



NORSEY WOOD SOCIETY



WINTER 2011

NEWSLETTER 136

FOUNDED 1977

www.norseywood.org.uk



Billericay Countryside News

norsey1@hotmail.co.uk



A short AGM will be followed by an

ILLUSTRATED TALK



photo: EWT

LIVING LANDSCAPES

by NEIL SUMNER
of the MILL MEADOWS SOCIETY

BILLERICAY DAY CENTRE

CHANTRY CHASE by the
CHEQUERS PUBLIC HOUSE
in the HIGH STREET

Monday 30th January at 7.45pm

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OUR TALK on 26th March 2012 will be held at the Billericay Day Centre and will be given by Jim Buttress on 'Royal Parks'.

The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held at The Day Centre, Chantry Chase on Monday 30th January 2012 at 7.45 pm.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of previous meeting – see page 7
3. Matters arising
4. Chairman's Report on behalf of the Committee – see page 2. Treasurer's Report and Annual Audited Accounts including consideration of Annual Subscription Rates.
6. Election of Officers and General Committee (nominations may be made at the meeting or in advance by sending the slip on page 8 to the Secretary)
7. Appointment of Honorary Auditor
8. Resolutions and Motions. Members are invited to submit motions for consideration at the AGM. Notices of motions must be delivered to the Secretary not less than 14 days before the meeting.

After the meeting has been concluded, we welcome Neil Sumner who will talk on Living Landscapes.

this newsletter is sponsored by norsey woodland crafts

I have pleasure in presenting the Report for 2011 on behalf of the Committee.

The main talking point of the year was changing the date of Open Day from September to May with an earlier start. Although the day started wet, high winds were avoided and a steady flow of visitors was welcomed in the warm sunshine. Owing to spending cuts there was no support from the Council Education Department but we were able to provide volunteers for a very successful pond dipping activity and in other areas. We again sponsored the heavy horse. The children's competition organised from our stall also provided a very high standard of entries as can be seen from the page of prize-winners' drawings in the autumn Newsletter. The Ranger is to be congratulated on attracting a good variety of participants and single-handedly organising a very successful event.

As previously announced, Tony Mullord has taken on the design and production of the Newsletter in addition to his editorial work. Printing has had to be carried out commercially and, although we have obtained a good price from Acors Press and the sponsorship contribution from Norsey Woodland Crafts continues, our costs have gone up. We have started to email copies to members who are happy to receive the Newsletter this way. We continue to support the weekly working party and the Ranger's Report in the Newsletter has kept members informed of activity in the Wood. The fencing and grazing of Norsey Meadow had been planned for some time and we now welcome its implementation.

We again held four Open Meetings, the subjects being Riverside Mammals of Essex, Chafford Gorges, the CPRE view on developments in Essex and British Native Woodland. Attendance at the June meetings held in the Education Room at the Information Centre in the Wood has been disappointing in the last few years despite interesting speakers and we are reverting back to the Day Centre in 2012, in case members were having difficulty getting to the Wood. There will be the added expense of room hire and we will keep the matter under review.

Our membership has held steady at just under three hundred households. At last year's AGM, the Society's Objectives were widened to include wildlife conservation matters in the Billericay area beyond the Wood. We have cooperated with other local organisations to influence the development of the Billericay School Farm Site which is to incorporate a wildlife corridor, taken part in Government consultations on the "Big Society" and, through Billericay Design Statement Association, contributed to comment on other central and

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Welcome to the Winter 2011 edition of our newsletter.

Please note that the AGM precedes the Open Meeting and Talk on 30th January next, (full details on the front page). All the necessary documents, apart from the accounts which will be available at the meeting, can be found in this issue. We urgently need nominations to the Committee and the form for those is included too.

For some time now, I have been asking for articles from members but the response has been just one, a few years ago! The members of the Committee have shouldered the 'burden' but I refuse to believe that there aren't some members who have something of interest to write about. Please consider putting pen to paper or finger(s) to keyboard. Thank you.

If you have an email address, but do not wish to have an electronic version of the newsletter, it would be very useful for us to have it, in case there is a need to announce changes to talks or events or other urgent matters. Your details would not be used for any other purpose or given to anyone else.

Season's Greetings to you all !

NORSEY WOODLAND CRAFTS
Simon Stock

I have just started the coppicing for this season and it doesn't seem very long since I finished the previous season's. I am currently planning for the coppicing to be completed at the latest by the end of February.

