



## Culinary Conservation - Supporting the Grazing Marsh Beef Scheme

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The continuing pressure on farmers has been well documented and this has been particularly acute for livestock farmers, with the numbers of

beef cattle declining and many dairy farmers giving up completely. The current proposals for reform of the Common Agricultural Policy are likely to bring about a further decline in livestock numbers because subsidies will no longer be linked to the number of animals kept. This scenario threatens the future management of the remaining areas of grazing marsh and also jeopardizes the potential to re-create grassland in appropriate locations around the Harbour, as grazing livestock are essential to the management of these important areas.

Chichester Harbour Conservancy and the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) discussed these issues and looked at the potential to combine environmental payments and direct marketing of high quality beef to achieve a sustainable future for the farmers and the grazing marshes themselves. After meeting the majority of the local beef farmers in the Harbour it was clear that there was good support for the Scheme and agreement on many issues, such as the use of native breeds, and realisation that it was the perfect time for the marketing of local, high quality beef with high environmental credentials.

A trial batch of meat will be marketed this autumn and, if successful, it is hoped that the farmers will work together to produce a business plan and co-operate to provide meat all year round. The meat will be sold direct to the public in boxes, probably of 10 or 20 kgs, after having been prepared, bagged and labeled at a modern licensed facility. The meat will be from two year old animals which have had two summers at grass, at least one on grazing marsh. The meat will be hung for around two weeks to enhance its flavour even more.

The meat will be sold for a small premium but one which still offers excellent value for money, given the high quality of the meat and the high value of the habitats the animals have helped to manage and conserve.

This is a great opportunity to help secure the future of grazing marsh in the Harbour and also enhance your quality of life. If you are interested in the Scheme and would like to purchase some meat when it becomes available, please return the reply slip included with the newsletter and you will be contacted with further details by the early autumn.

Colin Hedley, Sussex FWAG.

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We are very grateful to the Countryside Agency, the government body responsible for AONBs, for contributing to the cost of producing this newsletter.



## 2000 Strong and Still Growing

Welcome to the first issue of *The Friends* Newsletter in its new format and style.

During the past year *The Friends* has reached a membership of 2000 and has gained additional recognition as a large body of people with close interests in the Harbour and its environment.

We are now represented on the newly formed Chichester Harbour Trust and are prominently supporting the Conservancy in its application for Heritage Lottery funding.

With these achievements in mind your Committee has been considering how it might further increase *The Friends* presence and status.

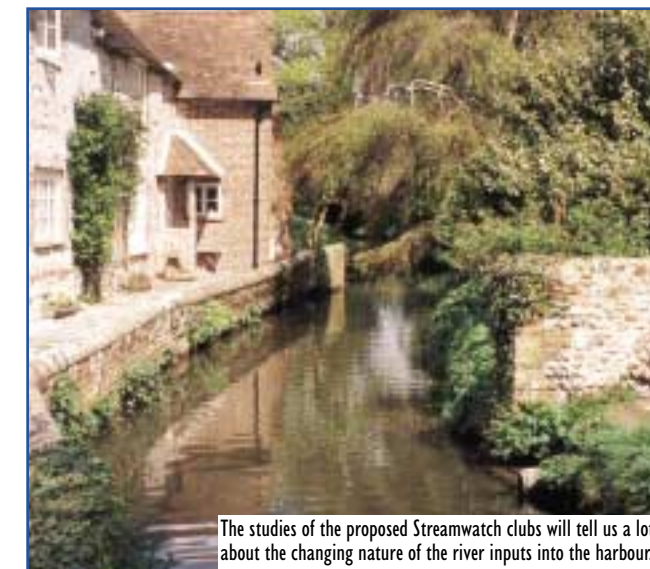
With the help and advice of Ali Beckett, the Conservancy's newly appointed Publicity and Information Officer, the Committee has decided to adopt a new and more eye-catching style for its Newsletter. It has also decided to circulate the Newsletter more widely to local organisations with interests in the Harbour.

Although the new publication will be more costly, we have accepted an offer to work closely with the Countryside Agency who in return will contribute 50% of the cost for one year and a reduced rate thereafter.

Naturally we hope that the new style and wider circulation will result in increased membership and thus defray the extra cost.

We hope you like it and support our decision made on your behalf.

John Willets



The studies of the proposed Streamwatch clubs will tell us a lot about the changing nature of the river inputs into the harbour.

## Lottery Bid Goes In

At the end of July, the Conservancy are due to submit their detailed application for £1.8 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Fund accepted the Conservancy's first bid for funds last summer, and granted £100,000 to the Conservancy to carry out the detailed research and planning necessary for the final bid.

