











Manhood Wildlife & Heritage Group

Annual Report 2026









Our Mission

To preserve the unique character of the Manhood Peninsula and inspire local people to care for its wildlife and heritage. To see a place where nature flourishes, history is celebrated, and people thrive.

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Chair's Report

The year 2025 to 2026 has seen us busy on all fronts. The winer was again taken up with Hedge planting, this time in collaboration with the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) With the help of a grant from CPRE we were able to plant another 2 kilometres of hedges on a farm in the Witterings/Bracklesham, and also with Trees from the Tree Council to add trees and hedgerows on a farm in Sidlesham. Jane Reeve has continued to lead this work, and our wonderful volunteers have both planted new hedgerows and worked to maintain our original plantings from the previous 2 years. Once again, the Selsey Tree Nursery was used to very good effect keeping the young trees over the summer for winter planting. Working with the local farmers here on the Manhood Peninsula is a great co-operation and they are very 'eco aware' and good guardians of the land.

Our monitoring activities have grown this year. We submit our findings to the national biodiversity records. We continue with the sites at Runcton (Vitacress), Sidlesham, Bracklesham and East Wittering, and have included sites in Selsey and Almodington. We are also surveying our Pollinator Highway sites for both flower species and pollinators; this year we added a verge at Sidlesham to the Pollinator Highway.

We have continued and expanded our work with young people thanks to Emma Horton who now leads 'Wildlife Warriors' clubs with the Scouts and Guides and with the Primary Schools in Birdham and Selsey. This has been a great initiative and brought many families to our Wildlife engagement days held over the early summer on Saturdays in Birdham, Sidlesham, Itchenor, and West Wittering. We were delighted to be sponsored by the Co-op for these events. We have also had stands for information at the Mundham Gala, the Sidlesham Fete, Selsey Lifeboat day, and the Bracklesham Big Picnic over the summer.

In the winter we held the competition for the Eillen Savill Prize. This year the young people were asked to make an item from recycled materials. We had amazingly imaginative entries both from individuals and from Guides and Brownie groups. We were able to give prizes to the winners at a ceremony in the Selsey Centre.

In January MWHG made a donation to the Library in Selsey of some books on the topic of wildlife gardening. Some books were for adults and some for children. The West Sussex Library Service held a formal handover of the books which was attended by me and Joe Savill who had organised the donation.

A team of volunteers have continued to develop the Tree Nurseries. The Selsey Nursery was used again over the winter and new beds have been established with donated trees. Regular weeding has been reduced by membrane laid on the beds.

Over the winter we have been planning a new watering system for the summer months which will be installed in the early summer.

The Pollinator Highway project, partly funded by the Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust expanded this year, with an additional site in Selsey which we collaborated with Hyde who manage the social housing at Denshare Road. This is a large oval of grass and produced a wide range of plants. In July we surveyed all the Selsey Verges looking at Plants, Pollinators and percentages of grass to other plants. We collaborate with the Wilder Sesley group and the Hidden Garden on these sites. The Sidlesham Site was left to grow but not formally surveyed this year but will be next year. We had a group of volunteers from Pfizer ltd who came and helped with the cutting and raking of the grass in September.

On the Heritage side of the Group we have seen the exhibition at the Novium continue to great appreciation and interest about the Selsey Tram. Some information boards have been replaced along the route of the Tramway walk and Bill Martin continues to be our liaison with the Church Commissioners regarding the Chalder Station restoration. The Weald and Downland Museum are hoping to reconstruct the Land Settlement Association house that they have in storage in the next year or so.

The Selsey Photo Archive held an exhibition in the Pavillion in Selsey called ‘Selsey at War’ to mark the 80th anniversary of VE day. This was held over 3 days in August and was very successful with more than 300 people visiting. Many thanks to everyone who worked on this project and to the Pavillion Trust for the venue. We were very pleased to use this exhibition at the Remembrance Sunday event at the East Beach Evangelical Church, and then it was loaned to The Academy, Selsey where year 9 children were studying the second World War and were interested to see how this had affected their hometown.

The stalwarts of the East Beach Pond, and the sensory garden in Manor Green Park continue to maintain these areas as a nature oasis in an increasingly urban setting as Selsey continues to grow. We have an increasing problem at the East Beach Pond with a small group of young men using catapults to attack wildlife. This is a national problem lead by items on tick tock. MWHG has endorsed posters raising awareness and has undertaken holiday club sessions with the secondary school children on wildlife awareness.

Our two new Trustees have been busy this year as we have been going through the process of moving our legal status from a Company Limited by Guarantee to a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation). This process was explained at out AGM in October and will move us away from Companies House and allow us to simplify the paperwork required to be lodged with the Charity Commission. It is hoped that this process will be completed by our next AGM. We were fortunate that one of our

Volunteers, Simona Stangaciu, was doing a management degree at the University of Guildford. For her project she undertook an analysis of MWHG. She gave us a very valuable and useful report, it was interesting to have an overview of our activities and management, and we have been able to use much of what she produced. We would be delighted if other volunteers came forward to become trustees. We are also looking for a Secretary, a Health and Safety Officer, and project leaders and organisers! These back-room activities are essential to keep the show on the road!

I would like to personally thank all the management team members for their continued unstinting work for MWHG, and especially to Jane Scotland, our Treasurer whose grasp of our finances is comprehensive and keeps us going!

A big Thank You to everyone who has volunteered, in any capacity, and supported in other ways, you are all fantastic!

