

# SMPPA Newsletter

## July 2022

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[www.emsworth.org.uk](http://www.emsworth.org.uk)

Summer 2022

### Environment

## New Owner for Slipper Mill Pond

*Words by Jim Hallstone.*

The Slipper Mill Pond Preservation Association (SMPPA) is pleased to announce that ownership of the pond has been transferred to the SMPPA from the former owners, after leasing it for over 50 years.

The change of status of the SMPPA to a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) in 2019 presented an opportunity for the ownership of the pond to be transferred to the SMPPA from the existing shareholders. The 7-acre Slipper Mill Pond, the one south of the Hermitage Bridge, was created in the 1760s to supply water to power the former mill, and has been in private ownership ever since.

Leigh Thomas (Millers) who owned both Slipper Mill and the Old Flour Mill sold Slipper Pond to the then owners of No. 2 Slipper Road in 1960. A consortium of local people had tried to buy it but could not raise sufficient funds and instead in 1967 leased the pond. The group became the SMPPA in the 1970s, and formed a registered charity in 1977 specifically to look after it 'for the benefit of the public'. The pond came up for sale again in 1980. 33 individuals, mostly householders overlooking the pond, clubbed together and raised the purchase price of £10,000; equivalent to

£45,600 today. At that time, there was a real threat that the pond could be filled in and sold for development. This purchase removed the development threat, and the pond continued to be maintained for the benefit of the public; much as today, by the SMPPA, under the terms of a 99 year lease from the Owners' Trustees renewed in 1982.

As time went on, the powers of the Trustees acting on behalf of the 33 pond owners became rather limited. There was no effective solution available to pursue shareholders when contact had been lost, nor the facility to raise funds for any reason. By 2019 only two of the 33 original shareholders still held their shares, and transfers to new owners had not always been made compliantly. Records held by the owners' trustees showed that correctly-transferred current information was only held for 18 of the 33 holdings; (55%). These Owners held 65% of the total shareholding.

It took very many hours of work to trace pond share owners, update their legal ownership status, obtain the formal consent of a majority to the proposed transfer, and legally remove a covenant tied in error to the deeds of one property that in theory prevented a disposal of the pond by one shareholder. Several



*The future of Slipper Mill Pond has now been secured for the benefit of wildlife and the local community.*

*Right: Slipper Mill Pond in the 1920s*



changes in solicitors also caused delay and frustration to the transfer process.

At last, on 22 April 2022, the transfer of title to the SMPPA was completed. The future of the pond as a wildlife area maintained for the

benefit of the public has now been secured, and any development threats virtually eliminated. For more information or if you would like to support the SMPPA, go to [www.smppa.org.uk](http://www.smppa.org.uk) or email [info@smppa.org.uk](mailto:info@smppa.org.uk).

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We have had a busy start to the year, with the major milestones of the Pond ownership transfer (see above newspaper article in The EMS newspaper) and the sluice apron repair (see page 3), along with a record number of entries to the Broomfield Schools Photographic Competition, and our first Spring Talk for some years.

The next event is the **Summer Garden Party on Sunday 31st July at 4.00pm** – we do hope you will join us. The **Annual Dinner will be on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> November** – this

will be at the Brookfield Hotel as usual so please put this in your diaries! All dates can be found at the back of this newsletter.

After careful consideration, we have decided to move the AGM from October to January and may combine it with the “spring talk”, assuming there are no items on the agenda which require long discussion. The change in date is due to the work load required to get all documents together on time (year end is 30<sup>th</sup> September), along with the preparation required for the Annual Dinner at a time when the volunteer Trustees are generally busy.

With very best wishes to you all for a fabulous summer.

*Jo Greenfield*

(and SMPPA Trustees)

chmn@smppa.org.uk - tel 01243 371134.

56 King Street, Emsworth, PO10 7AZ



## **Committee Members/Trustees**

Jo Greenfield (KS), Sharon Corbett (SR), Simon Dwyer (SR), Simon Eveleigh (KS), Jim Hailstone (SR), Maire Park (HW)

where SR is Slipper Road, KS is King Street, HW is Harbour Way.

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## **Pond Transfer from the Owners to the SMPPA CIO**

At long last the paperwork to transfer the ownership of the Pond was completed on 22nd April, at a total cost to the SMPPA of nearly £3,000 in legal fees, and many hours of paperwork, the bulk of it carried out by Jim Hailstone. There are many benefits to this, including the clarification of the ownership (as so many records had been mislaid by householders when houses changed hands), that Owners' Trustees are no longer required, and the SMPPA no longer needs to pay separate insurance for the Owners' liability.

