

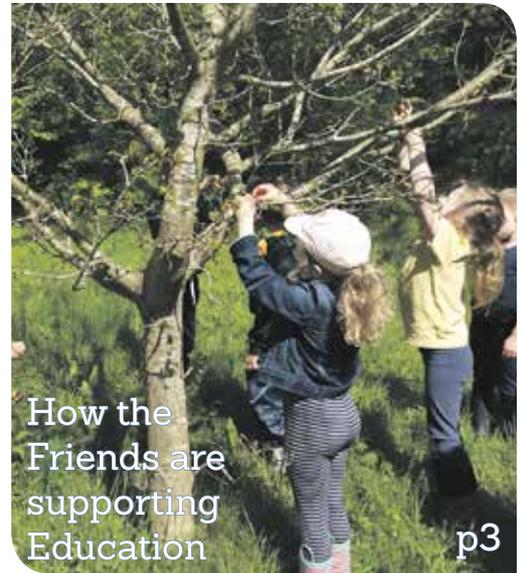
Summer 2018

Friends of
Chichester Harbour

Newsletter



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Our AONB neighbours

It has been a wonderful summer to get out and enjoy all that Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty has to offer. In this issue, Richard Austin introduces our nearest neighbours

From our Chairman

Welcome to our second newsletter of the year.

I write in a July that reminded me of 1976 when I was a 15 year old boy at my then home on a different coast - Dymchurch in Kent. I hope everyone's gardens have survived the drought and will recover next year.

Fortunately being largely supplied by chalk aquifers we have escaped the water supply problems that many other regions have faced. However, we do face enormous water related pollution problems that have been much in our focus this year - and will sadly be on the agenda for years to come.

Besides our normal schedule of work parties and projects we have provided a small bursary to one of the students on this years Marine and Coastal Resource Management MsC at Portsmouth University. David Jones' project is a scientific study of plastics in Chichester Harbour and to that end we funded the purchase of the equipment and provided much of the labour for the study in March. David will be our guest speaker at the AGM in October, and will be presenting his findings. He is both an excellent speaker, and also extremely well informed. I hope you will come and hear what he

has to say, and more importantly help in what we can all subsequently do.

The other big project we are running is the footpath survey for the Conservancy. This is a programme last carried out some 10 years ago. This time we are doing it using our members and a small amount of professional project management support - a vast saving to the Conservancy. The project will enable us to plan a schedule of prioritised footpath maintenance and ensure we are ready for the English Coastal Path.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your support and repeat the call for help - we always are looking for keen volunteers to help across a range of activities.



Oliver Chipperfield

Friends of Chichester Harbour Annual General Meeting Thursday 18th October 2018

A date for the diary! The Friends AGM will be held at the Chichester Yacht Club in Chichester Marina PO20 7EJ on Thursday 18th October 2018.

The agenda is:

- 5.30pm Chairman's welcome and Formal Business**
- 6pm Visiting Speaker; Dr David Jones (Portsmouth University) on his research into the effects of plastics, with particular reference to Chichester Harbour.**
- 7pm Informal drinks reception - an opportunity to meet Friends and your Executive Committee.**
- 8pm Finish**

Full details and relevant papers will be sent out to all members of the Friends at least 28 days before the meeting.

The Chairman and his Executive team look forward to seeing you there!



A fresh face for the Education Service

'A fantastic day', 'a fabulous day', 'a wonderful day'. It seems local school teachers can't praise highly enough the field trips to Chichester Harbour with the Harbour Education Service. Ali Beckett finds out what's new at Dell Quay.

The Service has come a long way from its humble origins in 1999 when it was set up by the far-sighted team at the Conservancy. It still has the same aims of giving, particularly local, school children the opportunity to explore Chichester Harbour. The end goal is for the next generation to appreciate and care for this unique Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Since those early days, thousands of people of all ages have visited the Education Centre. The classroom, despite its beautiful location at Dell Quay, was starting to show its age. Over the last two years, with funding from the Friends, it has been renovated. The entrance door has been moved, allowing for extra toilets – essential when there is a class full of children! New kitchen and washing facilities were added and improved storage built. A new floor and a fresh coat of paint has transformed the Centre. Education Officer, Jane Latawski said, 'we can't thank the Friends enough. The improvements they have paid for has changed it from a tired looking classroom to a Centre we can be really proud of again!'



