

Hurst Water Meadow News December 2008

Purchase of Old Bridge Meadow

The appeal to local people has got off to a good start, with over £5,000 raised so far, leaving a shortfall of about £14,000. We will be appealing to other funding agencies, but this is an uncertain process with only about one in twenty applications succeeding.

Now is not a good time to ask people to contribute in view of Christmas and the recession. Perhaps it would be easier to pledge a donation now, but pay later when we have reached the target which could be in three months' time. This method worked well when the Hurst was bought for the village.

Working party clearing the access

This is an investment in the future of the village for us and future generations. As a charity, we have to hold on to the land for public benefit for ever. **Please help us** with a donation or a pledge on the form enclosed with this issue and available at the Post Office.

We now have access to the meadow and a strong working party made a good start on 25 October. They cut nettles and cleared the way for a large kissing gate at the end of the attractive bridge wall and pier – now revealed. This will allow much better access for wheelchairs and buggies down to the Thames, once the ramp has been made less steep.

Trustee scything nettles

Wild flower seeding of the Hurst

The seeding of the middle and upper fields was completed on 22 October after numerous setbacks due to the wet weather. Tom Iles of White Horse Contractors and Charles Flower went to great trouble to get the job done. A seed mix of 21 species was sown with the aim of providing a rich source of nectar for insects throughout the season, as well as a lovely display of colour. We may have to wait for two or three years for the full benefit. Charles Flower has just published a book "*Where have all the flowers gone? Restoring wild flowers to the garden and countryside*" full of good pictures, including several of the Hurst. He has visited the new meadow and is full of enthusiasm for us replacing the nettles with wild flowers.

John Metcalfe's project on the lower field has made good progress, with an abundance of yellow rattle. Further cutting and seeding of the test plots has been done by volunteers. They planted 600 wild flower plants on 25 October.

Peter Pritchard, hon secretary 340008