The article in the Summer 2022 issue of The EMS newspaper explains the background in more detail; a copy of this is also available as a link on the home page of our website.

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## **Chichester Harbour Conservancy “Return of the Tern” Nature Recovery & local education group “Bird Aware”**

Sharon Corbett, Jo Greenfield, Janet Nunn and Maire Park had a very interesting meeting with Jessica Vagg and Pete Hughes from CHC looking at whether there are any opportunities for the SMPPA to be involved in the high profile “Return of the Tern” project which is underway in Chichester Harbour.

We also met with “Bird Aware” [www.birdaware.org](http://www.birdaware.org), a charity that works to raise awareness of the birds that spend time on our Solent coastline, and encourages

everyone to act responsibly with regard to wildlife. This group are giving us ideas as to how we can make our signage more effective and encourage owners to keep their dogs “close by” so they do not chase wildlife. We hope to have an update on the outcome of these two meetings later in the year.

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## Sluice Apron / Outfall Repair

The “repair” was completed on 9th February as planned. There was a race against the tide on the day itself as the initial concrete supplied was too wet, meaning that the workers couldn’t make a sufficient gradient without the concrete slipping off the edges. An additional 1.5 tons of thick concrete was delivered just in time to complete the job.

In spite of using 5.5 tons of concrete (the quote was for 4 tons), John Blamire from JRB Environmental kept to his original quote of £2,208.

The initial clear up was done by the SMPPA (led by Jim Hailstone) and included: moving the old cement bags, removing and disposing of the redundant wooden post and clearing of seaweed using a power washer.



*BEFORE - Damaged Sluice Apron viewed from the south showing rotten post to be removed*



*BEFORE - Damaged Sluice Apron viewed from footbridge*



*IN PROGRESS – Sluice Apron viewed from the south showing lorry delivering concrete*



*NEARLY COMPLETE – Repaired Sluice Apron viewed from footbridge*

## New Information Board & Updated Fishing Policy



A new notice board has been put up on the Slipper Mill wall, which allows us to post more current information as the notices can easily be changed around.

This now includes our updated **Fishing Policy**, along with **useful contacts** for reporting anti-social behaviour etc. Please do take a look.

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## Planning Application for Mobile Catering Unit – Dolphin Quay

There was considerable reaction against this proposal which appeared in April. One of our members, Brenda Scott, went to the trouble of hand delivering notes to around 750 households, encouraging them to object.

Following 136 objections and only 2 comments supporting, the application was withdrawn in June - we are sure that Brenda's contribution made a big difference – thankyou Brenda.



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## Water Quality and Pollution

We receive regular reports of what appears to be pollution. Frothy white foam, accompanied by a brown slick or scum on the surface of the water, now seems to be a year round phenomenon and is often mistaken as evidence of sewage. The Environment Agency advises that these are the breakdown of algal blooms. Treated sewage discharges and storm water overflows very rarely form foams or scums on the water surface; they are usually only visible as a grey discolouration of the water around an identifiable source.

In March, paint appeared trailing from the new field drain at the south east corner of the Pond. A builder doing some painting at one of the properties that end had unfortunately chosen to clean his brushes into the drain. Although water based, the paint took a few days to disperse as it was neap tides so the water didn't over top the tidal gates and we could not force open the gates to drain the Pond.



*Paint washed down the field drain  
– March 2022*

## Broomfield Schools Photographic Competition – held as part of the Emsworth Arts Trail (words by Maire Park)



The 2 overall winners were both in Year 5. They were:

Local Nature: "*Damselfly*" by Gracie Johnson, Westbourne Primary School

&

Any Subject: "*Walking on Autumn*" by Iris Procter, Funtington Primary School



Last held in 2019, this year's Broomfield Schools Photographic Competition was greeted with great enthusiasm. With 146 photos submitted by the children, this was more than twice the pre-pandemic number of submissions and the standard of the photographs was very high.

The competition is held in honour of Maurice Broomfield, an internationally renowned photographer, who lived by Slipper Mill Pond and supported the SMPPA. Pupils in years 3-6 of six local primary schools can submit photographs in two categories: Local Nature and Any Subject. Prizes are awarded in each category/age group and the judges also awarded 15 "highly commended" certificates. All the photographs are exhibited in the community centre as part of the Emsworth Arts Trail and the winning photographs are displayed in the Emsworth Co-op afterwards. The Emsworth Coop also sponsored the refreshments for the awards ceremony, held on Friday 29th April to great excitement.

