



Friends of Newenden Meadow

NEWSLETTER

Winter/Spring 2026

The Meadow appears asleep during the winter months, but under the green grass blanket bulbs will be stirring and putting up their shoots, and plants will have extended their range in the autumn and soon will show new growth. During last year we saw both Green Wing, and Common Spotted orchids appear and a rare Dyers Broom, among the flowers that now grow in the meadow. We will be looking out for them again this year.

Getting ready for Spring

In mid-autumn we strimmed four areas at the western end, either side of the path, and sowed Yellow Rattle to lessen the grass and a mix of perennial and annual flowers that we hope will grow this spring. One area has been flooded by water coming through the hedge, but hopefully we will still see a result, though it might appear further into the field!



Flooding Ebb & Flow

The field has been flooded twice so far this winter, and Mallard ducks and gulls are making the most of the food created as a result, and a Little Egret was seen recently flying away. In a month's time the Common Frog will be laying their spawn in the shallows at the eastern end of the field, and hopefully there will be thousands of tadpoles by March. Although the

field floods during heavy rainfall, it drains into the River Rother as soon as the lock gates can be opened at Rye, leaving the scrape full of water. Because of this draining away, the plants growing in the flooded area happily survive.

Recently we strimmed the area near the Marsh Mallows and the fenced in area too. That part of the field had been left to allow the Water Mint to flower at the end of summer and strimming it now gives the new Marsh Mallow plants a chance to grow up through the grass. All grass cuttings are removed to prevent nutrients from seeping back into the soil, creating better soil conditions for our native wild flowers to grow.



Temporary Habitat

Later this spring we will find areas where we can strim and lay down black plastic under tarpaulins. These will stay in place throughout the summer, to be taken up at hay making, leaving areas perfect for autumn sowing of Yellow Rattle and more perennial and annual seeds, continuing the spread of wild flowers for both common and rarer Bumblebees, and Solitary Bees and all other pollinating insects that thrive in the meadow. When the tarps are removed, this is an ideal time to see Grass Snakes, Slow Worms and Field Voles who will have made their homes there during the summer months.



Fun and fundraising – Talk by Local Ecology Expert Brian Banks

On Friday, March 13th, at 7pm., we will be welcoming our local Ecology expert, Brian Banks to give a talk on the work he is doing in Northiam, restoring two fields to wild flower meadows, and also advising us on what more we can do to enhance our own meadow here in Newenden. This is a not to be missed talk in the Church of St. Peter's, Newenden.

It is also a fundraising event. Education is one of our core objectives and it is sometimes hard to observe the rich diversity of life in the meadow. Our moth population is largely nocturnal, well camouflaged and shy. However, we would like to buy a moth trap. These are harmless to the moths that are caught, but enable you to observe and photograph the moths that are either living in or passing through the meadow, before releasing them on their way.

Whilst it would be possible to borrow one, and we have done in the past, there is no guarantee that the weather will be right, before it has to go back. It would be much better for the Field Manager to have access to one directly, so that she can site it as required when weather permits. We could also use it in other locations, such as local gardens for interest. A reasonable trap with batteries costs around £350 - £400. We will be running a series of events to raise these funds and will be able to share the findings with Friends and on our website.