Currently, I still have net bags of seasoned firewood available but have stopped taking bulk orders for this winter. Also still available is very well seasoned kindling. I am running an order book for bulk firewood for winter 2012/13 with the orders starting to be delivered/collected in approximately May 2012. The firewood available will be mainly Sweet Chestnut but I will also have a reasonable volume of Hornbeam which is a fantastic firewood

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local government proposals affecting our interests. Some of our members have taken part in the Living Landscapes project which is the subject of Neil Sumner's talk after our formal AGM. We have also held discussions with members of Billericay Youth Town Council with a view to getting younger people interested in the wood.

As noted above, our expenses are rising and although we have a strong balance sheet we need to make sure our income covers our regular running costs, leaving a reserve for special projects. A proposal for increased subscriptions will be placed before the AGM as explained in the Treasurer's article on page 5. This is after some serious discussion by the Committee which felt that as financial pressures are now bearing on the whole of society, the discount for retired members could no longer be justified. Its withdrawal enables the annual subscription to be held down to a modest rate which we hope all households will be able to afford. We hope not to increase it again for many years.

All the above would not have been possible without an active Committee. In addition to our Officers and committee members, I would like to thank David Bissett for his continued help with the web site, our newsletter deliverers, Phillip Davies, our auditor, and Chris Huggins, Ranger, for their continued support.

RANGER'S REPORT Chris Huggins

After the prolonged unseasonably mild spell, it's been noticeably colder for the last couple of days as I write (November 16th). Despite this many of the oaks are hanging on to most of their leaves, unlike the other tree species which seem to be at more advanced stages of shedding. The weather does seem to have been odd recently, with some flowers still in bloom even now, and the warm spring appears to have caused a good crop of many fruits, nut and berries, which must be good news for population levels of species relying on them for food.

Of course, the onset of late autumn brings with it the coppicing season, and the work party has already made substantial progress on a small glade near the information



centre. An impressive 'dead hedge' has begun to take shape, and a (very) small experiment (n=2!) has begun in different methods of protecting hazel stools from possible browsing damage. Our friend in the woodyard has also made a start on a larger area along the 'new' forest track

towards the Norsey Road entrance. Together with the main coupe which should be cut by last year's contractor, this will make a good contribution towards creating more habitat

and my personal favourite. As some people are aware, I had not been taking orders for beanpoles this year due to problems sourcing them without incurring large unacceptable costs. I have just been able to make arrangements with another coppice worker to supply me with them. The cost of the beanpoles is £1.25 each and they will be available for collection in the new year. Please place your orders with me as soon as possible so that I can ensure getting enough of them. Regrettably, I will still not be able to supply pea sticks.

As we are now approaching the Christmas period, why not stop by the yard on a Sunday to pick up a Christmas gift for someone special or to treat yourself. You will find a very interesting range of woodland craft products from toys and whistles to bug boxes and planters, and much more, that would suit all pockets! Some of the products available are viewable on the website www.norseywoodlandcrafts.co.uk

For week day opening times, to make an enquiry or to place an order please feel free to contact me on 07884 171147 or via e-mail at norsey.woodland.crafts@blueyonder.co.uk

Please note my Christmas and New Year opening times:

December 17th 9.00am to 3.30pm
December 24th 10.00am to 3.00pm
December 25th / January 1st closed
January 8th 9.00am to 3.30pm

I would like to wish all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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variety around the wood, especially as the regrowth occurs in subsequent years.

The effectiveness of coppicing in creating good quality woodland habitat has been illustrated this year by a very marked increase in the numbers of dormice we have found during our monthly nest box checks. As you may recall, I was concerned that numbers had been reducing over recent



years, but suspected this was due to the fact that the habitat where the boxes were located had become too mature to be dormouse friendly. Having erected new boxes in some more recently coppiced areas, I was relieved to record the best numbers for several years, 38 being found in September and 25 in October, which seems to confirm my theory, although of course other factors could be at work. Whatever the cause, to find so many is clearly encouraging. More information about coppicing and its benefits can be found in the pamphlet 'Why are we felling the trees?', available from the information centre, which the Norsey Wood Society kindly funded the reprinting of recently.

Our usual autumn fungus foray was well attended again – although not by fungi! In some previous years we have covered four tables in the education room with our finds, but this year only gathered enough to fill one. There was a good mix of species though,

Work towards restoring Norsey Meadow continues, but not without hiccups. Following the unfortunate incidents with cattle eating yew, we have had a delay in getting permission from the Forestry Commission to fell some of the trees. I'm hopeful that this has now been resolved, but the felling licence application has to be on the public register for six weeks before we can proceed, and it hasn't yet been put on there. However, there should still be time to get the work done this winter. A contractor has already been consulted, so he should be able to start promptly once permission has been granted.

Finally, those of you familiar with the internet may like to know that I have set up a Facebook page called Billericay Countryside News where up to date information about Norsey Wood, Mill Meadows, Queens Park Country Park and the surrounding countryside can be found and posted. Please have a look and contribute.