Our thanks go to all those who helped make this event such a success, particularly the schools for their support, and parents for encouraging their children to participate. We are already looking forward to next year's competition and the creative talent it will reveal.



Competition judge, Gilbert Park presenting a prize



Jo Greenfield presenting a prize to the Head of Funtington Primary School, Sarah Tittley

## Spring Talk – Sarah Hughes - Strategic Wildlife Corridors (words by Maire Park)

Having had a pandemic gap in our Spring Talks, it was a wonderful experience to welcome Sarah Hughes from Chichester District Council to talk about Strategic Wildlife Corridors. Chichester has identified seven wildlife corridors; the Slipper Mill Pond is at the southern end of the Westbourne to Hermitage corridor.

The River Ems is central to this corridor and we connect the rest of the corridor to Chichester Harbour. The Pond has a vital role in maintaining the species there.

Sarah started by talking about some of the environmental changes seen in our area; for instance the drainage of the River Ems by Portsmouth Water and its consequences. Many species suffered as a result of the drainage - the reservoir of several species in and around the Slipper Mill Pond allowed them to re-establish quickly. We are also important because of the variety of our bird species.

### ***She identified a number of issues:***

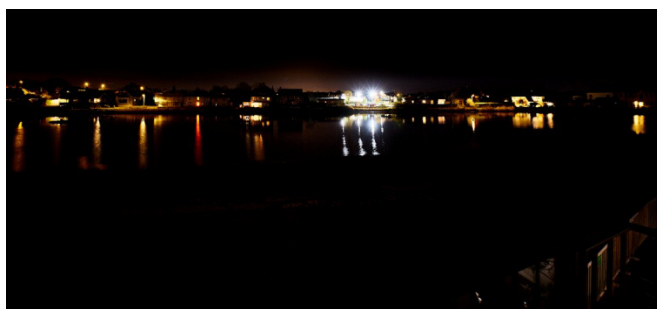
- Plastics have now been found in human blood so are assumed to be everywhere affecting birds, mammals and invertebrates. Avoiding litter, particularly with plastics, is essential.
- If we allow plants and green areas to grow and reduce our grass cutting and pruning, we will encourage existing species to expand and new ones to move in.
- This wildlife corridor is home to the rarest and the second rarest bats in the country. They are extremely sensitive to light pollution and won't fly in areas where lights are bright at night. Turning lights down or better still, off, will encourage these rare bats.
- Dogs can disturb wildlife and if this happens repeatedly, the wildlife moves on because they cannot breed, feed or live if repeatedly disturbed. In addition, dog urine and faeces can kill vegetation and be toxic to the creatures living there. Slipper mill is a popular dog walking area so it is vital that dogs are kept close and any waste collected and disposed of.

***Sarah ended by encouraging us all to make a small change in our behaviour that will contribute to preserving our wildlife and its habitat.***

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## Caravan Park “Bright Lights”

New lighting installed earlier this year in the Caravan Park was shining right across the Pond, and several residents complained to us. We were also concerned about the negative affect this would have on nocturnal animals. One of our members, Gilbert Park, approached the park owner who has now made some improvements, with just one bright light now remaining.



*View of the lights taken from Harbour Way  
(across the Pond from the Caravan Park)*

## Maintenance Jobs – a big THANKYOU

There is always a list of jobs that need doing around the Pond. Although we now only have one large workparty a year when we do a full cut of the east bank grasses (due the first week in October, followed by a full workparty planned for Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> October), there are many other small workparties that carry out tasks.

These tasks include monitoring/repairing the tidal gates, footbridge and other gates, repointing the brickwork, monitoring the banks surrounding Dolphin Creek (including repairs to gabion netting), strimming grass to improve visibility along Slipper Road etc etc. Jim Hailstone generally leads these tasks, helped by other volunteers who include Rob Turner, Fraser & Susan Dibden, Trevor Smith, Simon Eveleigh and Simon Dwyer.

Sharon Corbett continues to monitor, protect and water the young shrubs and flowers that we have planted. This year we are trying a new “targeted” approach to managing the tall Phragmites reeds, a project which Maire Park is leading.

***We are most grateful for the help of those people named above, and to the support of all our members.***

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## ***Sad News – Lisa Hailstone***

Following a long battle with cancer, Jim’s wife Lisa sadly passed away on 16<sup>th</sup> July. Our thoughts are with Jim and his family. The funeral will take place on 4<sup>th</sup> August – please contact Jim for details, or alternatively email [info@smppa.org.uk](mailto:info@smppa.org.uk).

