

Management News

Summary

- ❖ Welcome to the Wildside Lottery Project - new walkers shelter at Grove
- ❖ Further Lottery work awaiting planning permission - community hide
- ❖ Excavator work
- ❖ Tern raft

Walkers Shelter at Grove.

We have just received planning permission for another walkers shelter at Grove to compliment the one at Stodmarsh. This shelter is being funded, in common with all the work undertaken under the Welcome to the Wildside Project, by the Heritage Lottery fund. Many thanks to them for the funding which allows us to provide visitor facilities which we would otherwise not be able to afford.

The Stodmarsh shelter has proved popular with visitors as a place to meet out of the rain, maybe sit and have a bite to eat, either on returning to the car or before setting off. The shelter at Grove is a similar design and will have a notice board and chalk board for sightings in due course.

Other Welcome to the Wildside Project Work

We are still awaiting a decision by Canterbury City Council's planners on a new educational facility to accompany the dipping platform and flower bench by the Ramp at Grove. This will be a smaller version of Feast's Hide and will overlook the existing pool, which we hope to further enlarge, next to the dipping platform. This new hide is being purchased for educational use and again is funded through our Heritage Lottery Grant. Natural England wants to encourage more children into the countryside and Stodmarsh has the potential to be a fantastic educational resource. By investing in education at the site we can help further children and adults understanding of these

protected sites. Along with the dipping platform and bench we are providing facilities for school groups and others. We have produced a free education pack which has been distributed to local schools and this hide will allow visits to the NNR by school parties in bad weather as well as good. It also means that birdwatchers and the birds won't be disturbed in the other hides. Due to its location next to the dipping platform are not expecting amazing birdwatching views but please feel free to use the hide if not in use by a school group.

Excavator work

We have let another excavator contract for further work this winter. We intend to install additional water control structures on the grazing marsh, install new culvert pipes in the reedbed, undertake some essential ditch clearance in both the reedbed and grazing marsh and do some reed cutting (weather permitting) and scrub removal. This is all essential management work and will benefit a range of wildlife - birds, invertebrates, fish and plants.

We continue to work with RSPB and other partners on the Bringing Reedbeds to Life Project and will apply lessons learnt from this research at Stodmarsh, Ham Wall and Hickling Broad to the management of Stodmarsh. If you would like to learn more about the project have a look at the RSPB's website here:

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/projects/details.asp?id=tcm:9-210865>

Tern Raft

Our volunteers continue to provide valuable assistance on the reserve - helping keep the paths clear, cutting scrub in the reedbeds, clearing the views from the Marsh and Tower Hides. Ben Ring deserves special thanks for researching designs for an additional tern raft has been install in front of the Tower Hide. Ben also helped in its construction - thank you Ben. The raft has been prefabricated in our workshop yard and was floated out on the lake at the beginning of December. It has been anchored securely into the lake bed but still requires a suitable nesting surface of shingle or cockleshell. Hopefully the terns will approve next breeding season.

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