

The Hurst Water Meadow

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



Hurst water meadow news

June 2006

Planting wild flowers in the scrape on 23 May

This was a great success. Helen Clark brought two shifts of 13 children from the senior form who came armed with trowels and (mostly) wearing wellies. Charles Flower, the wild flower consultant, instructed them in safely removing the plants from the 9cm pots and planting them in the hard clayey soil. They got down to it with great energy and enthusiasm, so the job was soon done. After fruit juice and a biscuit, they returned to school for a change of clothing and regaling the form teacher with their achievements.

It was an inspiring occasion and Charles Flower found it one of his most interesting projects and a triumph for the children and adult volunteers. The site was fenced and the whole scrape was mulched with composted bark chips from Nuneham Woods. The trustees plan to enter the whole project (including the wild flower planting, the open-air classroom and the learning program on the website) for an Oxfordshire Sustainability and Conservation Award (OSCA). The first prize is £1000. If we win, we will share it equally with Dorchester Primary School.

Raising the level of the access track and footpath

This was completed on 7 June. Areas of bare soil have been sown with grass and wild flower seed mix and covered with geotextile (biodegradable over three years) to prevent erosion. The surface of the track of stone scalplings will have a light covering of topsoil and be sown with grass seed, so that it greens up sooner. Volunteer working parties have done a wonderful job.

Fishing

The season started on 16 June. Residents of the parish and those under 16 can fish for free. Non-residents pay £4 for a day permit and £30 for the season. A rod licence, obtainable at the Post Office, is also needed.

Defra grants

The trustees have applied for funding under the Higher Level Environment Stewardship Scheme. This replaces the Countryside Stewardship Scheme from which the trustees have greatly benefited. If our application is successful, we will be better off: if it fails we will be poorer.

Wild flower planting project west of footpath

This ambitious four-year project is going well, with a good showing of yellow rattle which weakens the grass and allows wild flowers to flourish. The hay will be cut after 14th July to give wild flowers the best chance to seed.

Peter Pritchard, Hon. secretary

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