



Cormorants

by a local artist

A page of one of the postcard books on sale in support of the SMPPA

Newsletter — January 2014

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Introduction

2013 was another successful year for the Association – particularly with the wild flowers that sprang up at the North end of the East Bank enchanting many. We are dealing with the encroaching common reeds and addressing the Greater Black Backed Gulls problem including protracted negotiations with the relevant authorities. The current position of these issues is reported in this Newsletter.

Behind the scenes the Association has been very busy, working on flood related issues. Until formal agreement confirming that the management of the pond does not impact on flooding up stream the Association will not undertake any further works that could imply, however remotely, such responsibility. As each year in the past we are indebted to the tireless effort of the committee and the splendid work done by the volunteers.

Wishing you a prosperous 2014.

Nick Madinaveitia – Chairman

Wildlife report

General

Winter has just arrived and between the storms we have had those splendid clear days with magical dawns and sunsets. Last Autumn's work parties have tidied up the banks, cut back the reeds and trimmed the rufy-tufted wild life refuges working to our planting plan. It looks almost too smart and if it were not for the promise of vigorous spring growth one would say too urban.



We have had as many as a dozen cormorants on the rafts clearly keeping our fish population in check; a great measure of the healthy state of the pond water itself. If you were quick enough you could catch sight of regular high speed fly pasts of a pair of kingfishers who seemed to be

commuting from Peter Pond to the marina.

The Greater Black Backed Gulls disappeared in October only to make fleeting visits in the later part of December discovering they were not welcomed.

Our usual friends have been much in evidence. Numerous gulls, coots and the little grebe have all been busy.

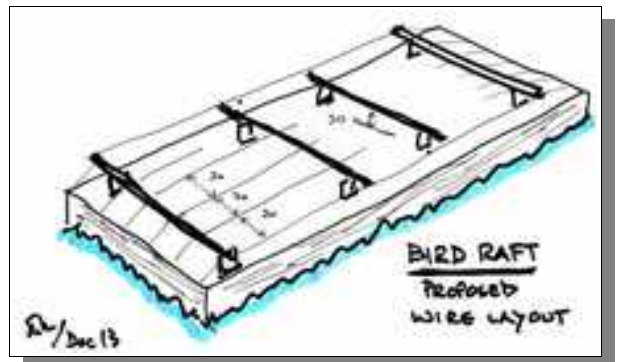
The pond has now been lightly frozen over several times and the cold weather routine is establishing itself.

Greater Black Backed Gull

Larus Marinus)

As reported in our September Newsletter the gulls have become an increasing source of annoyance. At our November Annual General Meeting we debated their merciless predation of smaller birds and disturbance, The consensus was that although fine birds in themselves they were not welcome. We settled on the idea of covering the central bird raft with netting and to cause the birds the least distress we had to install it before the New Year to avoid disturbing them during the nesting season – an illegal activity.

We came across reports of birds getting caught in loose netting. Since the raft is generally inaccessible we had to look for another solution and found the RSPB recommended using wires for flat roofs.



We realized their eyesight must be very good indeed because one only has to hold out a piece of bread and gulls fly in from all corners of the pond . Finally at the beginning of December two fearless volunteers installed wires at 30 cms centres some 30cm above the raft itself.

The very next day the pair of Greater Black Backed Gulls came, circled the raft inspecting it, made a lot of noise and then flew away. They have called by from time to time but not stayed.

Work Parties

As ever the Association much indebted to the doughty volunteers who help on these occasions.

The first session of the Autumn took place on a most in-clement 26th October and 13 volunteers cleaned the banks of rank growth, trimmed bushes and filled builders' bags with the debris which were whisked off to the tip.



The second session involving 14 enthusiasts on 30th November cut back and cleared away the reeds in accordance with the agreed planting plan.



Infrastructure

General

The pond banks and the gates are in good condition with only minor maintenance issues to be addressed. We have not been able to deal with the minor leaks yet and they are 'on the list' for the near future.

As reported the sluice and more particularly its apron are in need of urgent attention. We have deliberately not started preparing for these works as any action could be incorrectly construed as an admission of liability for flooding upstream of the pond - you may well recall that the Association was threatened with legal action following the June 2012 flood event. Action is being taken to formalise the Association's position – see below.