Although it seems some way off, this will be the last newsletter before Christmas, so I hope you all have a peaceful and enjoyable one, and that 2012 is a good year for you.

SUBSCRIPTIONS 2012 Ken Betson Membership Secretary

Subscriptions for 2012 will be due on 1st January. The rates are unchanged: £2.00 for a Senior Citizen household £4.00 for all other households An additional amount of £1.50 is required to cover postal charges, if you live outside Billericay.

Payment by Standing Order is the easiest method for you and the Society. The necessary form is to be found on page 8 of this Newsletter. Once you have completed all the details, **please take or send it to your own bank.** If you have already set up a Standing Order, you need take no action now. You will receive a receipt with your March 2012 Newsletter.

If you wish to continue paying by post, my address is 51 Bellevue Road, Billericay CM12 9HB.

Anne Gray will be happy to accept subscriptions at 14 Bush Hall Road, if that is more convenient.

To conclude, the Committee wishes to thank all those members who have generously donated to the Society, in addition to their subscription.

The Society has been faced with a number of cost increases in the last year and the Committee has been considering how these should be met. Broadly, the Society's annual running expenses are the costs of producing four Newsletters, arranging four Open Meetings, membership of BTCV and insurance. (We have to be members of BTCV to take advantage of their insurance scheme.) These costs need to be met from subscriptions, donations from members and the profit on draws or raffles held at meetings. Current projections suggest an annual deficit of around £120, which is likely to increase as costs continue to rise.

The Society does have a substantial capital reserve but the Committee takes the view that this has been built up to fund projects related to the Wood or the broader objectives of the Society and should not be eroded to fund deficits on routine running costs. Similarly, the Society often receives one-off donations which, the Committee believes, should also be directed to furthering the Society's objectives.

Options considered by the Committee have included:

- restricting our activities and costs by reducing the number of Newsletters and/or Open Meetings to three per annum
- introducing a specific entry charge for Open Meetings (perhaps £2.00) in place of the current voluntary contribution through a draw or raffle
- increasing subscriptions.

We have decided that a reduction in activities would suggest, wrongly, that the Society is in decline and also that nothing should be done that might discourage attendance at Open Meetings, which are the key activity that we provide for our members. It has therefore been decided that subscriptions will be increased from 2013. Subscriptions were last increased in 2006 and the Senior Citizens' rate of £2.00 in particular is considered to be unrealistically low. From 1st January 2013, a flat rate annual subscription of £5.00 per household will therefore apply.

The Committee realises that this represents a substantial percentage increase for Senior Citizens but the current concessionary rate is in fact the rate paid by the majority of our members and we feel that most will accept that they need to make a more equitable contribution to our costs. Maintenance of a 50% discount for Senior Citizens would inevitably mean increasing the standard rate to more than £5.00 and we are reluctant to contemplate this. The Committee wishes to avoid frequent changes to subscription levels (partly to reduce the need to ask those who now pay by Standing Order to send new instructions to their banks) and we would hope to maintain this new rate for at least five years. A blank form to be used for amending Standing Orders will be included in the autumn Newsletter next year.

While the Committee has responsibility for fixing subscription levels and has made the decision in principle, we wish to ensure that we have the support of members for our actions and we will therefore provide an opportunity for a discussion at the AGM in January.

Recent increases in postal rates mean that four 2nd class stamps now cost £1.44 and this figure will no doubt exceed the current £1.50 donation requested from those who receive their Newsletters by post in 2013. A revised figure of £2.00 will therefore be sought but there is now an option of receiving the Newsletter by e-mail if preferred.

CONTACTS

COUNTRYSIDE SERVICES

Norsey Wood Ranger 01277 624553 (If urgent 01268 550088)

Countryside Services (BBC) 01268 550088 www.basildon.gov.uk

NORSEY WOOD SOCIETY

Chairman: Cliff Mullett 17 Lilford Road (632353) cliffmull@btopenworld.com

Secretary: Roy Mahoney 10 Jacqueline Gdns (653308) rsmahoney@btinternet.com

Treasurer: Paul Hudson 5 Cavell Road (656047) paul_hudsonuk@yahoo.co.uk

Membership Secretary: Ken Betson 51 Bellevue Road (622479)

Newsletter Editor: Tony Mullord 3 Kensington Gdns (623327) drollum1@hotmail.co.uk

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS and WEBSITES

Norsey Woodland Crafts 07884 171147 norsey.woodland.crafts@blueyonder.co.uk

B's NE's (Billericay's Nature Explorers) billericaynatureexplorers@basildon.gov.uk
c/o Norsey Wood Information Centre, Outwood Common Road, Billericay CM11 1HA

