

## Scarning Conservation Volunteers Annual Report 2016

The volunteers have had another busy year.

We have 36 members on our register although generally the work is done by 7 or 8 regulars. It is good that there is interest in our work.

This year it has been a help to have involvement from the Dereham Scout group and their three days of help made a great difference. We hope to have more involvement from them in the future.

We have been fortunate enough to win an Interactive Funding Grant of £1000 which will go towards the purchase of two new information boards for the water meadows. We also received a grant from Breckland Council of £200 which was used to purchase nesting boxes for Tawny Owl, Kestrel, Tree Creeper, Blue Tits and Robins.

We are still trying to get help with putting the Owl and Kestrel boxes up and unfortunately two of the small nest boxes have been vandalised, however a generous resident in Meadow Drive has donated several small nest boxes that he has made. These will be put in secluded locations.

The art work has been done for the signs and a draft design has been made. There has been a delay in progressing with the signs as our first quote was for £4000. We felt this was too high and have since found a company to make them for around £1500.

The scrapes have been dug out a little deeper at one end and the island scrape made a bit larger. Last year they dried out in the spring which was not good for the tadpoles and the island scrape flooded over in the winter. Hopefully the changes made will solve these issues.

Angus Newton our contractor has also dug out some more of the ditches. The plan is to put some sluices in so that the water level can be maintained.

Over the year we have put some dead hedging in on Lucy's Meadow North, Cut this area and most of Lucy's Meadow. We have been very grateful to Richard Eagle for taking all of these cuttings away. We have also worked hard to control the Himalayan Balsam and control some of the brambles.

Angus has cut and cleared further areas of the meadows and we are starting to see a change in the vegetation growing.

Plans are in place to make the informal footpath into a firm surface accessible to pushchairs and wheelchairs.

To help with funding this we will be applying for a grant from Tesco's. This is money they raise from the sale of carrier bags which then has to be given back to local community projects. If we are lucky enough to win one of the larger grants then we hope to add a pond dipping platform and some bench seating by the footpaths.

Plans for the Bio Blitz are well underway. The idea of this is to promote the area as a special place for wildlife and to identify and record as many species on the site as possible.

This will be a day of family activities including guided walks, pond dipping and worm charming and children's activities. Various wildlife groups will have stands to promote their work. There will also be experts available that will help with species recording and spotting. We will be looking at everything from bugs to flowers and birds to mammals.

We hope to do some moth trapping on Friday night and open these traps on Saturday morning.

If you would like to volunteer a few hours of time on the day or just come along to see what it's about you will be most welcome.