



Volunteers and Members NEEDED

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Introduction

The Association had a successful 2018, building on the achievement of previous years. As you will have seen, work is proceeding in preparation for the 2019 Season and hopefully we can continue to make progress.

I must mention with sadness the recent passing away of Tony Yoward, at the age of 93, who was one of the prime movers and a founder member of the SMPPA. Tony was a long term, stalwart supporter of the Pond through many crises including the complete rebuilding of the West bank.

However we do now have serious problems. Along with many of the Committee Members, I am getting older and becoming less able to undertake the many varied tasks in which I am involved. In company with other long serving committee members I intend stepping down in the near future.

Nick Madinaveitia

February 2019

Call for support

The recent flurry of house sales has shown a continual rise in their value, reflecting the glorious environment we have around the Pond. These delightful surroundings are due, in no small measure to the activities of the Association. It is in everyone's immediate financial interest to keep this standard of well-maintained but unobtrusive ambience and now perhaps it is time that the younger members of our community replaced those who have guided the Committee for so long. Please, do volunteer to participate.

As mentioned in the Autumn Newsletter and at the AGM we do need more members and volunteers – not only to carry out the physical tasks but to help in the many supporting committee roles; chairman, treasurer, social organizer, membership and even the newsletter.

Please talk to one of the Committee about what help you can offer. If you do not know anyone on the committee please call or send an email to the chairman. We look forward to hearing from you.

Charitable Incorporated Organisation

On the 8th October 2018 our CIO Constitution was given to us by the Charity Commission and, as discussed at the October AGM we need to have full membership approval to implement it.

Before we can do this we have various legal matters concerning the Pond Lease to resolve with the Owners' trustees and are preparing to approach a specialist firm of solicitors for help with the technicalities.

Infrastructure

Pond Draining

We drained the pond and opened the gates on 24th January for several days taking advantage of the Spring Tides to flush out silt. We had previously approached the Environment Agency to redirect the flow at Constant Spring to increase the scouring process, but they were unable to act within the timeframe.

They have now responded that they are not prepared to adjust the sluices to increase the flow in the Lumley Brook unless there is a significant increase in the flow of the River Ems. They fear that causing a lower flow in the Western branch could strand fish and seriously affect the ecosystem. Comments about the ponds' 'silting up' in the last 40 years are most intriguing – in 1977 (about 40 years ago) when the tidal gates were renewed, we were required by the authorities to lower the impounded water level by 9 inches - equivalent to a sudden dump of silt across both ponds.

Reeds have taken advantage of the major change in base level, however their spread now seems almost in equilibrium. When the water levels are dropping the main channel carries flow but the flanks drain in gentle dribbles and very little silt is carried away.

Unfortunately flushing is only likely to work when flows are very significant, so we will continue to open the gates under appropriate conditions.

Tidal Gates

The worm growth and build-up of barnacles have been removed and, whilst not perfect, the seals should stem any leakage better.



Sluice Gate



Sluice blade and groove looking upwards

Whilst the pond was drained the sluice structure was inspected and found to need serious attention in the near future. The picture is taken looking upwards from the pond side and wear on the groove rebate can be clearly seen.

A specialist is being approached to quote for the work.

Footbridge railings

As reported last September the existing balustrades are showing the ravages of time .

Various solutions to the problem have been explored, for example, replacing the posts using steel pads bases etc. We have written to four structural engineering practices for support with a possible redesign but have had no real success so far.

In discussion with the WSCC Public Rights of Way Section, we have been advised that any solution other than a direct replacement would involve a full technical approval; we have been offered a grant of £200 towards the works.

Considering the lack of response from the engineers and the fact that their solutions will require significant outlay, we are getting quotes for refurbishment rather than replacement. Hopefully we will instruct a contractor to start in the very near future so that the bridge will be resplendent for the Spring.



Northern Bird Raft

The windy weather in the autumn caused the raft to rotate and twist its anchor chain into a tight ball, thus setting it free. On the last weekend in January we caught up with it, fitted a new anchor and chain equipped with a swivel and refixed the coot house roof.

The task was carried out by doughty SMPPA volunteers and was not without incident. Passers-by were concerned that all should return to shore safe and well, as at one point the two dinghies in attendance had abandoned one poor soul on the raft!

Reeds

As noted in the September Newsletter our efforts to control the spread of the Common Reeds (*Phragmites australis*) continue. If left unchecked they will continue to spread over the banks and Slipper Road, creating a potentially dangerous reduction in sight lines for walkers and drivers of vehicles. Their rhizome system is invasive and has caused the road surface to crack in the past. By controlling them we are seeking a balance between providing a habitat for wildlife and safety for all.

The reeds can grow to a height of 4 metres and perhaps if we had our time again they would not have been planted!! – Never mind, they were and we need to deal with them.