Children enjoying a Harbour Schools session and an open day to celebrate the renovation work



Harbour Schools is a new project that has been successfully trialled this year and will now be rolled out to other schools. Inspired by Forest Schools, Harbour Schools offers six consecutive trips to the harbour. Over the period, pupils are introduced to a wide variety of Harbour experiences.

At Chidham School a group of pupils walked down to the Harbour each day for activities such as making bark boats which were floated out to sea (there was some sadness when they didn't come back!), playing I-Spy, going on a shoreline treasure hunt, making bird kebabs, and taking a Splash Walk in the creek. The teachers were thrilled with the Harbour School which links closely with the National Curriculum and supports them in offering outdoor learning opportunities. Harbour Schools, funded by the Friends, will be offered to two schools in the new school year.

It is essential that the next generation know the value of our outstanding landscapes. It is hoped that with the Friends funding and the Harbour Education Service we will ensure that all local schoolchildren will know this is a very special place.

Funding from the Friends of Chichester Harbour has also supported:

- Get Afloat boat trips
- Junior Conservancy
- Interpretation panels at Beaky's Wildlife Walk
- Art and photography workshops

This is just one example of how funding from The Friends of Chichester Harbour has been key to the success of the Education Service. In addition grants have allowed the team to trial new ideas and support schools in deprived areas.

One scheme has provided a free outreach visit to all the schools in harbour-side towns and villages. The Conservancy staff go into the school and run workshops that introduce pupils to Chichester Harbour. In general these visits are then followed up by a school trip to the Harbour. So, it has a 2-fold benefit of enriching the pupils field trip as well as promoting the Education Service.

Introducing Our Nearest AONB Neighbours

By *Richard Austin*, AONB Manager, Chichester Harbour Conservancy

There are 34 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England, including the one closest to home at Chichester Harbour. AONBs all have the same purpose – to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape – yet they are all different in their own way.

There are three AONBs closest to Chichester Harbour, all within an hour's commute and ideal for a day out. Technically, the nearest is the **Isle of Wight AONB**, although it might actually take the longest time to reach! This AONB covers around half of the Island and its most famous landmark is the bright white stack called 'the Needles'. Away from the sea cliffs, the Isle of Wight is dominated by farmland, with sheep rearing on the downs and heaths, dairying across the lower-lying land, and pockets of arable farming.

To the east of Chichester Harbour is the **High Weald AONB**. The character of the High Weald was established by the 14th Century and the landscape has survived major historical events and social and technological changes. As a result the High Weald is considered to be one of the best surviving, coherent medieval landscapes in Northern Europe. It is characterised by rolling hills, irregular-shaped fields and open heaths,

interconnected ancient woods, scattered farmsteads and narrow lanes.

To the north of Chichester Harbour lie the **Surrey Hills AONB**. The Surrey Hills, together with the Green Belt, mark the boundary of Greater London. The strong character of the ridges and hills of this chalk landscape feature the highest point in the South East of England at Leith Hill (294 metres). This AONB also has sandy open heaths and woodlands, both of considerable ecological importance.

Each AONB has an AONB Manager and they meet-up three times a year to share and learn from the latest experiences in their protected landscapes. They also discuss new and innovative ideas and areas of common interest with potential for collaborative work. For example, actions to raise the profile of these special places, particularly to those in London, are a lot more effective as a group rather than individually. AONB Managers are also like-minded people, who passionately care about their area of work. Although the actual landscapes are not really comparable, they are all recognised as nationally important and they all need to be respected and looked after for future generations.



Visit to a wildflower meadow

By *Ginny Kidd*, Events Secretary

With a small group of Friends we met Michael and Jane Josphe in their garden where we enjoyed coffee, tea and homemade cookies and biscuits, whilst admiring their Sussex-style house and the purple, pink and mauve of the flower-filled garden.



