

environmental
partnership
in
action

The Greensand Trust

April 2010 -
June 2010

Greensand Highlights

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Photo by Tony Harding

New safer access has been created into Kings Wood, Heath & Reach from the Flying Fox reserve. Previous access was opposite Sandhouse Lane and was very dangerous and muddy. Greensand volunteers installed a field gate and a culvert laying a 6m pipe with 100 sandbags which were filled in Oak Wood and used for the end walls. About 10 Land Rover loads of soil/aggregate mix was brought down from Oak Wood and used to infill. Thanks to our volunteers for all their hard work!

Volunteers helping to improve access
www.greensandtrust.org

The Forest Office, Maulden Wood, Haynes West End, Bedfordshire MK45 3QT
Phone: 01234 743666 Fax: 01234 743699 E-Mail: info@greensandtrust.org

Edgewick farm

The Greensand Trust has recently finished a project to enhance conservation and public access features at Edgewick Farm on behalf of Woburn Sands Town Council.

We helped the Council successfully apply for a WREN grant to:

- Install two cabinets with interpretation about the Farm;
- Erect fencing, gates and a boardwalk to allow a wet flush area to be grazed and keep the public separated from the livestock ;
- Erect additional fencing and gates to allow a picnic area to be managed by grazing.



Volunteers constructing the boardwalk

The works were carried out over the last year and we expect to move livestock into the two areas over the next few months.



New gate and interpretation board

It is hoped that the wet flush area, a rare and important habitat in the local region, will benefit from regular grazing thus encouraging some rare species of flora such as ivy-leaved crowfoot.

Chalk Arc Community Grant Scheme

Eight community groups and organisations have been awarded £74,354 to help improve their local green space. For further information about the Chalk Arc Initiative a sub-group of the Green Infrastructure Consortium please visit www.chalkarc.org

Sandy Smith Nature Reserve

Volunteers helped to plant over 2000 native hedge plants in the reserve. Liz Millbank, Greensand Trust ranger, led a guided walk for 26 members of the Flitvale Wildlife Trust group around Sandy Smith Nature Reserve.

Visit www.greensandtrust.org. for more news throughout the year



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Heathland creation

March and April saw the culmination of over 5 years of work on Shire Oak Heath in the Rushmere Estate. The area is in a SSSI and under Natural England approval the plan was to restore a large area back to Heathland.

Our volunteers started clearing birch and pines on the area back in 2005. The last couple of years saw an acceleration of the work resulting with the last logs being cleared from the site in early April.



photo by Bob Hook

volunteers
clearing
birch trees

Contractors then dug up the tree roots and heather seed was scattered by children from St Leonards Lower school, Heath & Reach. A fantastic achievement by our volunteers who tirelessly undertook the task during many work tasks (15+) contributing many hundreds of hours of work. Without this huge effort Shire Oak Heath would still be a sea of birch!



The Heathlands of the Greensand Ridge project has just completed its 2nd year and has made excellent progress. Targets delivering significant elements of the Heathland and Acid Grassland Habitat Action Plans have been delivered, some ahead of schedule – meaning more of these habitats are being managed and enhanced sustainably. Educational activities and guided walks have taken place, as well as improved survey and monitoring of heathland and acid grassland sites along the Greensand Ridge. And over 100 volunteers have contributed over 480 days of their time to the project over the last year – that's equivalent to more than 2 people working full-time for a year!

We'd also like to formally welcome Lafarge into the partnership – work at Rammamere Heath is making a significant contribution to the project.

The project is a partnership led by the Trust, with funding from Natural England's Countdown 2010 Action for Biodiversity fund. Partners include the Wildlife Trust, the RSPB, Beds RCC, Central Bedfordshire Council, the Forestry Commission and Lafarge.

News from around the Trust

Ouzel Valley Park improvements

The River Ranger and local volunteers assisted with the Environment Agency desilting operation along the lower Clipstone Brook by removing bankside litter.

The River Ranger continues to monitor sections of the River Ouzel in Leighton Buzzard and reports any concerns to the Environment Agency. This regular reporting has led to substantial amounts of rubbish and blockages being removed from the river; improving the flow and quality of the water.

The Ranger team have cleared the sprayed areas of Japanese Knotweed in Averys Meadow Nature Reserve, with no sign of re-growth. Local volunteers have helped the Rangers remove the Himalayan Balsalm on the site as well. Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsalm are attractive but are garden escapees which are not native to this country and so are not good in nature reserves where we are trying to encourage the more rare native species to grow and flourish.

Forest School

Forest School is an inspirational and inclusive process that offers children, young people and adults the opportunity to develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a local outdoor setting.

Building on many years of experience of delivering outdoor education programmes and activities, The Greensand Trust have developed a Forest School programme to provide the opportunity for schools and groups to have a longer-term involvement in their local sites.



A group of twelve, year 4, pupils from Mary Bassett Lower School in Leighton Buzzard participated in 6 sessions of Forest School in Averys Meadow Nature Reserve. The pupils were introduced to activities such as shelter-building, fire-making, outdoor cooking, craft activities, and woodland exploration. Central Bedfordshire Council very kindly agreed to the Greensand Trust using Averys which is a 'fantastic site for Forest School activity!'

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Events are a success!

Andy and Melissa Banthorpe led a moth event in Stockgrove Country Park. The event is part of a series to introduce children to wildlife in Stockgrove and the surrounding area.

