

CHELMER BLACKWATER RESERVE

SHAREHOLDER NEWSLETTER # 8 - January 2024



WISHING ALL OF OUR SHAREHOLDERS A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The Chelmer Blackwater Reserve Community Interest Company (CIC) was formed by a group of residents concerned as to future plans for the land adjacent to the Tesco Supermarket in Maldon. In Feb 2022, the CIC signed a long-term lease with Tesco Stores Ltd to take control of the land and to develop it as a community nature reserve. All members of the CIC are un-paid volunteers and work is funded by a combination of grants and donations. Members of the public are actively encouraged to become shareholders and to participate in activities to support the management of the reserve.

This newsletter provides updates on what has been going on over the past few months.

THE CHITTENDEN BENCH

Visitors to Ironworks Meadow are now able to take a rest mid-walk if they want to sit and enjoy the reserve for a while. A bench has been donated in memory of Betty & Bill Chittenden, the parents of one of our shareholders. Betty was born in Maldon and grew up on the Causeway. She was working at Bradwell Power Station when she was introduced to Bill, whose colleagues had decided he needed a girlfriend and sent a message down to the typing pool to see if anyone was interested. After a year of courtship, which included walks on Ironworks Meadow, they were married in 1960. They stayed in the Maldon district for the rest of their lives. Bill died in 1995 and Betty in 2022.



WORK PARTIES

Our first work party of 2024 will be at the reserve on Sunday January 14th at 10am. We look forward to seeing you then and hope you will also join us for a post-work-party drink in the Muddy Duck to welcome in the new year. Work parties are open to anyone who wants to lend a hand in the ongoing work to maintain and improve the reserve.

The last work party concentrated on tidying up along the route of the newest section of path, shovelling barrow loads of soil to provide extra support to the path edging. A small section remains to be completed.



We plan to continue the making good along the edge of the new meadow footpath and removing saplings and suckers in areas cleared of scrub and bramble last year. In addition, we would like to attempt some trial 'management plots' in the area of meadow that is rather devoid of any flora other than a few species of grass.

So, in addition to the usual stout boots and gloves, please bring shovels, spades, rakes, secateurs and croppers. Those leaving vehicles in the Tesco car park, please let Simon Wood know, including registration plate details, so that he can sign you in. The following work parties will be on 11th and 25th February.



ROTARY DONATION

Last summer, the path between the river and canal became very overgrown and, with the benefit of hindsight, we found the absence of an edging made it more difficult to keep clear.

We are therefore having a timber edging installed retrospectively. Maldon Rotary Club have generously agreed to provide us with a donation to cover the lion's share of the cost.

CHARLES TAIT PAINTING

We decided that the Salty Dogs Christmas pop-up art shop would be the best market for selling the donated Charles Tait painting at a reasonable price. Many thanks to Den Phillips for agreeing to exhibit it and for generously waiving her commission. The painting sold within a week.

UK POWER NETWORKS

You may have noticed the new pond which has appeared by the boardwalk.

At the beginning of October a third party came onto the site without permission or prior notice, placed new cabling on the electric pole and excavated part of the site. In the process, they eliminated one of the rare marsh sow-thistle which had been carefully cultivated by Sarah over the summer.

Enquiries with Tesco locally and at head office established that they knew nothing about it.

A witness reported having seen UK Power Networks vehicles involved. We accordingly contacted them immediately and have continued to chase for the following three months, without any substantive response. We have accordingly now told them that we will be making a substantial damages claim, in hopes that that may gain their attention.

WILDLIFE NOTES

With winter now with us, it was great to note sightings of both Kingfisher and Water Rail along the Kingsmere water course. The latter might be described as a thin billed stripey Moorhen and frequents reedbeds, ditches and other marshy places. It is more often heard than seen, sounding something like the squealing of a pig!

Perhaps the best recent record was the male Marsh Harrier that Tony Kennelly spotted, flying overhead on Boxing Day- a new edition to our reserve species list!



STANDING ORDERS

A number of members have now entered into standing orders to make an annual contribution to the reserve. Thank you to them.

Your share purchase makes you a member of The Chelmer Blackwater Reserve Community Interest Company for life and you do not need to make any further payment. However, in order to help the CIC meet the inevitable expenses which we incur going forward, we are inviting shareholders to enter into standing orders on a voluntary basis. We suggest five pounds a year but if you want to pay more that would be very much appreciated. The bank details are:

The Chelmer Blackwater Reserve CIC Sort Code 60-13-37 Account No. 49715534

It will help if you also e-mail the Treasurer cpryke@clara.co.uk and tell him you have set it up.

THANK YOU EVERYONE FOR YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT!

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