In a cool barn doubling as a lecture room Michael described, with slides, the stages necessary to create a wildflower meadow.

First the land had to be cleared of shrubs, plants and grass. Then six inches of 'top' soil were removed to reach the earth that had never been cultivated. A lot of digging, weeding, rotavating, raking and firming all followed to prepare the site for seeding.

The seed mix was selected to suit the climate and location – and to include plants and flowers that had traditionally been grown in the area. The seeds were then scattered and watered.



In the wildflower meadow we can again see our traditional local flowers such as field buttercups, orchids, yarrow, scabious, knapweed, vetch, bluebells and cowslips. It also improves the habitat for bees, insects, butterflies, birds and other wildlife such as badgers and foxes.

In the autumn and winter the meadow needs mowing so the seeds will then grow freely the following year.

Knowing a little of the early stages involved, we then walked into the meadow. With Michael's help we identified flowers, butterflies, bees, insects, small plants and the hedges. A lot of us hadn't seen many of these since childhood!

Knowing that 97% of our wildflower meadows have disappeared since 1945 we all left inspired to create our own patch of wildflower meadow however small. Some of us hope to sow a wildflower garden at the entrance to Eames Farm next year, a project that the Friends will enjoy getting involved with.

Events roundup

Since our last newsletter, we have enjoyed many events with our Friends! Particular highlights were John Arnott's talk on the Seals of Chichester Harbour in April, followed by a cruise to see the seals on the Solar Boat in May. We had a stall at the Chichester Harbour Conservancy open day, which was a great success during May half term with many activities for families. Definitely one to support next year!



June saw our visit to the Sussex Wildflower Trust (see left). A very successful fishing trip in July was followed by an evening at the Bosham Gallery so that we could enjoy looking at Victorian and Edwardian photos of the harbour over a glass of wine. Meanwhile, visits to the waste water treatment plant in Apuldram continue regularly throughout the year, along with the Cobnor Estate tours kindly hosted by Diana Beale – both highly popular.



The visit of the UK Border Patrol had to be moved to 27th September for operational reasons. For this and other events in the autumn, please see our events flier which accompanies this newsletter.

Filming *Terror*

The sun shone, white clouds scudded across the sky and a good breeze rippled the water. These were the perfect conditions for a long-planned afternoon of filming *Oyster Boat Terror* sailing on the Harbour.

Our aim is to make a 2-3 minute film of a typical trip to go on the website. The film will help people get a feel for the trip, have confidence in the ease of getting on and off the boat and give them a taste of the wonderful views that await.

For our filming afternoon, the skipper, Chris Harvey, kindly brought along a group of friends. After lunch at the beautifully refurbished Deck cafe, the 'actors' were ready for the off.

Our filmmaker is a local student Jonny Raby. Despite still being at College, Jonny has started to make a name for himself locally and he came fresh from a weekend working for Lamborghini at the Festival of Speed. During the afternoon he was able to both film the boat from alongside and onboard. On a separate occasion he took aerial views of *Terror* sailing using a drone.



Still from the film taken by drone over Emsworth Channel



We started with some video of the passengers being welcomed, putting on their jackets and going onboard. A removable ramp has made the boat much more accessible for those who aren't so keen to leap aboard from the pontoon. *Terror* then did a very short trip out of Emsworth Yacht Harbour and immediately back again so Jonny could film both views. Judi Darley, the crew member onboard, was careful to rearrange the passengers as apparently they never return in the same seat they went out on!

Emsworth Slipper Sailing Club kindly lent us *Slipper Maid* as a support boat, so we then headed out into the main channel to get video of *Terror* as she cut through the water. As we turned into Langstone Channel, the sails were hoisted with all hands on board helping out. *Terror* is in great shape for a boat over 120 years old and heads always turn as she sails by.

After about an hour on the water, the wind was picking up and we headed back to the berth at Emsworth Yacht Harbour. We are very grateful to all our 'passenger actors' and look forward to the film going online later this year.

Terror continues to sail until 24th September and will then be laid up for the winter. Sign up for the eNewsletter at www.oysterboatterror.org.uk

Can you help?