Ranger Bob Hook said 'We went to the lake first and saw Daubenton's, Noctule and Pipistrelle bats, some very close. Saw 34 species of moths including one fantastic Lime Hawk-moth and 12 Great Prominent which are rare in the county. Most exciting of all 3 micros of *Incurvaria oehlmanniella* were recorded - the first record for the county!'



photo by Bob Hook

Looking for moths!

Trust staff and volunteer leaders led 9 guided walks which attracted 110 people. The walks were on a variety of subjects ranging from birds to butterflies and moths to woodlands. 104 people also attended the event the Trust organised in Ampthill Park over the Easter break.

Stanbridge Lower School explore Nature Study Area

Thirty-five pupils from Stanbridge Lower School ventured out on a field trip to Stockgrove Country Park. All the pupils and staff thoroughly enjoyed their walk and wished they could have stayed longer to investigate what other creatures were living in the pond.

Staff from the Lower School said 'The Greensand Trust run a smooth operation and we would particularly recommend the activity to other lower schools.'

Since their visit pupils have sent pictures and messages of thanks to Greensand Trust staff and volunteer Mike Sumpter.



News from around the Trust



Drop in to the Bug Lab Tour at a site near you this summer and join us in discovering the marvellous mini beasts that live there.

Tuesday 3rd August - Stockgrove Country Park

Wednesday 4th August - Aspley Guise Townlands

Thursday 5th August - Houghton Hall Park

Tuesday 10th August - Linslade Wood

Thursday 12th August - Edgewick Farm

Thursday 17th August - Tiddenfoot Waterside Park

Wednesday 18th August - Flitwick Wood

Thursday 19th August - Vimy Road, Leighton Buzzard

A donation of £1 per child is suggested for craft activities. Bug Lab events are aimed at families. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Visit our website or call 01525 378101 for further details.

Passport 2010

Here is a taster of some of the walks in the Passport scheme:

Brilliant Butterflies, Sandy Smith Nature Reserve
Saturday 26th June, 10am - 12.30pm

Greensand Ridge Walk, Heath & Reach - Linslade
Saturday 31st July, 10am start. 6km/3.7miles

Heathland Discovery Walk, Stockgrove Country Park
Sunday 22nd August, 10am - 12.30pm

£2 per adult and £1 per child for half day walks and £3 per adult and £1 per child for full day walks. Please visit www.greensandtrust.org/events for further details of events and walks over the summer.

So what are you waiting for? Contact the Greensand Trust to book your place and get walking!

Booking for each event is required, and operates on a first-come, first-served basis. Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

Email: info@greensandtrust.org

Tel: 01525 378101

www.greensandtrust.org/Passport2010.html

www.greensandtrust.org/events.html



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Trust joins Cyclescheme



First member of staff to join the scheme takes their new bike out for a test run

Cyclescheme is a provider of tax-free bikes for the Government's Cycle to Work initiative. As an environmental charity the Trust encourages use of non-motorised methods of travel, and has therefore signed up to Cyclescheme.

Bitter Vetch survey

Volunteer Judith Knight has carried out a survey of the Bitter Vetch in Stockgrove. It is the only know site for this plant species in Bedfordshire. Two previous surveys were done in 2005 and 2007 by Esther Clarke when 87 and 84 plants were recorded. Judith recorded 104 plants which indicates it is maintaining and increasing its population.

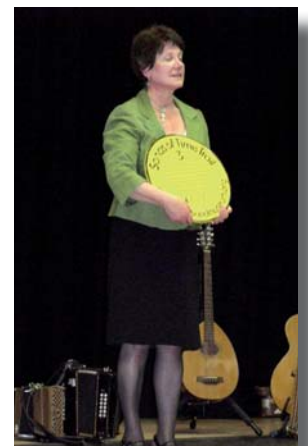
Staff leaving

The Greensand Trust has said farewell and good luck to two members of staff recently. We shall miss them both dearly but wish them every success in the future!

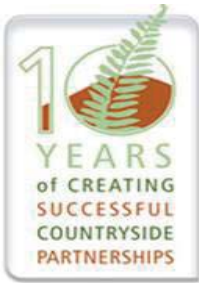


Lorna Walker, Community Development Officer, has started a new position in Central Bedfordshire Council. Since joining us in 2007, Lorna has been a great asset to our team and has achieved a great deal working with volunteers and our communities on a range of activities.

Carmela Semeraro, Sands of Time Project Officer, has finished her work with the Sands of Time Project. Over the 2 years Carmela spent on the project she worked with volunteers and recorded valuable memories of people associated with the quarrying industry.



News from around the Trust



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Waitrose donation for the Greensand Trust

The Greensand Trust have received a donation of £310 from Waitrose in Leighton Buzzard and £260 from Waitrose in Ampthill.



We were very fortunate to be nominated in two different stores. We would like to say a huge thanks to all our supporters who voted for us with their tokens. This money will go towards supporting local volunteers working with the Trust.



Nude Ewe

A cheque for £195.16 was received from the Nude Ewe project for sheep wool donated by Erika Pratt's Wensleydales. This money will be used for conservation and traditional grazing in Bedfordshire habitats.



For further information about the Nude Ewe project visit <http://www.bedslife.org.uk/nude-ewe/>

Growing GreenSpace Appeal



The Trust's Growing Greenspace Appeal is intended to raise funds to secure, protect and link vital areas of countryside, improve access, and preserve landscape, heritage and wildlife features.

www.greensandtrust.org/growing-greenspace/growingGreenspace.html

Please support us, think of it as an investment with a guaranteed return: a richer, more diverse, more natural environment for everyone and everything living in the Greensand Ridge area, for now and for decades to come.