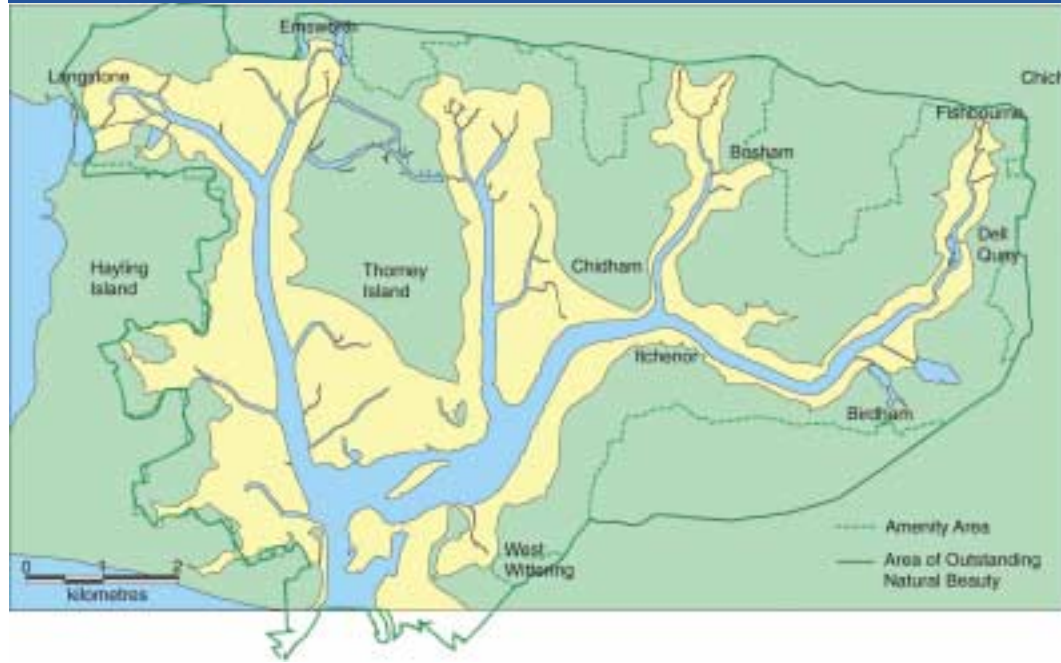
Robert Perry, the Conservancy's HLF Implementation Officer, says that if successful, the grant will enable the Conservancy to increase the value of its conservation work by 50% over the next three years.

The projects include plans for a solar powered vessel to be used as a floating classroom for schoolchildren and adults; much improved access to the harbour for the disabled, including the provision of all-terrain wheelchairs; the development of a 16 kilometre cycle route from Chichester to West Wittering; and the planting of new copses around the harbour.

The Friends will act as partners with the Conservancy on many of the projects, providing additional funds and volunteers to carry out the work.

Robert says the Conservancy expect to be told of the Heritage Fund's decision at the end of this year, and are making preparations to start work in February next year on the first of the projects.

## Chichester Harbour - Regional Gem, National Asset



Chichester Harbour AONB covers far more than the water, as can be seen from this map.

Thorney Island, Chidham, Bosham and Birdham are all included - because of their own special character, and because of the impact developments within them would have on the harbour as a whole.

Since the Friends were formed 16 years ago, many thousands of pounds have been raised to help to conserve this lovely area, which has been described as one of the few remaining wild and undeveloped parts of southern England.

Equally as important, members of FOCH join in Conservancy-organised working parties to improve the harbour environment.

Reed cutting, coppicing, tree planting, and other activities are carried out throughout the year - if you would like to join in, check the list of future activities on the back page.



### Kind Cuts

It may sound odd, but sometimes it is good to cut down trees in a wood. Coppicing is cutting a tree so that it produces many shoots rather than one main trunk. It is a practice that dates back to the Stone Age, and by medieval times was the standard way of managing a wood.

Communities needed to maintain their local woodland in order to have material for building, fuel and many other necessities. Rotational cutting gave a constant supply of wood of differing thicknesses and lengths. At the same time other trees were left to grow into large 'standards' to be used in due course for heavy timber for houses, ships etc, and they were replaced once felled.

