

The Hurst Water Meadow

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



Hurst water meadow news

January 2007

Footpath to Overy

The meadow flooded at the end of November, but the raised footpath allowed people to get to Overy. The picture shows three generations of a local family showing the way. The path would have been under two feet of water if the work had not been done. The meadow has flooded since and more is likely with all the rain. This is good for the meadow, if not for dog walkers!

Wild flower seeding project

The meadow is greening up after the power-harrowing and seeding last September. The process will be repeated next September, thanks to a generous grant from Waste Recycling Environmental (WREN) of £8,713. The benefits of sowing the wild flowers may not be apparent for several years, so we will have to be patient.

Natural England

This is the new government agency that has taken over the work of English Nature, the Countryside Agency and the environmental work of Defra (Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs). The Trust has greatly benefited from grants from the Defra Countryside Stewardship Scheme over ten years, amounting to over £9,000 and managed by John Metcalfe. It would have been hard to maintain the meadow without them. From August 1 2006, the Trust has been awarded funding under the new Environmental Stewardship Higher Level Scheme which is even more generous, but we have to take active steps to improve the biodiversity of the meadow. This is the reason for the wild flower seeding project. Their local advisers have been extremely helpful.

School visits to the meadow and beyond

Children from Dorchester Primary School have always visited the meadow and we are encouraging other schools to do the same. The entry form of 5-year-olds from Hagbourne School visited on 15th November and had great fun, and we hope, learned a lot about the natural world. Teachers and children enjoy these visits which are in line with the recent government manifesto encouraging 'learning outside the classroom'.

Primary school children can learn about the river and the natural world, as well as recording and measuring

their experiences. Secondary school students of geography can experience the theme of water as a source of power and follow the meandering stream down to the Thames and Day's Lock, and then visit the new Timescape project at Hill Farm Little Wittenham, run by the Northmoor Trust. The area is rich in history and we plan to work closely with Dorchester Abbey, through their recently appointed Education Officer Sue Dixon and the modernized Museum. Parents can help by encouraging schools to make visits and accompanying them on the day.

Litter

On 26 November, a working party filled four large dustbin bags with litter from the meadow and pool as well as retrieving two motor wheels.

Peter Pritchard, Hon. secretary

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