about £100,000 was achievable. This was well beyond the reach of the SMPPA so much time and effort went into trying to locate grant giving bodies. Spirits were very low as enquiry after enquiry produced no results. Eventually the Veolia Environmental Trust, a Landfill Communities Fund to community and environmental projects in the UK near some of the landfills and facilities operated by Veolia Environmental Services (UK) plc. showed interest. Negotiations were started and their requirements were that there was a fully costed and approved scheme prior to a formal application.

With the encouragement of the possible grant and as it was late summer the Committee decided to apply for full Planning Approval as soon as possible aiming for construction early in 2009 to avoid the breeding season. The Arup proposals were straightforward and early consultations with the Conservancy, the Environment Agency and Natural England had all been positive suggesting that the process would be straightforward. At a pre-application meeting with Chichester District Council the Association was recommended to repeat the earlier consultations and include them as part of the Application.



North Section

South Section

Before and After - as proposed in 2008
Showing how very little difference was planned

The processing proved interminable as the various officers referred the SMPPA to other sections within their organisations, but eventually in the February of 2009 the Application was lodged. To the SMPPA's consternation the application was referred to Havant District Council. Although everyone believed the county boundary ran along the centre of Dolphin Creek, the administrative boundary is apparently the high water mark on the outer face of the pond bank.

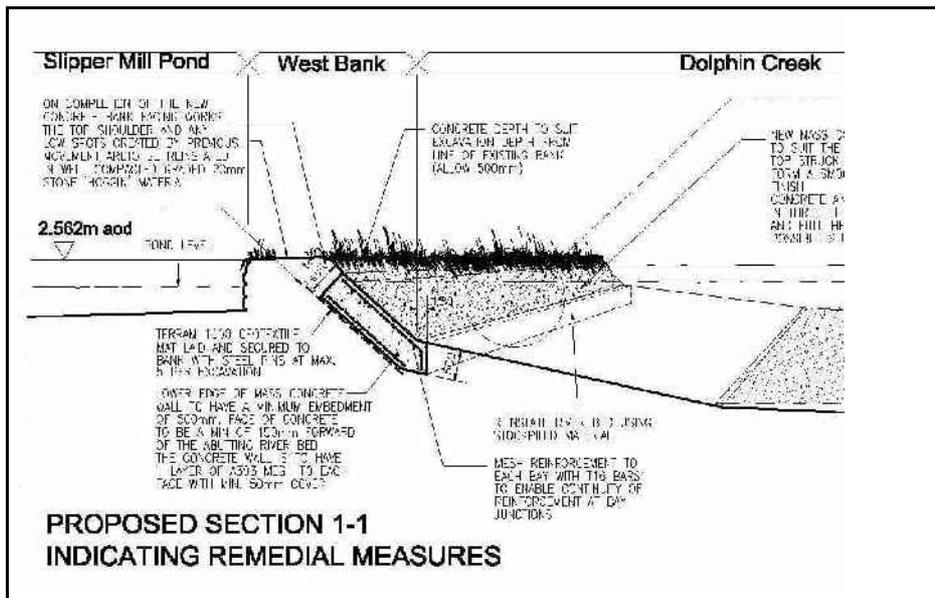
Approval was finally given late in May subject to the agreement of a Method Statement.

The SMPPA was now in a position to seek offers for engineering services to look after the detailed technical aspects of the work including the Method Statement and the compliance with the Construction Design and Management Regulations. Six practices were asked to submit and their offers evaluated. Ove Arup were asked to bid but declined saying that their fees would be prohibitively high. The George Brown Consultancy submitted a most

favourable financial offer and in addition they intended using the same geotechnical advisor as Ove Arup.