A wood managed in this way became very varied in structure having tall and short trees, light and dark areas and varying amounts of undergrowth. There was consequently a great variety of wildlife. However, if management stops, all the trees grow up, and the wood loses much of its interest and use. This is what happened from the mid-nineteenth century on, as wood was replaced by other construction materials, and conifer plantations were created for timber. Fortunately around the harbour we do not have conifer plantations, and at Salterns Copse we have been able to reintroduce coppicing.

We began with the Chichester Conservation Volunteers in 1983, working to a management plan that divided the wood into 10 sections, leaving an unmanaged border all round to preserve the external view and provide shelter. We didn't quite manage to stick to the schedule, but are now coming up to our 18th rotation. To make good use of the cut material we make short stakes to use when tree planting, and weave the thinner pieces between taller stakes to create an environmental barrier or 'dead hedge' between the footpath and the wood. Larger logs are piled up to make a habitat for invertebrates.

The wildlife has responded enthusiastically. Birds such as Blackcaps which prefer young bushy growth do well, many of the plants such as bluebells, primroses and foxgloves flower more abundantly in the open areas and butterflies and other invertebrates welcome the sheltered glades. Species which prefer more mature conditions remain in the surrounding edge.

So why not come and help? Coppicing work-parties offer a lot of variety: cutting, making stakes, moving material to the dead hedge and weaving it in. It may seem a bit destructive at the time, but go back in spring and admire the bluebells - it's worth it.

Anne de Potier

## Harbour Happenings



As the sun begins to shine, the office begins to empty. During the summer months extra seasonal staff are taken on. There is now a team of 1 full time and 2 part time seasonal rangers. Their main work is to strim and maintain the footpaths around the harbour as well as helping out with other practical tasks as required.

The patrol team also expands during the summer months with a much increased presence on the water. Their main duties are to enable the safe enjoyment and use of the harbour by giving mariners practical assistance afloat and advice as well as collecting harbour dues. To see what they are up to have a look at the Patrol Diary on the website which gives details of incidents that occur in the Harbour.

The programme of walks and activities steps up a pace in the summer months. This year more staff are getting involved in leading walks and helping with activities. There are 21 walks and activities planned just for the months of June through to August. All of these take many hours to organise but it is a programme unrivalled by any other AONB and brings many thousands of people into contact with the harbour throughout the year.

The first of the Heritage Lottery Fund projects has got underway, much to Robert Perry's delight. After many months of planning, the restoration of the old grain store on Dell Quay has begun. This project has started before the main bid, which should go into effect early next year, as it will provide office space for extra staff recruited for the duration of the HLF projects.

The new look website is now up and running. So far we have had nothing but positive feedback. We have lots more ideas for adding to it, so if you have any comments please let me know.

Anne is involved with her regular summer surveys and also with analysing trends in wintering coastal bird numbers. Information that will be very useful as it gets built up over the coming years. Alison is still typing away at the management plan, which will get its public consultation in the autumn.

It's not all work and no play though. In May we had the annual rounders match between the Conservancy and the Itchenor Society. After our humiliating defeat last year, we were pleased this year to lose by just ½ a rounder. Again we have promised to practice hard before the next match, but like new year's resolutions these things don't always happen!

Ali Beckett

## The Harbour in Print & Paint

Do you know any poems, essays, paintings or any other creative work by nationally recognised authors or artists which feature the harbour? The Conservancy is trying to compile a cultural database, but we need help!

We are limiting it to well-known people, but from any time. Please could you email or write with details of the poem/picture or whatever, the name of who wrote/painted it and if possible (particularly for literary items that would not be in 'Joe Blogg's collected poems') where it could be found.

The contact is Anne de Potier at the Harbour Office, or [anne@conservancy.co.uk](mailto:anne@conservancy.co.uk).

Thank you very much.

Anne de Potier

## Trust Update at AGM

A progress report on the work of the Chichester Harbour Trust, which aims to buy land to preserve the amenities of the harbour, will be given at the Friends' annual meeting by Sir Jeremy Thomas.

Lt Col John Davis, the Conservancy Harbour Master, will also up-date us on the Conservancy's plans for the harbour.

The AGM will be held at Chichester Yacht Club at 7.30pm on Thursday 16 October (notice of meeting enclosed with this newsletter).



# Diary Dates



Here are the details of the forthcoming workparties. Please come and help if you can - it's sociable and no harder than active gardening. Just wear old clothes and bring tough gloves - plus food and drink for an elevenses break! If you are unsure of the meeting place or have any other questions please contact Anne de Potier or Alison Fowler at the Harbour Office.

