

NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2016



**Gift to
Nature**

Calling Ryde Residents!



Ryde Police Cadets moved so fast that every photo we have is blurred!



Green Gym came twice within a month

All these brilliant improvements have been made possible by funding from **Peoples Postcode Lottery**, **Ryde Town Council** and **Down to the Coast**, so a big thanks to all involved. We are still hoping to raise a little more money, and if we do, we will build a small board walk by the river, easing access from across the railway line. If you would like to be **involved** in conservation, wildlife recording, being an eyes and ears of the site, or even just listening to Ruth's pearls of wisdom, please email us at info@giftonature.org.uk and we will keep you informed.

In August we started our restoration of **Swanmore Meadows**. Teams of volunteers have descended on the site and have been extending the paths and making them more robust. Those of you who wal the Meadow in winter will appreciate how boggy it can get.

Our next task will be to call in local contractors. We need to remove some of the scrub, to give the meadow grasses and flowers a better chance to flourish. There are machines that make light work of the task. We need to coppice some of the trees too, so don't be alarmed. Then the volunteers will be back to do some fine tuning.

At the same time, local historian **Ruth Waller** has been looking into the history of the meadows and surrounding area. Her findings will inform the super-doooper new interpretation boards we will be putting up, but we have also managed to persuade her to come along to Ryde and give a **talk** to anyone who may be interested. We thought we would do this after Christmas.



**Gift to
Nature**

Gift to Nature is the flagship conservation project of Island 2000 Trust.

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And other news...

Cattle have returned to Brading Down (and thanks to Bob at Isle of Wight Council for helping to sort this). Stocking densities for conservation are low and the timing and duration of is carefully managed as both over- and under-grazing can reduce the wildlife value of a habitat. Its good because it has a slower effect than cutting, so allows less-mobile wildlife to thrive. The Cattle's tongues wrap around grasses and plants and pull up tufts of the vegetation, producing a tussocky field. They will eat long coarse grass and push their way through scrub and bracken to create open spaces. Their trampling and dung is good too.



Meanwhile in Pan Mill Meadows we have replaced the sheep with a far less gentle beast. This huge earth moving machine is digging a trench to take drainage from Asda and St Georges Way. It all looks a bit drastic at the moment, but we have been assured it will be restored, and we are looking forward to welcoming the sheep back. Apart from the major works, the 'new' meadow is looking really good now, thanks to the efforts of the sheep earlier this summer.



Over the net few months you are going to see a lot of work on this site too. We have to coppice some trees to the ground near St Georges Roundabout. We know you like trees but these were damaged by the flooding a couple of winters ago, and we won't be very popular if they fall on anyone's car. And as a bonus, it will lighten up the meadow and encourage other plants to grow. There's new interpretation and seating going in, and some of the paths will be improved.



And finally we were surveying Munsley Bog for another project and it dawned on us how little public access or views there are of this. Godshill Parish Council own most of thr publically accessible bit, and we manage it on their behalf, thanks to a kind donation from them. If you are unaware of the hidden gem it can be accessed from May Close in Godshill.



Gift to Nature is the flagship conservation project of the Island 2000 Trust.

Gift to Nature provides opportunities to allow residents and visitors to enjoy the natural environment by creating, enhancing and providing access to sites and activities that deliver benefit to all.

Gift to Nature is part of the Island 2000 Trust, registered charity no. 1083233.

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