The committee is in contact with a specialist contractor EnviroAqua (www.enviroaqua.co.uk) who are recommending spraying the reeds when the growth is about 30cm to 60cm high, and importantly after they have undertaken all necessary paperwork in order to apply to the Environment Agency for an AQHERB01, permission for spraying. They have advised as follows:-

‘... Enviroaqua has had an extremely good success rate cutting Phragmites and spraying the regrowth. Slipper Mill Pond Preservation Association have cut areas of vegetation back prior to spraying treatment. Some marginal vegetation has not been cut and all attempts will be made to spray this area as effectively as possible. Treatment of the Phragmites will be using Roundup Pro-Bioactive. This is a non-selective Glyphosate-based product safe to use by our qualified personnel around aquatic environments.’

As Roundup Pro-Bioactive is a non-selective Glyphosate-based product there will be collateral damage to the immediate vegetation but this will recover. Great care will also be taken to avoid wildlife especially any birds nesting.

Signage

Warning signs in pond are to be removed and replaced by pictogram panels fixed in strategic positions

The Information Panels at the head of the pond and on the wall of Slipper Mill are being reviewed at present and a revised panel is being discussed.



Wardle Land

We continue in discussions with the Wardle family who are prepared to gift the Association with the land which includes the public footpath on the West side of Dolphin Creek. We are looking at details of the lease for access to the adjacent moorings and, at the same time, thinking carefully about the commitment and bearing in mind potential future Committee strength.

Westwood Development

The Planning Application (Ref: APP/18/00672) has been submitted to Havant Borough Councils and the following objection lodged on behalf of the SMPPA

1. Flood Plain

Reducing the flood plain potential of land to the North the A27 so affecting flows and flooding downstream.

2. Surface water drainage

High local ground water level impeding efficiency of a storm-loaded SUDS system creating pollution risk.

3. Ecological corridor

Valuable 'green' through routes from the Downs to the Sea are being eroded by the many intrusive development proposals clustered close by in both Havant and Chichester Council Areas.

4. Impact on the local infrastructure

Ever more housing in the area overstressing underlying systems such as: educational, medical, employment as well as transportation facilities in the area.

Social Affairs

Spring Talk

We are looking for a speaker at the moment and will keep you aware of developments.

Annual Dinner

The Annual Dinner was enjoyed by 71 guests in the Brookfield Hotel at the end of November. The raffle prizes were a great success and our thanks go to the Brookfield Hotel, the Coop, Keyprint, The Sussex Brewery, Driftwood Cafe and the Deck Restaurant and our own members for their generous contributions. The entertainment took a different format this year with Bill Keeble as Master of Ceremonies introducing various acts from a Dead Parrot sketch, Pond Talk, the Hole in a Bucket, finishing with a surprise “SMPPA” song set to the tune of 'YMCA'.

SMPPA Song

(Written by Bill Keeble to the tune “YMCA”, (Village People)).

*Pond Folk, there's no need to feel down.
I said Pond Folk, pick yourselves off the ground.
I said Pond Folk, coz you're in Emsworth Town,
There's no need to be unhappy.*

*Pond Folk, there's a place you can go.
I said Pond Folk, you just got to know,
If you join up, I'm sure you will find,
Muddy ways to have a good time!*

Chorus

*It's fun to be in the SMPPA,
It's fun to be in the SMPPA.
They have everything, and sometimes a flood,
And birdlife, and reed beds, and mud!*

Repeat Chorus

(Finale)

S-----M-----P--P-----A !

“Pexit”

By special request we have been asked to reproduce the words of the Pond Talk sketch written by Betty Smith, Jo Greenfield & Catherine Madinaveitia.



Jo Greenfield and Betty Smith

- J Hello hello Miss Fortune, How lovely to meet you here. I haven't flown into you for such a long time.*
- B Is that you Mrs Bird? How are you? Are you all right? You look pale; more like a barn owl than a tawny.*
- J I'm all right, thank you - just hoping I haven't got that irritable owl syndrome again. It's probably because I've been swooping a lot today. I've done at least five minutes of swooping but I hear the recommended number of swoops a day for real fitness is 10. Would you like a drink? Sun's over the yardarm I think.*
- B Tell you what, let's sit by the Olde Sluicey Gate. We could get a drink from the Pond from there.*
- J Here we are, then (both sit – Mrs Overall appears). Is that a kingfisher over there? See, just by the “No Swimming” notice. Oh no it's one of those Swedish green Ikeas. I see it now. They got carried here on the jet stream during migration I suppose.*
- B What are you talking about? Swedish green Ikeas? Never heard of them. Are you sure?*
- J Oh yes, I was roosting on the Hermitage Hardware shop windowsill last night and a man was showing one to Mr Muddypond. Beautiful plumage. Very elegant bird too. Sad though. It could hardly hold its little head up (nodding). Perhaps it's something to do with the rafts.*