Thursday 4 September Thornham Point Clearing informal dams and replacing stones in the sea wall. Meet at 1000 at the far end of Thornham Lane, which is a turning left off the Thorney Road (the road to the barracks signposted off the A259 between Emsworth and Southbourne). Wellies and waterproof gloves essential. Morning only.

Wednesday 10 September Snowhill Marsh, West Wittering Clearing rubbish that has blown into this important conservation area. Meet at 1000 in the West Wittering Sailing Club carpark, which is at the far end of Coastguard Lane (go as though you are going to the sea, but turn right as you pass the church). Waterproof gloves needed, and wellies advised. Morning only.

Monday 22 September Cobnor Foreshore Litter clearance. As part of a Solent-wide Beach Clean today, we will be doing our bit here. Watch out too for publicity nearer the time on possible other locations. Meet at 1000 at the hard users carpark at the far end of the private drive through Cobnor Estate: the turning is on the left just past the turning for the activities centres. Remember waterproof gloves and wellies. Morning only.

Wednesday 24 September Dell Quay Some 10 years ago we planted an area either side of the coastal footpath with mixed trees and shrubs. Some of these are now too large, and need coppicing to benefit themselves, the other trees and the footpath. We started this last year, but need to continue this autumn. Meet outside the pub at Dell Quay at 1000. Stout boots and gloves needed. Morning only.

Thursday 2 October Cobnor 'Amenity' carpark As at Dell Quay, some of the trees and shrubs planted when the carpark was created in the late 1980's are now too large, so we will be coppicing them. Meet at 1000 in the carpark, which is at the entrance to Cobnor Estate, Chidham. Stout boots and gloves needed. Morning only.

Tuesday 7 October Coppicing and Dead Hedging at Salterns Copse. Continuing traditional management of this old woodland to maintain its wildlife interest. Meet at 1000 at the public car park at Chichester Marina. We will then drive together through the security gate to the wood. If you arrive late go to the Marina Office by the lock gates and ask for the code number. If you know you will be late contact Anne de Potier at the Harbour Office any time up to the day before. Stout boots and gloves needed. Morning only.

Wednesday 15 October Stream Management at Fishbourne (the annual paddle!). Clearing some of the plants ready for increased winter flow. Meet at 1000 at Fishbourne millpond; park in Mill Close if necessary. Bring wellies and gloves; waders if you have them. Morning only.

Tuesday 21 October, Wednesday 5 November and Thursday 13 November As 7 October

Tuesday 18 November Cutting Reeds at Thorney Deeps To improve its growth and hence its value to nesting birds. You will need wellies, and waterproof gloves! Meet at 1000 on the corner of Thorney Road and Thornham Lane The site is along a private track through double metal gates - not Marina Farm. Morning only (probably finishing by 1200 - it's quite energetic, so we do it 'little and often')

Thursday 27 November General Fallback Morning for unfinished or unpredicted jobs. Contact Anne de Potier or Alison Fowler at the Harbour Office before 0915 for details.

## What's on

### **Exploring Chichester Harbour - for people who are mobility impaired 4 August**

New for this year. A trip along the Cobnor path followed by tea. Contact Judi at the Harbour Office for more details.

### **Whimbrel Walk 17-19 September**

Walk around the harbour in 3 days starting at Langstone and finishing in West Wittering. Includes coach travel, boat trip and celebration tea. £36 per person. Call the Harbour Office for a booking form.

### **Emsworth Food Festival 19-21 September**

Visit the Conservancy's stall whilst sampling all the goodies on offer at the Festival. More details on [www.emsworthfoodfestival.co.uk](http://www.emsworthfoodfestival.co.uk).



## Pilot Scheme to Sell Grazing Marsh Beef to the Public

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### Would You Like to Know More?

The Grazing Marsh Beef Scheme offers the chance to buy high quality local meat and help secure the on-going management and conservation of environmentally important grazing marsh and coastal grasslands.

The meat will be bagged in conveniently sized portions, labelled, provided in cool boxes and either delivered direct to your house or available for local collection. All meat will be from two year old animals which have grazed at least one season on grazing marsh.

To help gauge potential interest please fill in and return the slip. This won't commit you in any way, but will allow forward planning and help facilitate co-operation between the beef farmers involved. You will then be contacted over the coming months with more details such as price, size of packs and timing, when we hope you will be able to place a firm order.



The Grazing Marsh Beef Scheme is supported by FWAG and Chichester Harbour Conservancy



Name: .....

Address: .....

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Tel: .....

e-mail: .....

Please return to: RN Sprackling, Sandylands Farm Office, Nyewood Road, Rogate, Petersfield, GU31 5HU