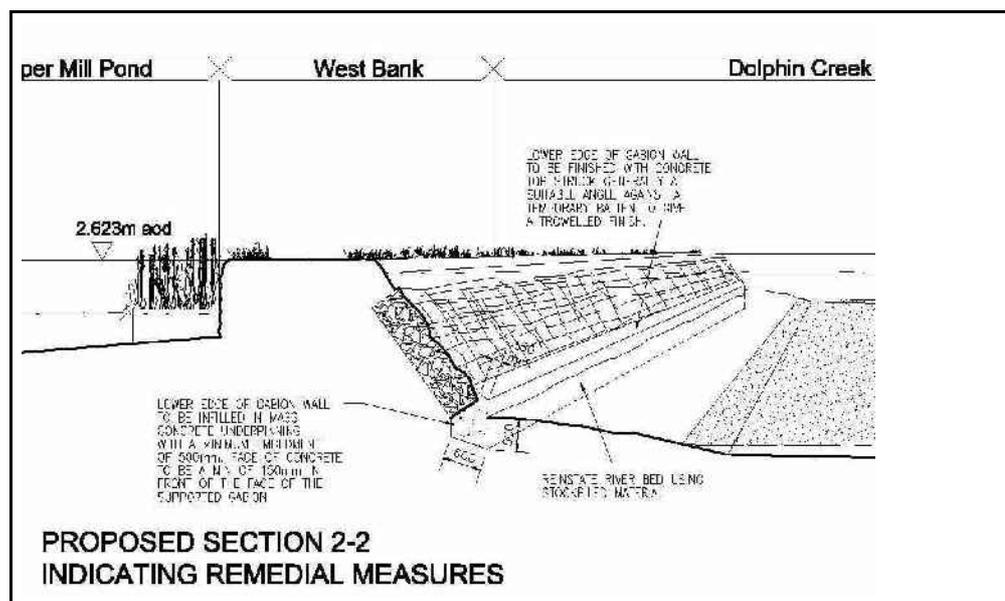
The fees for this stage were substantial and, by the Autumn, sufficient Grants had been assembled so that the Association was able to ask the consultant to commence.

The Design and Documentation was complete by the end of November and fixed price tenders were invited from six firms. The lowest offer came from Caroway of Rowlands Castle and was fortunately within the scope of the funding available



North Section Design

South Section Design



Preconditions now met, the funding bid to Veolia was prepared and submitted in March 2010, with strong indications that it would be successful when the results were announced in July. The SMPPA was very hopeful that work could start in September and be completed before Winter set in.

Meanwhile the consultant submitted the Method Statement to the conservancy for approval, initiating a series of discussions with the Environment Agency, Natural England and WSCC Ecological Unit. After much correspondence the Statement was agreed in principle.

Unfortunately Veolia turned down the funding request at the end of July saying that they were oversubscribed. Despite generous grants from the Conservancy, there were insufficient Association funds. The project seemed doomed.

Last minute enquiries revealed the possibility that the Three Harbours and Coastal Plain LEADER Action Group might fund it as part of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Investing in Rural Areas. By the beginning of September a bid had been prepared and was submitted to their September Meeting cycle. This bid was successful, though the conditions attached meant that all work and payments had to be made by the end of March 2011.

Caroway, the contractor, reconfirmed they could carry out the works and promised a start in November - which was postponed. Eventually they were able to start at the beginning of January with a promised completion date of the end of February.

The Rural Development programme and LEADER funding



LEADER is part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), which aims to improve the

competitiveness of farming and forestry, support a diverse and successful rural economy, and help to develop vibrant and thriving rural communities.

Parts of West and East Sussex and Hampshire have been designated to receive LEADER funding. This means that farmers, growers, small rural businesses and community groups located in a LEADER area may qualify to apply for grants towards projects that will help achieve the aims of the programme and the particular priorities of the LEADER area.

Work started slowly at the beginning of January. The site accommodation was established close to Slipper Mill and a temporary bridge built over the tidal gate entrance.



Caroway used a 3 tonne digger and dumper to start work on the Southern Section. Two metre sections of the creek bed at the foot of the outer face of the bank were excavated and carefully filled with concrete in two layers.



The first was the foundation and the second a retaining strip to ensure it was well keyed in. Work was carefully controlled and no two sections adjacent to one another were worked on at the same time.



Holes were left so that the Conservancy could insert poles for navigation marks if needed and residue at the bottom of Dolphin Creek was cleared away.

Work on the Northern section proceeded on similar lines with the soft clay and mud at the bottom of the bank first being taken away. In places some of the original timber walling was found and, being in good condition, it was left in place and concreted in.

When the lower works were complete the top of the bank was made good with new sandbags.

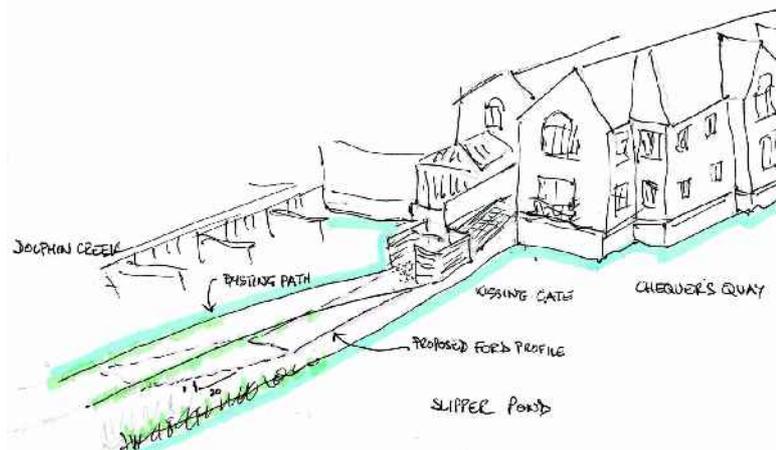


Caroway have made good any damage, seeded the disturbed earth and reinstated the footpath. Even though the footpath and its surface are WSCC's responsibility the SMPPA suggested that the Northern end of the path be resurfaced at the same time at WSCC's expense. This was agreed and the works were coupled to the Association's contract..