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## **Generous Donation from Prue Ramsay’s Family**

We really appreciate any donations, no matter how small, but we particularly want to mention the £1,000 gifted by Prue’s 4 children from her estate. Prue lived in King Street and was a long standing member of the SMPPA. Her children say that the walk around the Pond meant so much to her, especially as she became more restricted in where she could go for a walk. Without donations (or grants), our income from members’ subscriptions & the Dolphin Quay lease is only just over £4,000 a year. Gifts like this make a huge difference towards helping to fund our preservation activities – thankyou.

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**WANTED**

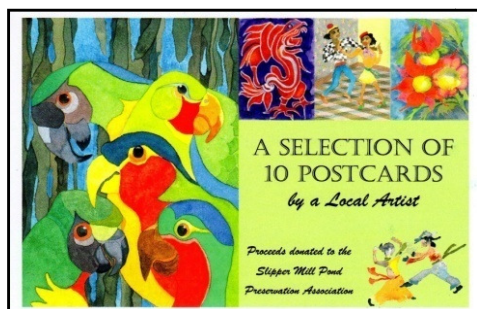
***New Members are very welcome. If you know of anyone who is interested in joining us or is new to the area, please let us know, or pass our details on to them.***

**We are looking for an additional Trustee**, ideally from Queen Street, Slipper Road south or Roundhouse Meadow. The Committee meets quarterly, with additional small groups meeting/liasing as necessary. We have a great action-focused team. We are also looking for people / organisations to do Wildlife Monitoring / Studies.

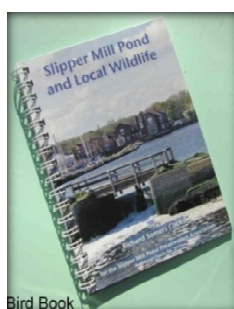
## Useful Contacts (also available on our website)

<b>Enquiries/Chair</b>	Jo Greenfield	01243 371134	chmn@smppa.org.uk
<b>Membership</b>	Sharon Corbett	01243 389994	membership@smppa.org.uk
<b>Police</b> Emergency 999 Disturbances 101	PCSO Baylee Reed is our local Sussex Police officer (call 101). Online reporting is at <a href="http://www.sussex.police.uk/ro/report/">www.sussex.police.uk/ro/report/</a> - select "antisocial behaviour". Hampshire Police have the same online reporting – see <a href="http://www.hampshire.police.uk">www.hampshire.police.uk</a> . The police encourage video evidence of antisocial behaviour. Posting videos on the nextdoor app <b>nextdoor</b> or on <b>facebook</b> can be highly effective for publicising the perpetrators.		
<b>Wildlife</b>	Downland Surgery - 01243 377141 RSPCA - 01239 667541 Our Rural Crime Officer is Colin Booker (PCSO / Wildlife Crime Officer, Chichester and Arun Areas). Call 101.		
<b>Pollution</b>	Call Southern Water on 0330 303 0368 or email <a href="mailto:pollution@southernwater.co.uk">pollution@southernwater.co.uk</a>		
<b>Diesel Spillages</b>	Call 999 or 112 and ask for the coastguard as they have 24 hour coverage for this kind of incident.		
<b>Environment Agency</b>	All incidents 0800 807 060 Flood line 0345 988 1188		
<b>Fishing Policy</b>	Updated information and signage clarifying our Fishing Rules are on the Slipper Mill notice board and around the Pond.		

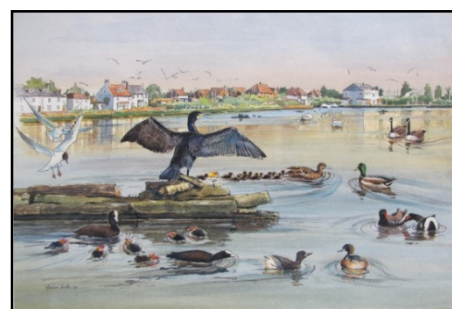
## Publications – Available to purchase – please contact Jo Greenfield (see above)



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



*Bird & Butterfly Book - £5*



*Notelets - £3 for 6 (incl envelopes) by local artist Marian Forster*

Dates for Your Diary	Event
<b>Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> July at 4.00pm</b>	<b>Summer Garden Party – 4.00pm at Slipper House (2 Slipper Road)</b>
<b>Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> October</b>	<b>Full Work Party</b>
<b>Friday 25<sup>th</sup> November</b>	<b>Annual Dinner – Brookfield Hotel</b>
<b>January 2023</b>	<b>AGM and Spring Talk – Date tbc</b>