- B Oh these rafts. I don't know why they leave them there. They just attract more birds. You should hear the noise the Great Black Backed Gulls make. Fighting the swans. Keeps me awake half the day. Unsettling.*
- J It's that wretched Pexit business I expect. The Pond leaving the SMPPA has split the bird population almost in half. The Leave vote was by a very narrow margin. Owl things considered, I feel sorry for the May Swan. She's left owl by herself.*
- She's been left this mess by David Cormorant – what a twit!*
- She's trying to negotiate with all the various bird species as well as with the SMPPA. Must be difficult. Not helped by that goose, Geese Mogg, desperate to leave and push her off the raft.*
- B Not to mention Doris J, oh sorry, I mean Boris J, you know, the grey heron. He used to be blonde but became grey overnight. This happened when the vote was won by the Pexiteers. Don't think that he was expecting it – he was horrified and went grey the next day! He's a real troublemaker. But he's been quiet lately. Keeps hidden in the reeds. Bodes ill!*
- J But I thought the May Swan had been successful with the argument over fishing rights? Not that I like mullet myself but it's the principle of the thing. By the way, didn't anyone vote for the Canada Solution?*
- B Oh no. The Canada geese did fly in and try to mediate but the swans just mobbed them. Pity.*
- J No wonder The Pond wants to leave the SMPPA. During the day there are endless lines of children, joggers, birdwatchers, dog walkers AND dogs walking up and down, up and down. There's no need for them ALL to do it here.*
- B I've often thought they should fence off the entire Pond and stop people coming here altogether.*
- J That would be a hoot.*
- B And another thing. You know, I could swear there was more water in the Pond yesterday when I flew along the bank. Where's all the water gone? The Pond bed's beginning to look quite derelict.*
- J Yes I can't understand why they do that. When I phoned the Chairman to complain, he told me that the Committee are working day and night on it – filling and emptying the Pond. I asked him why they did it all the time and he just muttered something about a hole in his bucketand that reminds me of a song....*

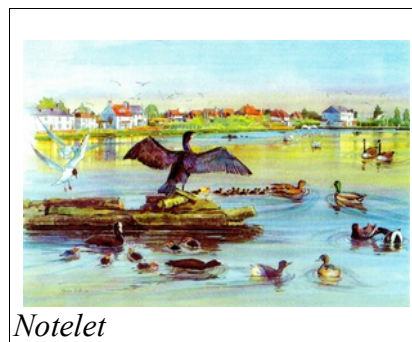
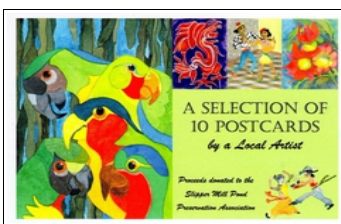
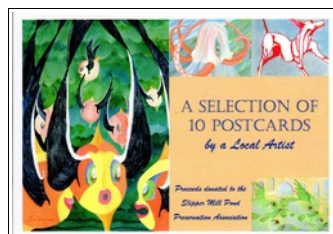
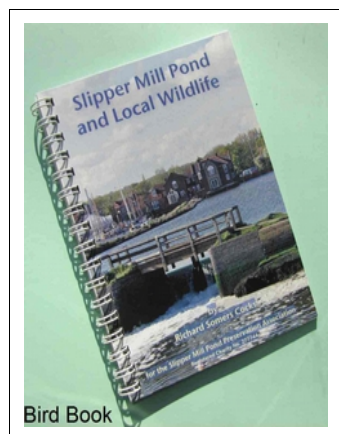
Dates for the Diary

Date	Day	Event
tbc	tbc	Spring Talk
15 th April 3 rd May	Monday Friday	Broomfield Photo Competition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last day for entries • Prizegiving
tbc	Sunday	Summer Party
25 th October	Friday	AGM
22 nd November	Friday	Dinner

Contacts

General:	Nick Madinaveitia	01243 377749	chmn@smppa.org.uk
Treasurer:	Mark Phillips	01243 376756	treasurer@smppa.org.uk
Membership	Sharon Corbett	01243 389994	membership@smppa.org.uk
Social Events	Jo Greenfield	01243 371134	info@smppa.org.uk
Work Party	Rob Turner	01243 376508	workparty@smppa.org.uk
Photo comp.	Mark Phillips	01243 376756	photos@smppa.org.uk
Wildlife:	Downland Surgery	01243 377141	
	RSPCA	01239 667541	
Environment Agency	All incidents	0800807060	<i>Note - revised numbers</i>
	Flood line	0345988 1188	
Post	c/o 35 Slipper Road, Emsworth, Hants., PO108BS		

Publications



Please contact Jo Greenfield if you wish to purchase the Bird Book, Notelets or Cards all on sale to support the Association.

Data Protection Act 2018

To comply with the EU's General Data Protection Regulation we have added our Data Protection & Privacy Policy to the Membership page of our website. If you have any queries, or do not wish to receive email or postal communications from us, please let us know by writing or emailing to info@smppa.org.uk.