

# SMPPA Newsletter

## January 2023

### Winning Poem from the Annual Dinner – 25 November 2022 written by “the Roundhouse Meadow” table

*Now we all love Roundhouse Meadow, but lately we've been torn  
Because it's been invaded by builders at dawn  
They've lit a lot of fires, and blocked our drives and view  
They put the radio on max and turned the air quite blue  
However, in the evening, when all is quiet and still  
We remember why we love our pond and take a sleeping pill*

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Since our last newsletter in the summer, when it seemed that the heat would never end, we have continued to be busy. It was a pleasure to be able to hold a successful Annual Dinner in November, the first one for 3 years. The large workparty in early October, along with a number of other smaller workparties led by Jim Hailstone, have achieved a wide range of tasks. In August our Pond and Peter Pond were reaffirmed as Sussex Local Wildlife Sites or “LWS”, which is good news. On a sadder note, August saw the worst antisocial behaviour that we can remember, causing much distress to local residents and passers-by.

The next event is the **AGM on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> January at 7.15pm** – details included

with this newsletter. We do hope you will join us.

***We are most grateful for the help of everyone mentioned in this newsletter, and to the support of all our members. Thank you.***

With very best wishes to you all for a wonderful 2023.

*Jo Greenfield*

(and SMPPA Trustees)

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## **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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## **Annual Dinner (words by Maire Park)**



The Annual Dinner was held on Friday 25th November. Because of pandemic restrictions there hasn't been an Annual Dinner for three years so this was a real opportunity for members to enjoy an evening with old friends and for new members to put names to faces and faces to names.

We were delighted that Nick Madina could join us to say grace before the meal, as he has been in and out of hospital for several months. The Brookfield Hotel provided a delicious meal, quite an achievement for 71 guests; and the room filled with energy and chatter. After the meal, it was time for some coffee-time fun.

This started with an aeroplane making competition. Each table was provided with coloured paper to make a paper aeroplane and a prize was awarded to the plane that flew furthest. Ros Stamper won the very appropriate prize of an inflatable gull.

Over dinner, each table was tasked with writing a poem, limerick or joke that related to the pond in some way. We have an abundance of poetic talent among our membership and many of the limericks were greeted by enthusiastic chuckles. The winning poem submitted by Roundhouse Meadow is published on page 1.

After dinner Jo Greenfield gave some highlights of the history and challenges around the SMPPA and a toast of remembrance was made to former Trustees who have sadly passed away since the last dinner: Mark Phillips, Peter Archer, Tony Yoward and Angela Brown.

Then there was a quiz with questions about Emsworth and the Pond. For instance, the SMPPA was formed in 1966, the same year that Tom Jones was the Christmas number 1 with "Green Green Grass of Home". Remember to revise for another quiz

by visiting [smppa.org.uk](http://smppa.org.uk)!

The “guess the weight of the chain” competition was won by Trevor Smith who guessed its weight exactly! (1.6kg or 3,200 butterflies!).

And finally, we held the Raffle. We had loads of prizes divided into surprise bags - it was a bit like emptying your stocking on Christmas morning! We had generous donations of prizes from our members and from the following local businesses:



We are very grateful for everybody's support. This is our main fundraising event of the year and this year we raised nearly £700, a real boost to our finances.

So, thank you to the Brookfield Hotel for hosting such an enjoyable evening and thank you to everybody who supported the dinner. It was wonderful to be together again and now we can look forward to next year's Annual Dinner.

**Put this date in your diary, Friday 24th Nov 2023 - see you all then!**

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## Bird Flu – dead birds

Dead swans have been found in the Fishbourne, Thorney and Bosham Channels and birds collected for analysis have since been confirmed to have been infected.

2 dead terns have been removed from the Pond recently and disposed of according to government guidelines at [www.gov.uk/guidance/report-dead-wild-birds](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-dead-wild-birds).

We have reported this to Peter Hughes (Ecologist) at CHC ([birdreport@conservancy.co.uk](mailto:birdreport@conservancy.co.uk)) who has requested that, for identification purposes, we submit photos if we find any more.

More details at [www.conservancy.co.uk/page/latest-news](http://www.conservancy.co.uk/page/latest-news) .

