



Events

**** Work parties:** Meet at The Scout Hall, Greens Farm Lane at 10.30. Tools/gloves provided – wear old clothing and wellies or water proof boots

Friday 4th April (11:00) : Display of photographs at Waitrose supermarket Billericay High Street.

Saturday 12th April: Bird Walk at Norsey Wood – meet outside the Education Centre at 7am

Saturday 12th April : Work Party**

Sunday 20th April: Easter Sunday church service at 6 am

Thursday 24th April : Kingfishers illustrated talk by **Jeff Harrison** at The Reading Rooms, 7.45 – after our Annual General Meeting

Saturday 26th April: Tree walk at Norsey Wood

Saturday 10th May: Work Party **

Sunday 11th May : Green Woodlands Day at Norsey Wood

Saturday 17th May: Bird Walk at Queens Park – meet in the car park at 6.30 am

Saturday 7th June: Wildflower Walk – meet at The Scout Hall, 10.30 am

Sunday 20th July: Laindon Common Open Day

Volunteers required for routine cattle checking – please see Rangers Report, page 2

Chairmans Report

For our AGM this year we are very pleased to have booked Mr Jeff Harrison, a wildlife photographer. I and another member saw Jeff at an Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT) meeting in Chelmsford and it was an exceptionally good talk. You can find out more about Jeff and his work on his web site

<http://www.jeffharrisonphotography.co.uk/>

Kingfishers – up close and personal

A superbly illustrated talk by Jeff Harrison

24th April, 7.45 pm Reading Rooms Billericay



As we do not currently have an Events Organiser our indoor meetings are now reduced but we are generous on quality at the AGM – if you are one of those members attending this year I promise you won't be disappointed.

We need nominations for committee positions. Most importantly we urgently need a Secretary.

The role is not onerous – it only requires attending 5 or 6 meetings per year and taking minutes and dealing with a handful of items of correspondence each year. Please consider putting yourself forward for the role.

John Hathaway is stepping down from the committee after several years service as Membership Secretary and previously as Treasurer. John has done a superb job with Membership, reducing the burden of renewals



and newsletter distribution. Our thanks go to John for his hard work and efficiency in the role.

David Slawson has kindly agreed to take over the Membership Secretary role.

**** Please could you keep David's work to a minimum by paying your membership by Standing Order and by taking your Newsletter electronically if you can. ****

I have agreed reluctantly to continue as Chairman for a ninth year but only really to keep The Society ticking over until we get more new and motivated committee members who want to revive the Society with more activity and ideas. This has happened with other local conservation organisations so I never give up hope of it happening with us.

As many of you are aware the site opposite Greens Farm Lane has been nominated as Tier One Green Belt in Basildon Council's draft Core Strategy. This news was greeted with delight by members and is due to the efforts of many members in highlighting the importance of maintaining a wildlife corridor link to the Meadows.

Commercial Estates Group, who have an option to apply for planning for the site, have responded by creating a Vision for a Mill Meadows Extension on 60-65% of the site. Concurrent with this would be that the north 35% of the site is built on. I have received a mixed response to this from our members. In general whereas the idea of extending the Meadows is attractive many members have concerns about building on Green Belt and the impact on infrastructure. Hence the committee agreed that The Society as an entity will not submit a response to the Core Strategy consultation. Many of us have of course submitted individual responses.

Neilsumner123@aol.com

PhotoBook – a Year on Mill Meadows

Mr Vic Hare has created an online photo album of the Meadows through a year. The photographs make for very enjoyable viewing. Please email harehouse@yahoo.co.uk for the link and the password.

Rangers Report – Spring 2014

Well, thankfully, the wet weather seems to be over, at least for the time being, and Spring is underway. Despite the wet weather, it seems to have been a fairly successful winter as far as the habitat management tasks are concerned.

Hedge works

I hope you like the hedge laying and planting that has taken place along the Southend Road (see figure 2). The work is courtesy of a grant from Veolia. I'm hoping the planting will at last solve the problem of what can be done to provide a wildlife friendly barrier/buffer along this stretch. We have made several attempts to sort it out in the past, but only time will tell if we have been successful with this attempt. The hedgelaying should help to raise the profile of Mill Meadows as a whole. I often wonder if people realize what lies behind the hedge as they pass by. Now they will be able to see over the hedge (for a time at least), and into the fields beyond. The brash from the trimming of the hedge can also be used to protect the coppiced hedge between Wantsfield and Coles.

Felling in Wards' Hoppits

At the last minute, we did manage to get the coppicing done in Wards' Hoppits (see figure 1). It was a 'skin of the teeth' job, and there will be some clearing up to be done, but with the trees down and removed from site it will be interesting to see what the increased light levels encourage to germinate. The re-growth on the cut stumps should also provide some thicket for nesting birds over the next few years.

Cattle

There's good news about the grazing to report too. We have managed to reach agreement with Essex County Council to use some of their stock of dedicated conservation herd of Red Poll cattle (*the name derived from their distinctive red colouring and poll means naturally hornless – Ed*) to graze the meadows for the next few years. They are a rare breed and should provide an attractive site in the meadows. For more information on the breed see <http://www.redpoll.org/page/1/Home>. I met the



graziers on site recently, and need to get a few repairs done to the fences, before the cattle can be delivered, but they are keen to deliver the cattle sooner rather than later. One thing that is new is that they will need checking daily. **If anyone would like to be involved with this, please let me know**, as a few volunteers would be useful. I don't think it's particularly onerous, and training will be arranged once the cattle are on site. Obviously, the more volunteers we get, the less each of them will have to do, and I can be freed up to do other things. If you are interested please let me know and I can organize the training and a rota. If you want to come to the training and decide after that if it's something you feel able to take on, that's fine as well. I look forward to hearing from you!