The River Ems

It is very disappointing to have to repeat the message that the Association is still continuing to press both West Sussex County Council and the Environment Agency for resolution.

Both authorities have verbally agreed the findings of the Burgess Report and its supplementary information but formal confirmation remains outstanding. (See our January, April and September Newsletters).

We now have the help of our County Councillor, Sandra James, and received just before Christmas a copy of the consultant's report prepared last February for us to comment on. We will be responding to this report in due course.

24th December Flooding

This exceptional rainfall in the early morning of 24th December 2013 filled the water meadows upstream of Constant Springs. We became involved in the morning and Nick Madina's notes of the events give a flavour of the Association's involvement.



EA – River Ems at the Westbourne Gauge

9 am. - Gavin Millar – of Slipper Mill rang saying that a Lumley resident had

knocked on his door asking the SMPPA to open the sluice to help relieve the flooding at the cottages and asking what he should do.. I explained that, whilst we had sympathy with their flooding problem, opening the sluice would not alter the levels so far upstream. The Association is very sensitive on this point as opening the gate, even as a matter of courtesy, would be a tacit admission of the pond being responsible for flooding upstream.

I suggested that the resident should contact Kevin MacKnay of WSCC who is responsible for the Ordinary River System and Asad Abbas of the EA who is responsible for the sluice at Constant Springs and the Main River.

9.30 – Environmental Agency duty officer rang asking me to open the sluice – which I refused to do saying that it would have no beneficial effect and only cause further damage to the sluice apron and the South Bank.

9.45 – John Smith – Environment Agency – Project Leader rang and we had amicable conversation. I confirmed that I had refused to open the sluice as described above. I reported that the pond level was at the time well below the top of bank and that the backwater effect of any flooding entering the pond would not be felt by the cottages at low tide and more particularly at the anticipated higher than predicted

high tide.

10.00 – Asad Abbas – Environment Agency – Local Engineer - Similar phone amicable conversation – have discussed the issues many times in the past.

12.30 - John Smith – Environment Agency – NM report on visit upstream
Constant Springs:

- Water meadows upstream awash
- Gauge – reading 0.59
- Two of the three sluice gates open

Lumley Cottages

- Stream (at 1200hrs) comfortably below the service pipes
- Some residents cleaning up (hose pipe and pump at cottage No 3 (?)- South block)
- Flooding from rear?

Lower Lumley Road

- Recent fresh material on outer face in the vicinity of Hermitage Brook
- Brook not backing up (i.e. at 1200 – how much work had been done by locals to clear any blockages???)
- Much surface water remaining (6-8cm on West side of low section of road)
- Pond level some 15cm below road water level
- Surface Drains blocked

Mentioned the Water-Edge Grant project to raise sections of the Peter Pond bank and improve the local drainage. The project is being put forward by David Hilton, a resident of the lower part of Lumley Road, and has the support of Sandra James – the Bourne WSCC County Councillor. Kevin MacKnay and Asad Abbas are being consulted and detailed level information is being sought.

25 December – 1200

Visited the bund parallel to the railway line at North end of Brook Meadow to see if the bank had been over-topped at the bend – and it had. There was debris against the undergrowth at the bend and grass etc. caught in several of the overhanging branches to demonstrate this.



Constant Springs Sluice

On 31st December a resident of Lumley Cottages called in a great state of stress as the Lumley Cottages residents feared that they would be flooded yet again by the high Spring Tides and the expected Storm Surge. I restated our position and suggested that we should work together to resolve the issue. After discussing this problem with Committee Members we agreed that in this instance opening the gates would be much appreciated as a friendly gesture and hopefully start a dialogue. This was

done in the dark at 10pm on New Year's Eve and they are being held open to help with desilting the pond.

We were rewarded several days later when another Lumley owner came to explore the issues and after a fruitful hour-long conversation he agreed that it would be very helpful to set up a Lumley Residents' group and work with us to put even more pressure on the Environment Agency and West Sussex County Council to carry out their obligations.

We will keep you up to date on this saga as events happen.

Thorney Field

The preparation of the Southbourne District Plan has rekindled interest in the field.