## Antisocial Behaviour



*Graffiti on the footbridge – August 2022*



*Graffiti on the Mill wall – August 2022*

It all escalated after a fire was deliberately lit by 2 young boys on 1st August on the west bank footpath. The fire began to spread quickly but was swiftly put out by local residents, including the Manager of the Raglan pub.

During the hot summer weather, there was much swimming and jumping in the Pond itself, with climbing on the tidal beam, gates and footbridge. The level of antisocial behaviour and litter was worse than anyone can remember, with particular impact on Slipper Mill residents (who have had stones thrown at them on numerous occasions) and boat owners who have had their boats damaged. This culminated on the evening of Monday 8th August with graffiti on the notice board, mill walls and footbridge.

The Trustees made the decision to open the tidal gates and to drain the Pond in order to limit the time available for anyone to swim in the Pond. As the river levels were very low upstream, it was then decided to use the sluice gate instead of the tidal gates which meant that there was still some water left in the Pond at low tides.

Draining the Pond did reduce the number of young people hanging out by the footbridge but antisocial behaviour continued to flare up, and local residents (and Police) are keen to have CCTV, which is something that we are investigating. We have also set up a local whatsapp group to communicate on these kinds of issues.

The problem of antisocial behaviour has been throughout the Harbour so is a community (not just an SMPPA) issue. The feeling is that Police are overwhelmed with calls, so occurrences have also been logged online via the West Sussex police website, with the Police visiting from time to time.

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## Sussex Local Wildlife Site “LWS” – status retained

After the Sussex Wildlife Trust surveyed the Pond in 2021, we are very pleased to say that the LWS Technical Panel reaffirmed the Pond's status as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) in August 2022. The Southbourne local planning authority has been notified of the decision so that they can take account of it in implementing Local Plan policies.



## Summer Garden Party (words by Maire Park)

Simon Dwyer & Claire Starling hosted the Summer Party on 31st July in the garden of Slipper House. The sun shone as some 35 members shared drinks and nibbles; conversation and fun. It was a wonderful opportunity for everybody to enjoy our beautiful pond in such lovely surroundings. Thank you Simon and Claire.



## October Workparty Tasks – Bank Strimming, Buddleia Removal, Footbridge Upright Post Repairs, Concrete Posts on Verge etc



*Some of our fantastic workparty volunteers relaxing after their hard work*



*The team working on the footbridge upright posts*



*Buddleia being removed – a mammoth task!*

A small team (Jim Hailstone, Rob Turner and Fraser Dibden) cut the grasses in early October followed by a full work party on Saturday 8th, to collect and bag the arisings. Four trailer-loads were taken away for recycling.

The Buddleia by the caravan park was removed – it needed a second work party of six people, and another two trailer loads. A mix of indigenous light “hedging” was planted instead in November (see “Planting” on page 7).

Graffiti was removed from the footbridge and walls as far as possible. New Perspex was purchased to replace that in the information board that had been damaged by graffiti.

Another rotten footbridge upright post was replaced by a group of volunteers (the second one this year). Concrete posts were placed on the verges on the southeast bank to prevent parking there.

Delicious home-made cakes, biscuits and refreshments were hosted by Susan & Fraser Dibden and were very welcome at the end of the session. Thankyou to everyone who contributed so much on the day.



## Tidal Gates – Maintenance & Monitoring



*Before cleaning - Fraser Dibden showing the amount of growth on the gates*



*Afterwards - a heron admiring the newly cleaned gates*

In late November, while the Pond was drained, Jim Hailstone and Fraser Dibden spent several hours removing a large amount of growth from the gates using a jet wash and sharp scrapers.

Jim inspected the tidal gates & side posts using a bradawl, and concluded that they all appeared sound and not in need of renewal. The leakage around the tidal gates is now easier to detect after encrustation removal, and appears to be mainly between the corner posts and the walls. We are investigating if it is possible to fill these gaps.

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## Chequers Quay - Sea Club Rush Planting

The water around Chequers Quay appears to be getting shallower and silting up. Following comments from residents about the associated smell, it was agreed to plant Sea Club Rush (which is non-invasive) in two corners adjacent to the development.