Friends of Queens Park Country Park 07775998794 c/o 31 Gt Wheatly Rd Rayleigh

Mill Meadows Society 01277 630849 www.millmeadows.org.uk

Living Landscapes Area 34 01277 630849 chair@millmeadows.org.uk

Wat Tyler Country Park 01268 550088 www.wattylercountrypark.org.uk
-do- (bird webcam) www.southendrspb.co.uk/serspbcam/webcam.htm

Essex Wildlife Trust 01621 862960 www.essexwt.org.uk

RSPB Chelmsford and S Essex Group 01621 892045 www.rspb.org.uk/groups/chelmsford

South Essex Wildlife Hospital 01375 893893 <http://southessexwildlife.org>



When the sky above is grey and the ground beneath is white, take another look at these warm colours of Autumn!

NORSEY WOOD SOCIETY

Minutes of the 34th AGM held at 7.45pm on 31st January 2011 at the Day Centre, Chantry Way

Apologies for absence: Maureen & Leighton Bartram, Mrs Shirley Smith, Mrs Christina Lowing, Mrs Dorothy Rowe.

1. Minutes of previous AGM: The minutes were agreed and signed. Proposed C. Mullett, Sec. Mr E.Nash.
2. Matters arising: There were no matters arising.
3. Officers' reports from Chairman & Treasurer: The Chairman's report had been published in the winter newsletter and the Treasurer's report had been circulated at the meeting. Acceptance of both was proposed by C. Mullett, & seconded by K. Betson & R. Mahoney respectively.
4. Questions from the floor: There were no questions from the floor.
5. Election of Officers & General Committee:
Chairman: Clifford Mullett. Proposed: Jean Miles, Seconded: Anne Gray.
Treasurer: Paul Hudson. Proposed: C. Mullett. Seconded: Chris van Veen.
Secretary: Roy Mahoney. Proposed: C. Mullett. Seconded: Chris Van Veen.

General Committee:

Ken Betson (Membership Secretary)

John Friend,

Tony Mullord (Newsletter Editor) These three were elected *en bloc* .Proposed: C.Mullett and seconded: Jill Perry.

Mark Smith. Proposed: C. Mullett. Seconded: K. Betson.

Larry Symmons. Proposed: C. Mullett. Seconded: P. Hudson

The Chairman advised the meeting that it was the intention of the committee to co-opt the following members:

Anne Gray (Meetings organiser)

Jean Miles

Jill Perry

Kevin Goldsmith (co-opted as advisory member: Design & production of newsletter.

6. Election of Auditor:
Philip Davies: Proposed: C. Mullett. Seconded: C. Van Veen.
7. Resolution: The following change in the constitution was proposed by C. Mullett and seconded by P. Hudson: That the following be added to the OBJECTS of the Society in Clause 2 of the Constitution.
(c) To promote and support wildlife conservation & biodiversity in Billericay and the surrounding area, co-operating with other organisations where appropriate
After a full discussion the motion was carried. 35 for and 15 against.
8. Any other business: Ken Betson moved a vote of thanks to Chris Van Veen for his services as Treasurer. Ken then appealed to the members present to think seriously about joining the committee; being a general member of committee is not at all demanding.

COMING EVENTS

OPEN DAY Sunday 20th May 2012

CHAFFORD GORGES Saturday 26th May 2012. Guided visit. Details in the March 2012 issue

VOLUNTEER WORK PARTIES

Norsey Wood every Thursday 10.00 - 12.00

Mill Meadows/ Queens Park Country Park contact the Ranger on 01277 624553

**NORSEY WOOD SOCIETY
STANDING ORDER FOR PAYMENT OF ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION**

To.....(name of Bank)
.....Branch (name of Bank branch)
.....(address of Bank branch)
.....
.....Post Code.....

Account Number.....Bank Sort Code.....-.....(your account details)

Names of Account Holders.....

Please pay to **Lloyds TSB Bank plc, Billericay Branch** (sort code **30-90-80**) for the credit of
Norsey Wood Society (Account Number **00306185**) on 1st January 2012 (or on receipt of
this Order if later) and thereafter annually on 1st January each year, until this order is
cancelled by me, the sum of £..... quoting the Reference shown below.

Signed.....Date.....

Name.....(your name and address)

Address.....

.....Post Code.....

Reference.....(please print your surname, initials, post code)

*When completed, please pass this form to **your** Bank*

cut here ----- *cut here*

Society Officer(s)

If you wish to nominate somebody to serve on the Committee in any capacity
(not necessarily as an Officer), please return this slip to the Secretary

Your Name.....

Name of Nominee.....

Position(s).....

NWS Officers 2012