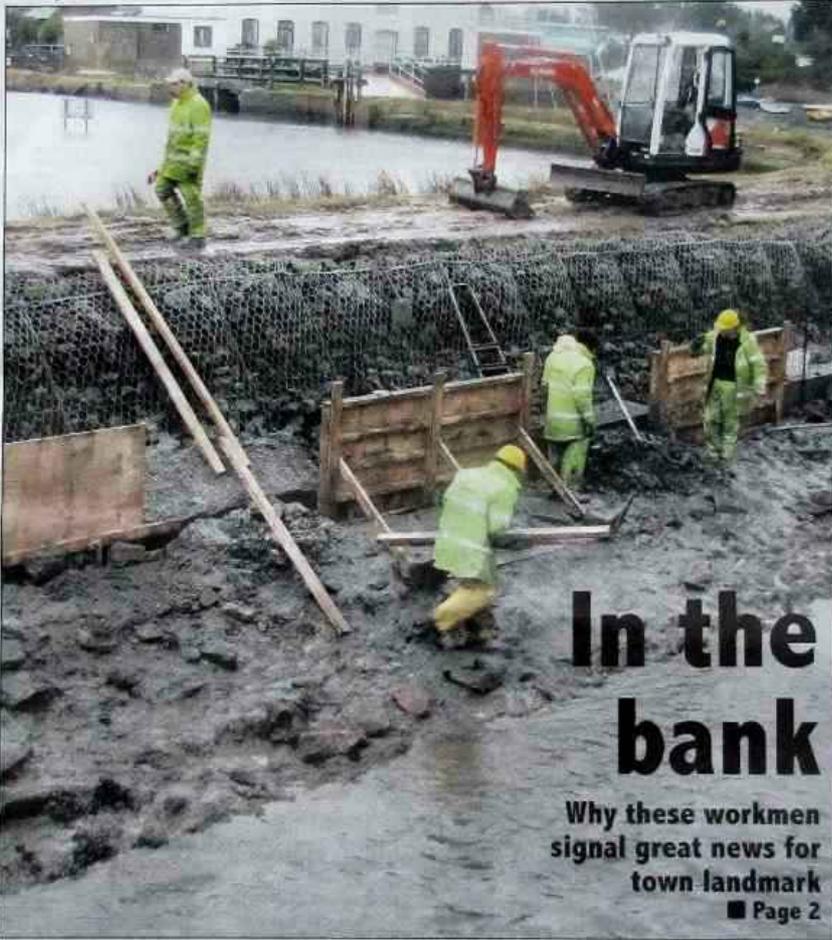


The lowest part of the path acts as a spillway during the peak of high Spring tides and suffers erosion from the passage of water over it

With work proceeding well in January it was suggested that providing a hard surface just South of the Kissing Gates at Chequer's Quay would be a good idea. The suggestion was to widen the lower part for about ten metres to the South which, while being almost a cosmetic change to the bank's profile, would help.



Obtaining agreement and approval to this with all the interested parties proved to be very involved though just possible in the time available. When it became apparent that full Planning Permission was needed with a minimum 8 week consultation period it was abandoned as impractical. It is inevitable that in the near future the path in that area will deteriorate again and WSCC will have to continue to look after it.



In the bank

Why these workmen signal great news for town landmark

■ Page 2

Campaigners win battle to restore town's beauty spot

■ By GREG MILES
greg.miles@chobserver.co.uk

A £100,000 project to restore a popular footpath around Emsworth's Slipper Millpond has started.

Eight years ago a routine inspection of the walls on the south western bank showed cracks had started to appear.

And now funding has been secured, the future of the footpath is set to be secured. The work is expected to take around eight weeks, depending on the weather.

Cement will be poured into the west-facing walls of the footpath, which lines the channel from the Dolphin quay boatyard and Emsworth harbour.

The Slipper Millpond Preservation Association looks after the pond and its volunteers have worked tirelessly to gain funding. Chairman Nick Madina said: "We have spent an awful lot of time and effort to do the work."

