

CHELMER BLACKWATER RESERVE

SHAREHOLDER NEWSLETTER, XMAS 2022

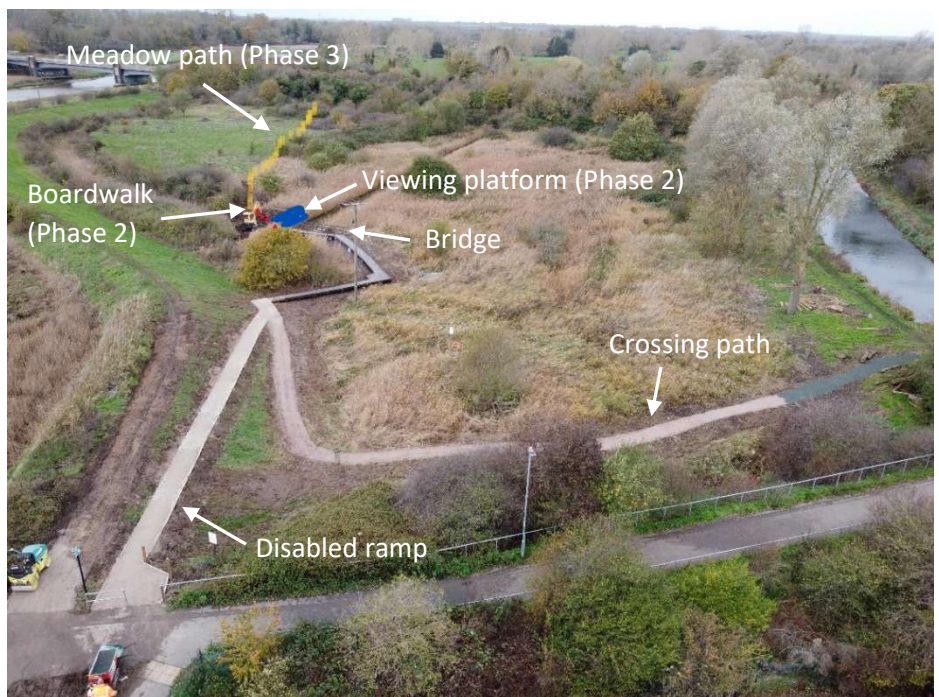


AMAZING PROGRESS!!

Thanks to the benevolence of a variety of funding bodies, some wonderfully generous benefactors and our shareholder community, we have beaten our own expectations in progressing the first two phases of our capital works for the reserve.

PHASE 1 COMPLETE!

Work on the bridge, crossing path between river and canal and disabled ramp from the sea wall began on 18th October and finished on 25th November. Coinciding with the wettest November on record, this was quite an achievement but has left the sea wall looking rather muddy! Although the bridge is up – and looking very fine – it is currently a bridge to nowhere! The drone shot shows the ramp, crossing path and boardwalk leading to the bridge.



Drone photography by Simon Farr

PHASE 2 NOW FUNDED!

Phase 2 comprises extending the boardwalk to connect the bridge to the meadow (red dots on the drone shot above) and the viewing platform (colour blue), the latter having been generously sponsored by The Essex Birdwatching Society. Grants from the Essex and Suffolk Water Community Fund and the Middlewick Farm Community Benefit Fund (administered by Essex Community Foundation) mean that we are now fully funded to complete this second phase! The wet weather and delays in supplies of materials have meant we have had to postpone the start but hopefully Phase 2 construction will be underway early in the new year.



The new bridge over King's Mere, already being used as a perch by our now regular Kingfisher (though we still haven't managed to get a photo!)

PHASE 3 BECKONS!

The final part of our initial plans involves creating a disabled-access path running across the meadow (marked in yellow in the drone shot), connecting the bridge and boardwalk with the public footpath which crosses from river to canal at the bypass end of the Reserve. Any further funds received now will go towards this venture- we are planning to start applying for additional grants, combined with other fund-raising activities, in the New Year.

RAIN, RAIN, RAIN!

After such a dry summer, it was a shock to receive so much rainfall over the last few weeks. Many thanks to Russ & Charlie from Pearl Construction for carrying on regardless! As anyone who saw the reserve at the time will know, it began to fill with water. At the end of the mere there is a channel through to a culvert that runs under the sea wall. It quickly became apparent that the flap-gate at the end of the culvert was silted up so water could not escape. This meant water backing up all the way to the Golf Course! Luckily, a maintenance team from the Golf Club donned waders and managed to free up the gate, and the site can now drain again. There is a risk, now, that too much water may escape so we feel we will have to come up with a better way to control water levels long-term.



The culvert running through the sea wall, draining into the tidal river.

RESERVE ACCESS

For health and safety reasons, the bridge has been fenced off. Until we complete Phase 2, the best way to view the reserve remains the Sea Wall footpath, easily accessed from Fullbridge (and Tesco's Car Park).

WISHING ALL SHAREHOLDERS OF THE COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY AND THEIR FAMILIES A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Christmas ideas: a share in the company makes a great gift!

(Requests for shares will be processed as soon as possible. Provided funds are received by 16th December every effort will be made to despatch certificates prior to Christmas but this may be subject to delays in the post due to industrial action.)

Coasters based on our logo are currently available for £10 from Salty Dogs
(on the High Street, next to the White Horse)



Donations: <https://chelmerblackwatercic.uk/index.php/donations/>

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