Dave Gattrell from Peter Pond very kindly offered his expert advice and worked hard with Jim Hailstone, Rob Turner and Jo Greenfield in 2 sessions to do 2 areas of planting.

This was done by digging up sections of club rush in Peters Pond (see top photo) and wheel-barrowing them over the road, and “planting” them directly in the silt. The work has received favourable comments from residents and passers-by. It is hoped that the rushes will thrive.



## Planting of saplings south of the caravan park

Following the removal of the tired and overgrown Buddleia by the caravan park, Sharon Corbett and Rod Aitken planted around 85 saplings made up of hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, crab apple, elder and wild cherry.

As native species, these light hedging plants will be far more suitable to encourage and shelter wildlife along the Pond banks.

Thank you to you both for your hard work. We shall enjoy watching the plants grow.



*New indigenous hedging to replace Buddleia*

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## Peter Archer - former Committee Member - in memory

Peter Archer, who used to live in Harbour Way, has very sadly passed away recently. In the early 2000s there were many problems with the west bank which required frequent emergency repairs. Peter and other Committee Members worked tirelessly with Nick Madina on fundraising for the bank repairs and Peter was instrumental in “making them happen”.

This culminated in a serious rebuild of the bank in 2011, when £75,000 was raised from grants (the bulk of it funnily enough from the EU), a major achievement after around 8 years of hard work. Peter also worked with the Environment Agency to help their understanding on how the River Ems works, as well as helping Nick make the current bird rafts. We are very grateful for his huge contribution over the years.

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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.***

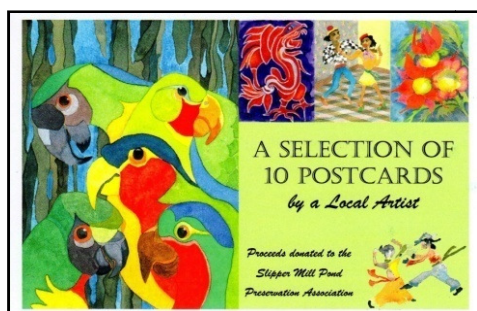
**We are looking for an additional Trustee**, ideally from Slipper Road south, Round-house Meadow or Queen Street. The Committee meets quarterly, with additional small groups meeting/liaising as necessary. We have a great action-focused team.

We are also looking for people or organisations to do Wildlife Monitoring / Studies.

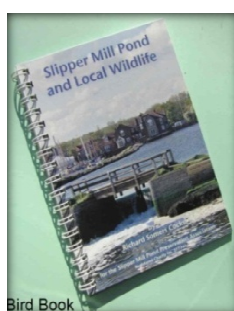


<b>Useful Contacts</b> (also available on our website)			
<b>Enquiries/Chair</b>	Jo Greenfield	01243 371134	chmn@smppa.org.uk
<b>Membership</b>	Sharon Corbett	01243 389994	membership@smppa.org.uk
<b>Social</b>	Maire Park		events@smppa.org.uk
<b>Police</b> Emergency 999 Disturbances 101	PCSO Matt Isles 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.		
<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.		

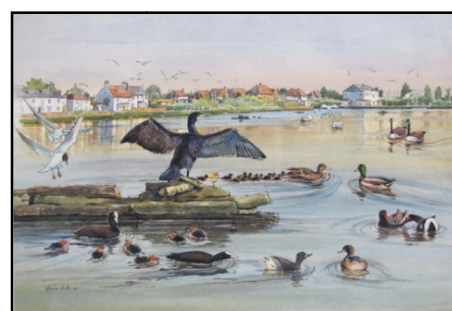
**Publications** – Available to purchase – please contact Jo Greenfield (see above)



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



*Bird & Butterfly Book - £5*



*Notelets - £4 for 6 (incl envelopes) by local artist Marian Forster*

<b>Dates for Your Diary</b>	<b>Event</b>
<b>Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2023</b>	<b>AGM – 7.00pm for 7.15pm</b>
<b>Summer – date tbc</b>	<b>Summer Garden Party – Slipper House</b>
<b>October – date tbc</b>	<b>Full Work Party</b>
<b>Friday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2023</b>	<b>Annual Dinner – Brookfield Hotel</b>