



## Slipper Mill Pond Preservation Association

Registered Charity No: 277444

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



Carmen - 9yrs

# NEWSLETTER

## December 2010

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### **Chairman's Introduction:**

I cannot believe a whole year has passed by so quickly and it seems like no time since last Christmas and in the village the shops already decorating their windows in preparation for the festive season.

In October we had a most successful Annual General Meeting and discussed many of the matters affecting the pond on a day to day basis.

The Annual Dinner has come and gone and the current cold snap made clear Winter has arrived.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to everyone.

Nick Madinaveitia

### **Wildlife Report** - Gavin Millar reports:

“As we experience an unusually cold November, with the pond covered in ice, lasting all day on occasion, and frost on the grass - a glorious sight in the winter sun, we are already on the look-out for birds from further north seeking food. So far, on the pond we have the usual wintering coots to supplement the breeding residents (but many fewer than last year, dabchicks, assorted gulls, mainly black-headed, some herring, common and greater and lesser blackbacks plus, of course, cormorants, including quite a proportion of youngsters, mallards and mute swans. Below the tidal gates and in Dolphin Creek, redshank, greenshank, oyster catchers, little egrets and moorhen (more than usual) are regularly seen. A first for me was the sight of a pheasant flying across from the East bank and walking up the path.

Earlier, in October, we had remarkable numbers of small fry, presumably grey mullet and quite a few adult sea bass which, of course, we are forbidden to fish.

The plants on the banks of the pond are regressing after the main growing season, although the eleagnus in the north part of Slipper Road was perfuming the air until quite recently and is still, just, in flower. The arbutus is at that beautiful stage where both flowers and fruit can be seen on it. The perennial sunflower left it late but flowered nonetheless. I haven't personally seen any plants not seen in previous years but if anyone else has I would be delighted to hear from you.”

### **Landscape Management**

At the AGM we confirmed the landscape management policy of leaving the banks alone as much as possible, keeping vegetation under control and experimenting with local cutting of the grass to encourage more wild flowers.

As part of the preparation works for the West Bank Repairs we have strimmed the grass to help the contractor have an easy start and to use the opportunity to inspect the fabric of the bank closely.



Volunteers cutting the grass by Slipper Mill

## **West Bank Repairs**

Our bid for a grant from the EU/LEADER fund has been successful so with the various grants we have been given and drawing down on our reserves we have just sufficient funds available to undertake the project.

Caroway, from Rowlands Castle, plan to start on site on 13<sup>th</sup> December. We have arranged with WSCC that the footpath will be closed so that the bank can be used exclusively for construction. Everyone is well aware of the impact of construction on the ecosystem and every effort has been made to finish the work before the beginning of Spring.

As reported fully at the AGM the cost of the construction stage is some £74,000. Unfortunately the £50,000 EU/LEADER Grant conditions require payments to be made and cheques to be cleared before they will make their funds available. At present it is likely that up to £15,000 will be needed as a bridging loan for about as long as a month – but the actual figures will depend on progress achieved on site.

We are exploring various ways to find a suitable loan – the Parish and District Councils are looking to see if they can help and we are in discussions with the Association's Bank. It is possible that we may have to approach members and ask for help.

To ensure that everyone understands what is happening we are circulating a leaflet explaining the project to all the neighbours and local businesses and posters will be placed in the display panels at either end of the pond and on the Kissing Gates.

At the end of the project we plan to have a springtime “Thank You” drinks evening on the completed bank and our various sponsors will be invited to attend.

### **DINNER 2010** - Betty Smith reports:

“Another excellent evening was held at the Brookfield Hotel on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2010 for the Annual Dinner. We enjoyed good food and good company. The chairman gave an outline of the Pond’s year and described the imminent repair works to the West bank. The Raffle, supported by generous donations from the membership, provided its usual entertainment. Our thanks go not only to our membership for the success of the Raffle but also to the following local organisations who donated prizes:

- the Brookfield Hotel
- the Co-op in Emsworth
- the Sussex Brewery
- Driftwood
- Results, the Hairdressers in Southbourne
- And Keyprint for printing the dinner tickets at no cost.

The dinner is the only occasion on which funds are raised for the Pond during the course of the year and our thanks go to all concerned..”

## **Slipper Park – Fence**

Another alternative proposal has been submitted.

## **Dates for your Diary for 2010**

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

## **Contacts**

General:	Nick Madina	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	