We are looking for some extra help with our newsletter.

If you would be interested in writing for us or taking photographs to accompany the articles we would love to hear from you.

We would give you a brief and all the contacts and support you need to research and write the article. Each article is around 3-400 words and is accompanied by 2-5 photographs.

If you are interested please contact alibeckett@tiscali.co.uk or call 075309 56184.

Ditches and drains for wildlife

In recent months have you noticed high-vis clad people digging about in the local ditches? If so, they are likely volunteers from the Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group. Here, *Jane Reeve*, explains what the group does.

We are a volunteer led charity based on the Manhood Peninsula. We work to manage sites for wildlife between the protected areas of Pagham Harbour Nature Reserve and Chichester Harbour. The wildlife corridors of hedges and ditches that connect these important areas cross private land and by working with landowners and farmers the Group actively carry out improvement work.

A recent Heritage Lottery Funded Project called Fixing and Linking Our Wetlands (FLOW) is specifically looking at improving the extensive ditch, pond and wetlands on the peninsula with wildlife and flood risk reduction in mind. Every ditch is being surveyed, parish by parish, to study their condition for potential improvements. A focus is put on relic farm and village ponds that have been abandoned or neglected. With some work they can be put back into production to hold water during high rainfall events, keeping it away from homes and roads, and also increase the amount of wetland habitat available for wildlife.

There is a nationally important population of water voles living in this area. They are rapidly losing habitat through poor land management practices and the work of FLOW includes creating suitable habitat for them.

After identifying sites for improvement, and having agreement from landowners, a BioBlitz takes place using volunteers to assess the species using these overgrown ponds and information gathered from the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre.



Water voles are one of the species benefiting from the improved habitats

Peter Trimming

Once the bird breeding season is finished, working parties of volunteers then go in. Where necessary contractors are brought in to carefully remove trees or branches, to open up sites and dig out spoil.

Our volunteers come from across the peninsula, and further afield, and are made up of retirees, young people looking for work experience, students carrying out research projects, and local residents wanting to get involved in looking after their environment. Local businesses, such as Nature's Way, have joined us for team building days. This injection of muscle power can be a great help on some of our bigger sites, we can never have too many volunteers!

Within the AONB we are working on three sites:

- West Itchenor village pond
- Three connected ponds at Birdham
- A site in West Wittering on the way to the beach

We try to encourage local participation so that these sites can be managed by residents into the future.



The Manhood Wildlife & Heritage Group welcome help on their many sites. Contact christopher. mwhg@gmail.com or via www.mwhg.org.uk or see them on Facebook at mwhgpage.



New environmentally conscious building proposed for West Wittering beach

The replacement of the popular café at West Wittering Beach has been the subject of local interest with opinions divided over the proposed designs. Here, Beach Manager *James Crespi*, updates us on the Estates latest plans.

Following two well attended public consultations over the course of 2017, a full planning application for a proposed new café was submitted in March by West Wittering Estate PLC.

Since commencing this project in early 2017 the design has naturally evolved through a process of extensive site analysis, combined with an inclusive, wide-ranging consultation process, which included local residents, beach hut owners, visitors, staff and several statutory bodies.

Through this consultation process the proposals have evolved into a design that minimises the impact upon the natural landscape whilst fulfilling the complex requirements of the site's highly diverse and varying users.

The heavily screened, ground hugging organic forms, sustainable materials & renewable energies, coupled with the introduction of new eco-habitats, achieves an environmentally-conscious building that is of the land, as opposed to on it; ultimately, satisfying the four overarching project aims of; conservation, safety, operational effectiveness and sensitive visual impact.

Subject to planning permission being granted which we hope to hear about soon, construction will begin in the autumn of 2018 ready for completion in autumn 2019. Please check our website for regular updates.



The proposed design for a replacement café incorporates sustainable materials and renewable energies



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New Members Welcome

Membership rates:

Single: £10

Couple: £15

Family: 20

Members receive regular newsletters, invites to special events, discount on Conservancy events and the opportunity to join environmental work parties.

To join please email:
membership@friendsch.org



Working with
The Friends of Chichester Harbour