The big problem has been locating the funding.

"We have been fortunate enough to have a lot of help, particularly from Chichester Harbour Conservancy, West Sussex County Council, and Chichester District Council, and at the very last minute when we were about to throw the sponge in before we got the grant from the LEADER project."

"The most important thing I suppose is that we will have finished the work in time for the breeding season."

"If we hadn't have done it, the footpath would have started falling in to Dolphin quay and it would have inhibited navigation along there. It would have caused the boat builder at the top of the quay to close."



The footpath along the millpond which is in need of attention



All about the Slipper Millpond

■ The pond was built in the 1700s to provide power to drive the Slipper Mill.

■ Flap gates push open as the tide rises and the turning tide closes the gates holding back the sea water which, in the past, powered it.

■ The tidal mill itself was in constant use until the Second World War and the pond has been looked after by volunteers since the early 1960s.

■ In 1981 it was sold to 34 individuals who granted a lease to the Slipper Millpond Preservation Association to be responsible for its day-to-day management and maintenance.

"If you walked along there you could see it started to pull away. It's not in imminent danger."

Half of the money was awarded by the LEADER project, part of the Rural Development Programme for England. Project officer at LEADER Richard Chalk said: "We are pleased to help in any way we can. We are

very pleased to award it to what is a very historical and environmentally important part of local heritage."

"We're keen to find other projects throughout this next year."

For more information about the LEADER project visit www.westsussex.gov.uk/leadea.



Chichester Harbour Conservancy

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Friday 14 January

Local Notice to Mariners No 2 of 2011



REPAIR TO WEST BANK OF SLIPPER MILL POND, EMSWORTH

- Mariners are advised that work has commenced to repair two sections of the west bank of the Slipper Mill Pond, adjoining the channel leading to Dolphin Quay in Emsworth.
- During these works shuttering will be placed close to the base of the mill pond wall, causing a potential obstruction to passing vessels. The extremity of the obstruction will be marked locally by the
- Mariners accessing Dolphin Quay Boatyard are advised to proceed with caution keeping to the port side of the channel when passing the areas of work.
- Work is expected to continue until the end of February and a further LNTM will be issued on completion.

Richard Craven
Acting Manager & Harbour Master
14 January 2011

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Everyone admired the way the Caroway team worked in the very unpleasant January and February weather with many wet and raw days. Access to the bottom of the creek was controlled by the tides and there were some days when it was not practical to work at all. The stream edge at the foot of the bank was soft at the start and got worse and worse as the works progressed. There was only minimal disturbance to the neighbours and the site was left clean and tidy.

This account cannot conclude with out listing the Association's thanks to the many organisations that gave their help:

- Three Harbours and Coastal Plain LEADER Action Group
- Chichester Harbour Conservancy
- West Sussex County Council
- Solent Protection Society
- Southbourne Parish Council
- Emsworth Business Association
- Emsworth Residents' Association

The Association will be inviting representatives of these organisations to inspect the works later in April.

Particular mention must also be made of George Brown Consultancy, Ove Arup and Partners and Caroway for their friendship, help and flexibility in achieving the project. Everyone was most impressed how the team worked on the bank whenever the tide permitted, how cheerful they were and how they left the site tidy at the end.

Whilst the final reckoning of the finances is still to be made, indications are that the Association will still have well over £10,000 in the Bank at the end of the day.

Spring Talk

The Spring Talk this year will be held at the Pastoral Centre in Emsworth on Friday 6th May 2011 at 8.00 pm.

Nick Madina will start the evening by reporting on the Slipper Mill Pond West Bank project – an extremely important project, now completed.

Ed Rowsell, Conservation Officer of the Harbour conservancy, will then talk about his work and, in particular, the conservation of birds and fish in the Harbour.

Coffee and tea will be served at the end of the evening.

Dates for your Diary for 2011

Friday	6 th May 2011	Spring Talk
	July/August 2011 (dependent on weather)	Summer Party
Friday	14 th October 2011	Annual General Meeting
Friday	18 th November 2011	Annual Dinner at the Brookfield Hotel.

Contacts

General:	Nick Madinaveitia	01243 377749
Treasurer:	Mark Phillips	01243 376756
Social Events	Betty Smith	01243 371576
	Sarah Titley	01243 379947
Wildlife:	Gavin Millar	01243 377071
	The Downland Surgery	01243 377141
	RSPCA	01329 667541
Environment Agency	Pollution and Flood line	0845 988 1188 0800 80 70 60
	Mention the local rangers in any calls – Paul Reynolds & Trevor Page	

(Photos: Nick Madinaveitia except where noted)