

The Hurst Water Meadow

Dorchester on Thames, Oxfordshire
Owned and managed on behalf of local people
Charity Number 1050272



Annual report for year ended 31 March 2008

Increasing the variety of meadow wild flowers

By increasing the range of wild flowers on the meadow, the aim is to benefit the insects and birds that depend on wild flowers. This has widespread effects on the pollination of crops and garden plants as well as adding to the beauty of the natural world which we all enjoy.



Several projects are in progress to achieve this aim, including the planting of 100 wild flowers along the line of the restored hedge by children of form 3 of Dorchester Primary School on 11th October 2007, and planting of 600 wild flowers on the lower field by volunteers on 9th February 2008.

The major overseeding project of 3 hectares (7½ acres) was not as successful as we had hoped due to the exceptionally dry spring weather not allowing the seed to germinate. As a result, the second year's overseeding has been postponed to September 2008. The grazing by horses has helped but cattle would be better for the meadow and wildlife.

The adviser from Natural England (formerly Defra) has reported that the meadow was in good shape, and complimented us on "the amazing commitment to enhancing the biodiversity and educational value of the meadow".

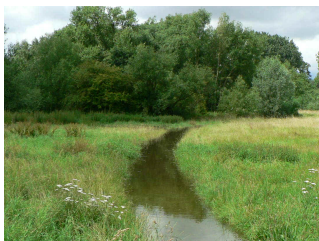
Education initiatives

In spite of the government manifesto on 'Teaching outside the classroom', getting parties of school children to visit the meadow has been an uphill struggle for a number of reasons, including concerns about health and safety.

The meadow is an ideal and safe site for secondary school geography field work. We are working on it. However, we have had six visits by primary school children which the teachers regarded as successful and the children greatly enjoyed.



The summer 'monsoon'



Two inches of rain fell in June and nine inches in July. This is very unusual and harmful to wildlife. The logs forming the open-air classroom shifted in the floods, but have now been secured. The meadow flooded again in January and March.

Henley Business Awards 2007

We were invited to put in for this and received a runners-up plaque in the Corporate Social Responsibility category.

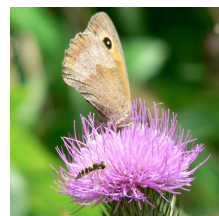
Finances

Income for the past year was £20,340 (2007, £25,547) and expenditure £12,025 (2007, £19,758) resulting in a surplus of £8,315, (2007, £5,789). Income included restricted funds of £13,107 for specific projects such as buying the new tractor and £7,233 of unrestricted funds. Restricted expenditure was £7,149 and unrestricted £4,876. The unrestricted surplus of £2,357 was added to unrestricted reserves.

Bank balances total £22,257 (2007, £13,942) of which £8,405 (2007, £9,233) is restricted and set aside for the overseeding project, £7,547

for future land acquisition and £1,250 to fund a history research project. This leaves £5,055 available to manage the Hurst, (2007, £4,709). The accounts will be published on the website once they have been approved and independently examined.

The trustees would welcome financial support to secure the future of the Trust, whether in the form of donations, pledges, legacies or 'in memoriam' gifts.



Kissing gate

We had hoped that this would be in place by now, but the County Council has not installed it yet. The present stile is most inconvenient for the elderly, and for wheelchairs and child buggies.

Historical research on the meadow

A brief story of the meadow appeared in the Dorchester News in May and June 2007. A benefactor has given a substantial sum to pay for a professional historian who has been engaged to research the area and produce a report. The eventual aim is an illustrated booklet for sale in the village.

New ride-on mower and trailer

The appeal for a replacement mower in December 2007 has been successful, thanks to the generous support of residents, the Parish Council and others.



The new and more robust machine, that should last us ten years or more, was delivered on 5th March 2008 by Countax Ltd of Great Haseley, who gave us a generous discount. A satisfactory price was obtained for the old machine.

Governance and audit

The Charity Commission has produced a document on 'Hallmarks of an Effective Charity' mainly aimed at larger charities, but spelling out clearly six principles that the trustees already aspire to. This has been amplified in the 'Good Governance Code for the Voluntary and Community Sector' published by the Governance Hub www.governancehub.org.uk. This sets out seven principles of good practice which the trustees aim to follow. In addition, the trustees have undergone an independent 'Organizational Audit' of original design to suit the activities and context of the Trust. The [examiner's report](#) is very positive and can be viewed on our website.

Peter Pritchard hon. secretary

31 March 2008

Previous annual reports

[2007](#), [2006](#), [2005](#), [2004](#), [2003](#), [2002](#), [2001](#), [2000](#), [1999](#), [1998](#), [1997](#)

[Home](#)

[Achievements](#)

[Education](#)

[Finances](#)

[Contact us](#)

[Latest newsletter](#)

[Friends](#)

[Archives](#)

[Gallery](#)

[Maps](#)

[Species](#)

[Latest annual report](#)