Scrub clearance in SSSI

Less good news on the scrub clearance within the SSSI fields. It did prove to be far too wet to get this work done during the winter, but I have applied for funding for 2014/15 from DEFRA, so I'm hoping to get it done early in the autumn.

Chris Huggins

Countryside Ranger, Basildon Council

Membership Year 2014-15

A new membership year has just started (the year runs from 1st April to 31st March) and so a renewal form and standing order mandate (which must be returned to the Society please, in order that it can be recorded in our records, after which we will mail it out to your bank) are attached to this newsletter. If you are happy to receive newsletters by email, please quote your e-mail address on the membership renewal form.

I would like to thank you all for your continuing valued support with a particular thanks to those of you who very generously add a donation to their subscription.

Your continued support really is the lifeblood of the Society.

John Hathaway
Membership Secretary

Recent sightings

A member of the society has reported seeing a weasel on the reserve. They are widespread but no longer common and have previously been recorded but this is the first sighting for some time. Weasels are smaller than stoats being 20 to 25 centimetres in length and do not have a black tip to their tail. They prey on rats, mice, voles and young rabbits. If you see any please contact a committee member.



Figure 1 Some of the timber from Wards Hoppits



Figure 2 Part of the hedge laying



Minutes of the Mill Meadows Society Annual General Meeting

Held on **Thursday 25th April 2013** at 7:45 pm.

The meeting was opened by the Chairman giving a welcome speech to the attendees,

1. Apologies for Absence were noted
2. No matters arising from the previous AGM
3. Chairmans report was circulated. The chairman encouraged more members to consider standing for the committee.
4. Treasurers report was distributed. It was noted that various items of expenditure were planned. Some money is being held for the Living Landscapes project.
5. Membership secretary report noted the continuing increase of members receiving newsletters by email and paying by standing order.
6. Rangers report was given by Chris Huggins
7. Election of Officers: James Dansey was proposed as secretary, other positions were carried forward from previous year and voted en-bloc. New member David Slawson was nominated for the committee and voted for.

The meeting concluded and was followed by a talk on Gardening for Wildlife by Michael Lavelle.

Notice that the 16th Annual General Meeting of the Mill Meadows Society will be held at the Reading Rooms, Billericay High Street on Thursday 24th April 2014 at 7.45 pm.

All members are invited to attend; non-members are very welcome but cannot vote.

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Matter arising from the minutes of the 15th AGM held on 25th April 2013.
3. Report of Chairman.
4. Report of treasurer, accounts for 2013/4.
5. Report of Membership Secretary
6. Rangers Report
7. Election of officers and general committee for 2014-15: nominees so far:
Chairman: Neil Sumner
General Secretary: **POSITION VACANT**
Treasurer: Alan Talboys
Membership Secretary: David Slawson
Event Organiser: **POSITION VACANT**
Newsletter: Ken Williamson
Other Committee Members: Paul Jarmy, Frances Adams, James Dansey,
Nominations – if you wish to nominate someone as a member of the General Committee please give details, to the General Secretary at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. Include the Position for which nomination is being made, name of nominee and your name.
8. Resolutions and motions.
Members are invited to submit motions for consideration and delivered to the General Secretary prior to 14 days before the meeting.
9. Maintenance and development of the nature reserve.
10. Any other business.



Mill Meadows Society Newsletter

Issue 65

April to June 2014

www.millmeadows.org.uk

I would like to -

Membership Year

apply for membership

2014/15

renew my membership

1st April
2014

To 31st
March 2015

(please tick as appropriate)

Name

Address

Post Code

Telephone

E mail

(all correspondence & newsletters will be sent via e-mail when an e-mail address is quoted)

In our household there are -

adults &

children

Subscription, per household, @ £4.00 p a.

£

:

Donation - thank
you

(please state amount)

£

:

Cheques should be payable to " Mill Meadows Society"

TOTAL

£

:

If you would like to pay by standing order, please complete the attached form

Calling all young people

Do you have any young people amongst family & friends who would like to learn more about nature? We are linked to a group that is devoted to children of all ages and it is called B's Ne's (Billericay's Nature Explorers)

If you would like more information then please tick this box

Please send this form together with your subscription &/or standing order form to:

**Membership Secretary, Mill Meadows Society,
c/o 19 Gainsborough Close, Billericay CM11 2DB**

If you require a membership card, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope

Please use the reverse of this form if -

(a) you wish to air your views about the Society, its management or have suggestions of topics for future meetings

or (b) names of other persons who may be interested in joining the Society



Mill Meadows Society Newsletter

Issue 65

April to June 2014

www.millmeadows.org.uk

For Society use only

date received	s.a.e	date card issued	S/O received	date S/O to bank	xl entry	date subs to Treas	membership number
	YES / NO		YES / NO				



Pay by STANDING ORDER

Please complete the form below and return it to :-
Membership Secretary, Mill Meadows Society,
c/o 19 Gainsborough Close, Billericay CM11 2DB

STANDING ORDER MANDATE

To: (name of your bank) _____

(Your bank's postal address) - _____

Please make the following payments to :-

Bank: LLOYDS TSB Billericay Branch

Sort Code: 30 – 90 - 80

Beneficiary: MILL MEADOWS SOCIETY

Reference: Mem No: _____ Name: _____

Account No: 0 1 0 4 2 8 2 3

Amount:	Annual Subscription	£	4.00
	Donation	£	_____
	TOTAL	£	_____

Due Date: IMMEDIATELY then 1ST APRIL ANNUALLY

Commencing:

Last Payment: Until Further Notice

And debit the following account :-

Account Name: _____

Account No: _____

Signed :

Date :