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EMSWORTH
TREE WARDENS

Win Some, Lose a Lot: the Loss

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Further north on the eastern side of the Horndean Road just north of the junction with Southleigh Road, about 60 to 100 trees, including an old hedgerow, were 'hacked' down in February. This left the northern entrance to Emsworth looking like the aftermath of a battle site. The trees felled included Sycamore, Ash, Hawthorn and Holly. A number of dead Elms were also cut down but rather surprisingly 60cm stumps were left.



While Emsworth Tree Wardens (ETW) appreciate that safety for those using a road where the speed limit is sixty mph is an important consideration, such a drastic change in this major approach route into Emsworth could have been tackled with greater sensitivity. This is especially disappointing following Havant Borough Council's recent affiliation to the Tree Council. Apart from how it looks, this mostly healthy hedgerow provided food and shelter for birds and wildlife and while some of the Hawthorn may regenerate, it will take many years for the 'damage' to be rectified.

We understand that further chainsaw incursions are planned for what is left on this side of the Horndean Road as well as along Emsworth Common Road. Andrew Skeet (arborist at HBC) has assured us that he will contact Emsworth Tree Wardens if and when he is considering major tree work of this nature in future.

If you are concerned about this huge loss of trees, we would urge you to contact your local councillor and/or Havant Borough Council Customer Services (tel 02392 446428/29), suggesting that a less drastic approach is taken to other trees and hedgerows in future. Havant Borough Council's insensitive actions make a mockery of the fact that this is the 'Year of the Hedgerow'.

Ann Jolly, secretary ETW



Towards a Local Biodiversity Action Plan

Southbourne Parish Council has a Biodiversity Working Group that meets regularly in the Village Hall at Southbourne. The aim of the group is to draw up a Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) for the parish of Southbourne. At our next meeting on Thursday 9 April at 7.30pm, we have Lindsey Bates who is the Local Biodiversity Coordinator for Chichester District Council and she will be telling us about training that is available, together with grants that we can apply for. Hopefully, these grants can be used by local societies to help fund their own wildlife projects. Anyone living in Southbourne or who has an interest in Southbourne Parish is welcome to attend.

Why Biodiversity is important

Without plants and animals we would not be able to survive. The success of each species is essential to the health and well-being of the whole planet. If species are destroyed, having taken million years to evolve, they are lost forever. Our biodiversity should not be taken for granted; the common frogs you find in your garden pond are just as important as endangered species such as Water Voles.

Biodiversity Action Plan includes:

- Encouraging biodiversity in residential gardens
- Mapping habitats
- Encouraging community wildlife projects

Involving local societies is an important feature of our Local Biodiversity Action Plan. Soon, local societies in Southbourne will be receiving a pledge sheet that will ask if they would agree to any of the following:

- Having a speaker on a biodiversity topic
- Carrying out a biodiversity survey
- Carrying out an independent wildlife project
- Mapping a habitat



Metres from disaster

The Environment Agency might not do better than King Canute at pushing back the waves but it may stop them coming closer. How is explained in a consultation strategy, *Planning for the Future*, published in partnership with local councils.

With rising temperatures triggering higher sea levels, the threat to coastal land, habitats and property becomes more challenging. The Agency's draft strategy says that by 2018 almost 400 Emsworth properties could be at risk, double the present number. Properties fringing the west Emsworth coastline as well as Bath Road and Bridgefoot Path are exposed. Areas adjoining the Slipper Mill Pond are also at increasing risk. It's a similar story at nearby Langstone and westwards through Highbury, Cosham and Portchester making over 4,200 properties in the 27km covered by the report.

Four management options have been identified as a response to managing each of the seven coastal sections of the report.

These are:

- Do nothing - let nature take its course
- Do the minimum - maintain until defences fail
- Hold the line - maintain, sustain and improve defences
- Managed realignment i.e., moving defences to a more sustainable location inland.

In most cases, the Environment Agency recommends holding the line, the exceptions being Warblington and Conigar Point, South Moor and Farlington Marshes where further studies are needed in 10 years time. In total £180 million would be the cost for protecting the study area, says the Agency, with nearly £16 million for Emsworth over the next 20 years.

Failing government support, money would have to come from local public and private sources. The assumption is that sea levels will be one metre higher by 2115. Data from NASA. The website <http://flood.firetree.net> shows that levels will have to rise by six metres to sink half of Emsworth - so there's still time to get used to the idea! Less fortunate could be the islands of Thorney, Hayling and Portsea whose futures are threatened by a three metre rise.

For more information:

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/library/consultations/101606.aspx
See also page 6/7 'Public Consultation on Flood Defence Strategy' *Ray Cobbett*

Biodiversity - the new buzz word?

Biodiversity or biological diversity is the variability among living organisms and includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems. Local Authorities have a duty under the Local Government Act 2000 to promote the environmental, social and economic well-being of their areas. Section 4 requires them to prepare Community Strategies for this purpose and guidance issued as part of DETR Circular 4/2001 makes clear that Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) are among the elements local authorities should build upon when preparing these Community Strategies.

The Government announced the outcome of a review of planning requirements on local authorities in November 2002. This made clear that local authorities themselves are not obliged to prepare LBAPs but that they should plan for biodiversity. Local authority planning for biodiversity should be firmly linked into Community Strategies to provide a framework to ensure biodiversity is embedded into all activities.

A Biodiversity Action Plan recently initiated in Southbourne by a subgroup of the Parish Council (see article on this page) has the full support of Chichester District Council. You may well ask what HBC is doing to promote biodiversity in Havant Borough? There is no Countryside or Ecology Officer on HBC staff to help identify key habitats and prepare site management plans nor are there any parish councils in the Borough. This work is primarily being carried out by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre and independently by several of the many voluntary nature conservation groups around the Borough, including the Brook Meadow Conservation Group in Emsworth. However, it is not clear who is responsible at HBC or HCC for coordinating all this work to attain a coherent plan.

Frances Jannaway

Space for Nature - Wildlife Gardening Competition

To encourage individual involvement, the working group is also overseeing a unique gardening competition. To be judged in November, when wildlife is particularly dependent on residential gardens. A number of prizes will be offered to those gardens that best encourage biodiversity through the provision of food, water and wildlife friendly planting.

Further details of the competition and the biodiversity plan can be found on the parish display board in Southbourne library or by contacting me by email philip.macdougall@btinternet.com or phone (01243-573782).

Philip MacDougall, Chair Southbourne Biodiversity Working Group



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