On 24th November schemes were presented at the Parish Council's Developers' public meeting for potential housing sites to meet the government's requirement to build new homes.



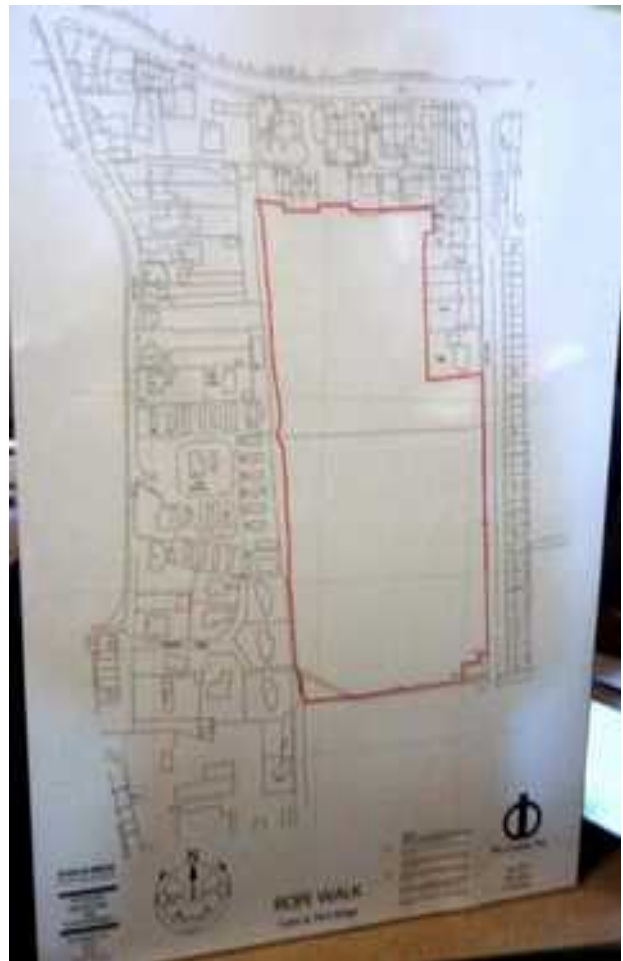
Great concern has been expressed about the proposals' impact on local services including education, medical, recreational space, traffic impact and library facilities. Special concern has been expressed about inadequate sewage facilities as well as the problems of coping with surface run-off.

Thorney Field was included among the parcels of land being considered as potential housing sites even though it lies within the Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and outside "Settlement Policy Area" and is not best favoured policy wise.



Thorney Road Site coloured yellow

The Thorney Field agent (M. Perkins) representing John Clayton Assocs. had a table and displayed a proposal for housing. He said there are 60 owners in all and Douglas Briggs, architects of Bosham, prepared the block plan.



Comments about the development have been lodged including:

- It is within the Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and residential development would intrude on views from the harbour side and other locations within the AONB.
- Such development would erode the effectiveness of land currently forming a strategic gap between developed areas.
- It would create an undesirable precedent for any proposals to develop land immediately to the south.

For more details and bigger plans please approach Southbourne Parish Council.

Slipper Road Street Lighting:

All residents of Slipper Road received a flier saying that the lights in Slipper Road were going to be upgraded – but when the West Sussex PFI Lighting Portal was checked the road was not included in the programme.

I enquired and here is the friendly correspondence with the Lighting Team:



Dear Helen,

Thank you very much for your reply. Our concern is the impact of the spilt light on the flanking bank of Slipper Mill Pond and its wildlife. We are concerned that the fitments might increase the amount of spilt light and affect the Red Book species we have in the pond.

Please can we have details of the locations and the proposed fitments so we can assure ourselves that they will have the minimal environmental impact. - Nick Madina,

Good Morning Mr Madina

Thank you for your email addressing your concerns for the wildlife of Slipper Mill Pond. After reading your comments I appreciate your request to find out the proposed plans for this area, however unfortunately they have not yet been drawn up for this road so I am unable to advise on what is being installed and the locations of these lamps.

We will be happy to help once these have been created, I would expect this to be done in the New Year.

Kindest Regards Helen Jones, Customer Care Team, Street Lighting - South Coast PFI

We will keep you up to date with developments.

