



# Newsletter

## October 2024

The nights are drawing in and our beautiful nature reserve is rapidly changing with the season. The summer saw a hive of activity with meadows being mowed, paths cut back and the start of the wetlands restoration project.



### Our conservation workdays

Some very hot days were spent in the woodland, nicknamed the 'Friends' Plantation' by our warden. Located between the cemetery path and the lakeside path, we've been planting whips of native species

here over the last nine or ten years and the woodland is now really taking shape. Lots of love and attention has helped many of these trees to survive. This summer in particular, saw an abundance of bindweed suffocating the more mature trees. It was very satisfying to clear it and find a tree still thriving underneath.



Stream clearance is an important conservation task in SNCP. The streams in our nature reserve flow in from Chaffinch Brook and feed the lake and wetlands area. They need to be kept clear of soft vegetation and overhanging branches whose fallen leaves cause the streams to silt up. Donning chest waders and getting stuck in the mud isn't everyone's cup of tea though so there are always tasks along the bank for those who prefer to keep their feet dry.



There is a school of thought among some that a nature reserve should be left to let nature run its course with little management to its habitats. However, a nature reserve in the unique position as SNCP is, needs to support a mosaic of habitats such as wetlands, woodland, meadows and lake. These habitats need to be maintained so as not to lose its variety of birdlife, wildlife and plant life. Without maintenance, woodland would eventually take over the whole area. This is where the wetlands restoration project comes in which Ian, together with our late dear Friend, John Hughes, put a lot of planning into. Aided by an army of volunteers from various corporate groups, The Conservation Volunteers and FoSNCP, the first stage was to clear the overgrown pond originally created in 2017. After exposing much of the pond, work began on clearing bulrushes and yellow flag iris from sections of the adjoining wetlands leaving



little 'islands' to provide safe hiding places for birds. Removing sections of the overgrown vegetation encourages a wetter habitat for wading birds and the invertebrates they feed on. Another part of the project was for Council contractors to install three sluice gates alongside the path. In time, when the water level rises, these sluice gates can be opened to allow water to flow into scrapes which will be created in the meadow on the other side of the path making it another perfect habitat to encourage the return of more wading birds. We've also built dead hedges in front of the gaps left by the installation of the sluice gates to deter dogs from entering this sensitive area. In any event, we ask that dogs be kept on a lead along this path.

### Wildlife and nature walks



Our unpredictable summer meant we had to postpone our Butterfly Walk in July but we managed to reschedule for early September. Thanks to the expert knowledge of Mike Pearce, a regular TCV volunteer, we managed to spot many of the species we've seen on our weekly butterfly transect. We finished collecting data for this year's butterfly transect at the end of September and submitted it to Butterfly Conservation Surrey and SW London. Sadly, 2024 has been a poor year for butterflies nationally and Butterfly Conservation has called a Butterfly Emergency calling on the government to take action for nature before it is too late. Ian continued his programme of leading our ever popular Bat Walks throughout the summer although sadly, the August one fell victim to our inclement weather.

### Other news

Our 2025 calendar is now on sale. Once again, we were fortunate to have a wonderful selection of photos sent in by our generous local photographers celebrating all that is wonderful about our local nature reserve. Look out for emails and posters about sales dates and please support us to raise funds for our conservation work.

Our warden, Ian, has now been in post for around six months and what a difference it has made. So many visitors to the park have commented on how much work has been done over the last few months which is wonderful.



Remember, for any issues relating to SNCP, you can email our warden directly at [Ian.Glover@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:Ian.Glover@croydon.gov.uk)

Finally .... the Friends of South Norwood Country Park are an enthusiastic group of volunteers with one thing in common – we love our designated local nature reserve. If you would like to join in with one of our workdays and learn more about the importance of conservation, please email us on [friendsofsncp@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofsncp@gmail.com)

For more information about SNCP and detailed workday reports, please visit our website [www.friendsofsncp.org.uk](http://www.friendsofsncp.org.uk)



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