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Development, Drainage and Flooding

Drainage is not a subject many of us think about very often I would guess. However, I believe it will become more important for us all in years to come if climate change continues.



Balancing pond showing the two oak trees under threat, centre back.

Through my involvement as a member of the Emsworth Community Board (ECB), I have become more aware of the way in which planning applications are decided regarding drainage. The Environment Agency has responsibility for drainage and advises planners based on criteria, which I believe need reviewing.

A scheme, which if approved, will have long-term consequences for Emsworth, is the Interbridges west site (A27 site), covering an area of 5.48 hectares (13.5 acres). At present, this site is a green field grazed by horses but on development all the rainfall onto the buildings, roads and hard standing will run via pipes into a balancing pond. From this pond, the water will be discharged slowly into the Westbrook so that in theory the flow of water at any one time will be no greater than at present. The design is calculated using an assumed rainfall intensity of a 1 in 100 year storm plus 20% for climate change.

Trees for the Future (continued from page 1)

Unfortunately, not only developers consider trees to be dispensable. Perfectly healthy, mature trees are cut down, for example because the householder cannot cope with the fallen leaves. This says a lot about the culture we live in.

Trees along pavements, roads and streets are the responsibility of Hampshire County Council (HCC) Highways Department. You may have noticed that the four Lombardy Poplars which were felled along Havant Road earlier this year because they were considered to be diseased and therefore a hazard by HCC's tree consultants, have been replaced with five disease resistant Elms. In addition, three mature trees, including a wonderful Scots Pine, have been felled on Warblington Road also for reasons of highway safety. It is not certain whether these trees will be replaced because of lack of space. Emsworth Tree Wardens are working with the ECB to improve communications with the Highways Department of HCC about highway tree management.

Emsworth Tree Wardens are also involved with several tree planting projects, including helping to plant 110 Hawthorn saplings and a Hazel coppice at James Road allotments, Bedhampton during national tree planting week. Other tree planting projects are: helping Emsworth Primary School with advice, donating sapling Oak trees grown from seed collected in Emsworth and providing tree growing equipment. See Caroline Fisk's article on page 5. The group has also been involved in cooperation with the ECB and Andrew Skeet of HBC in suggesting trees to be planted on Emsworth Recreation Ground on Hordean Road. A line of Field Maples and Wild Cherries were planted last winter and several more will be planted this winter together with some Oaks and Limes.

The group is also currently writing an Emsworth Tree Trail booklet which we will publish early next year to encourage local people as well as visitors to appreciate trees in their immediate environment. The funding for this project has been obtained from the Havant Conservation Action Project. The booklets will be available at libraries, bookshops, tourist information centres, schools, hotels, etc.

Finally, if you are interested in learning more about trees and especially which trees to plant for the current conditions, I would like to encourage you to come to a talk by Jon Stokes of the Tree Council on Monday 4th February 2008, 7.30pm at the Brookfield Hotel. He is an excellent speaker.

Frances Jannaway

The Westbrook drains a large part of north Emsworth, part of the A27 trunk road and the site in question. It is therefore an important water-course and we are reliant on the design of the development proving to be adequate into the foreseeable future.

We have recently seen severe flooding in other parts of the country where protection has been inadequate and I would like to see the criteria increased to give a greater safety margin to allow for more severe storms that could well occur.

Another current issue is the Hermitage housing site off Lumley Road where a balancing pond has been constructed as part of a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS). The developer wishes to increase the size of the pond, which is needed because he has been allowed to build more houses on the site. To achieve this he wants to fell two Oak trees protected under a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). Unfortunately, the Chichester District Council officers now seem willing to accept this solution rather than an alternative, which would not require any trees to be felled.

This is another case where we are reliant on the design capacity of the pond being adequate and where, I believe, the developer is seeking to solve a problem of his own making at the expense of the interest of the community.

Richard Galloway ECB

Slipper Mill Pond Banks

In 2004, the Slipper Mill Pond Preservation Association (SMPPA) started on a programme to repair the inside of the West Bank of Slipper Mill Pond. After a series of experiments to find the best solution, they planted Sea Club Rush along a 100m section of the southern end last spring, with the help of a grant from Chichester Harbour Conservancy Sustainable Development Fund. This planting has been very successful and the SMPPA are having a volunteer workday on Saturday 15th March to complete this work- all volunteers welcome. (Tel 377749 or see page 11)

Nick Madena



FRIENDS OF HOLLYBANK WOODS

Winter Work Parties

At the 9th Friends of Hollybank Wood's AGM held on Friday 23rd November, the Chairman reported as follows on the previous year's work parties:

"Last winter our usual work parties ran from November 2006 through to March 2007. One of the tasks was to clear Sycamore saplings from the side of the path that runs past the D-day hut. Judging by the amount of re-growth this summer I think this will be a continuing job for future years. Keeping the new glades open, general path clearance and re-signing the circular path where signs had been damaged kept us out of mischief for a few hours on a Sunday morning. We also checked out and cleaned the bird boxes. Rather disappointingly, only 3 out of 20 boxes had been used for nesting with a further 5 showing signs of overnight use. We may need to re-site some boxes but need a few more years' data to get a clearer picture. Incidentally, our 5-year Work Plan 2002-2007 expires this year and we have drawn up a new one to cover 2008-2013. This calls for much the same sort of work (coppicing, path clearance, etc.) but additionally we will take some measures to control the spread of rhododendron".

If you haven't joined a work party before do try it, you can do as much or little as you like and we always end with coffee and biscuits. Everybody is welcome.

Dates of winter work parties are: Sunday 20 January, 17 February, and 16 March. For details contact John Bond: 376302.

Pauline Bond



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