Energy Survey



On the 30th November, whilst the Work Party was working at nineteen to the dozen, Nick Rouse asked if he could survey the profile of the pond using his radio-controlled model boat. He is a mature MSc student from the Centre for Alternative Energy in Machynlleth Wales under the aegis of the University of East London. His course covers all aspects of renewable energy, how to minimise energy usage and how to design low energy buildings and the title of his thesis is 'What energy may be generated at existing tidal mill sites and what advantages may be gained by the use of back-pumping?' To answer this question he needs to know the volume and flow patterns of the various pools and for this he has designed and built the radio controlled boat he used on the Slipper Pond. It has a GPS antenna to determine exactly where it is and a acoustic depth sounder to measure the depth at that point and carries his laptop computer to log the measurements.

We hope to hear in due course what his findings are and if there is a future in the idea for the pond.

Annual Dinner

Betty Smith reports:

The Dinner was held on 22nd November 2013 at the Brookfield, attended by 67 members and friends, and was a pleasant, convivial evening. The Brookfield food and service was, as ever, of a high standard and the Raffle, after the dinner, entertained the assembled company in the time honoured fashion. Our thanks to all the individual donors and to the Brookfield Hotel, The Emsworth Co-Op, The Sussex Brewery and Keyprint for their sponsorship of the Raffle. The Dinner made a welcome £553 for the SMPPA and occasioned several useful comments on fund raising and one generous offer of help towards raising money in the future. The general maintenance of the Pond on a month by month basis is covered by the work of its volunteers and by the proceeds from the Dinner, the sale of our books and from our subscriptions. All contributions towards this fund, in whatever form, are gratefully accepted and used carefully. The major works on the fabric of the Pond are dependent on grants raised from a number of sources e.g. the Harbour Conservancy, West Sussex County Council etc. and represent the public aspect of the Slipper Mill Pond.

Photographic Competition

Sarah Titley Reports:

Westbourne Primary School has been invited to join five other local schools Thorney Island Primary, St James Primary, Emsworth Primary, Southbourne Junior and Funtington Primary in submitting entries and the closing date for the competition will be 7th April 2014. The judges this year are Jenny Tyson, a well-known artist, together with Gill Thatcher and Lizzie Dymock.

The prizes and certificates will be presented on Friday 2nd May 2014 at a private viewing for the entrants and their families at the Emsworth Community Centre at 4pm where all of the entries will be on show. The photographs will remain on display over the Emsworth Arts Trail weekend of 3rd and 4th May.

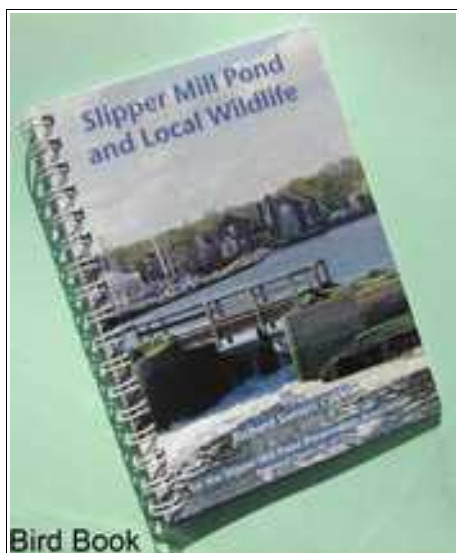
Dates for your Diary

April	TBA	Spring Talk
August	TBA	Summer Party
17 th October	Friday	Annual General Meeting
November	TBA	Work Party
21 st November	TBA	Annual Dinner, Brookfield Hotel.

Contacts:

General:	Nick Madinaveitia	01243 377749
Treasurer:	Mark Phillips	01243 376756
Membership & Social Events	Betty Smith	01243 371576
	Sarah Titley	01243 379947
Wildlife:	The Downland Surgery	01243 377141
	RSPCA	01239 667541
Environment Agency	Pollution	0845 9881188
	Flood line	0800 807060
	Mention the local rangers in any calls – Paul Reynolds & Trevor Page	

Publications



All on sale to support the Association
Please contact Betty Smith if you wish to purchase
the Bird Book, Notelets or the Cards