Dr Lesley Bromley

Chair Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group



MWHG Annual General Meeting, October 2025

Pond Power Project

Portsmouth Water Biodiversity Grant funded the MWHG Pond Power project to manage ponds that were originally recovered as part of the Fixing and Linking Our Wetlands (FLOW) project that ran from 2015 - 2021.

We focussed on four ponds: Willow Glen, Sidlesham; Florence pond, Sidlesham; Church Lane pond, Hunston; Sheepdip pond, Ham.

The ponds were initially photographed, assessed, species surveys carried out, including specialist dragonfly surveys, and then vegetation removal took place.

At Willow Glen, a large pond area and significant drainage feature for Sidlesham parish, the banks were very overgrown with a tangle of bramble and bindweed. One third of the pond was tackled and the vegetation taken back, especially around the 5-year-old trees, and the smaller wetland wildflowers exposed.





This pond also needed a new stake and binders fence along the front of it, adjacent to the pavement, and binders were sourced from West Dean Woods. The brilliant and experienced MWHG volunteers then stepped in and created the attractive woven fence.

At Florence Pond, once the bird breeding season had finished, we started to manage the growth of bramble at the far end of the pond and exposed a large log pile where we have previously seen reptiles sunning themselves.





The front of the pond, near to the main road, was tidied up, the bench made more accessible and tree branched managed back to get light onto the water. This was one of the ponds that completely dried out in the summer of 2025 which impacted the dragonfly habitat and surveying. The water vole colony is still holding on here and are still see fairly frequently.

At Church Lane Pond, in Hunston, we exposed the bank areas where the pond joins the ditch system. This allowed us to ensure that it is still connected and to make sure that no rubbish is blocking the channel. We were treated to a very close encounter with a water vole here which was a lovely reassurance that the gentle work we are doing makes the pond still suitable habitat for them.





Sheepwash Pond has been a challenge as it is covered in an invasive non-native plant species called Azolla Fern. This plant covers the surface of the water and smothers other species and prevents water oxygenation. During the winter this plant goes an odd pink colour. There is a South American weevil that will eat this invasive plant but efforts to source it were not successful. We did carefully remove some of the bramble and invasive willow from the top of the pond banks to get light in, and we found harvest mice nests which was a great surprise. Harvest mice are so tiny that they are seldom seen. Traditionally found in wheat fields, recent agricultural practices destroy the nests, so we tend to find them now in the dense sedges and grasses around ponds.



Once we have finished the physical work phase of this project, management plans for each pond were completed and handed over to parishes and landowners to use for future work. It was great to return to these ponds and to be reminded of how valuable they are.

Jane Reeve, Project Officer

Hedgerows Heroes Project

In the summer of 2025, the MWHG partnered up with CPRE (Campaign for Rural England) to get involved in a national Hedgerow Heroes project, delivering the Sussex program with tree planting on the Manhood Peninsula. The aim was to plant 10,000 trees creating 2 kilometres of new native hedgerow. With the help of lots of volunteers recruited through the MWHG and CPRE, 15,000 trees were planted across 2 sites to create 3 kilometres of hedgerow.

Tree planting took place between November 2025 and March 2026 and was extremely challenging during a very wet winter. The first phase of the planting took place in Ham, and we were fortunate to have a farmer who prepared the ground ahead of us using a rotavator to break up the solid clay. We started on a day that saw all that the weather could throw at us with snow, extreme wind and horizontal rain.





Amazingly volunteers came back and each week we averaged about 800 trees planted which was incredible. The rain was quite relentless during this period and there was one week when we could not reach the site as every access road was closed due to flooding. When we did get on site the mud was a challenge and pulling out volunteers knee deep was not uncommon.



The second planting phase of the Hedgerow Heroes project was on Chalder Farm just north of RSPB PHNR, providing more habitat. We planted the last 5,000 trees with a brilliant team of mainly MWHG volunteers and were helped in those last few weeks by a continual stream of Caroline's Diary ice-cream provided by the farmer, Chris Spiby. He turned up every break time to ensure blood sugar and energy levels were maintained and also was generous with his time in talking to the volunteers and explaining his farming



methods, what he was doing on the land, how he tries to work with wildlife etc. The weather changed and it became dry and sunny, which we really weren't used to.

Since the project has finished the trees have been checked to see how they are doing and if any guards need replacing. The majority of trees, despite the drought, have leafed and have done well so far but more rain would be very welcome. The trees at Chalder Farm have been watered through this dry period and are thriving despite a bit of deer interference.

Thank you to the CPRE for their funding and support in delivering this important project across the area.

It is worth reflecting on how many trees the MWHG have planted, this project included, over the previous 3 winters, across the Manhood Peninsula:

23/24 at Highleigh planted 5505 trees making 1100 metres of new hedge.

24/25 in South Mundham planted 4342 trees making 870 metres of new hedge.

25/26 in West Wittering planted 5535 trees making 1107 metres of new hedge.

25/26 in Ham and Sidlesham planted 15,000 trees making 3 kilometres of new hedge.





Total trees planted into hedges in the last 3 years = 30,382 which makes over 6 kms of new native hedge.

The Tuesday Tree Planting Club has developed during this period, and these volunteers have come out over the last 3 years and committed to tree planting despite the challenging weather, the mud and the long walks. Thank you to these amazing people who have endured difficult conditions to improve the environment for everyone.

Jane Reeve, Project Officer

Educational Work

The MWHG is very grateful to the Woodger Trust for funding a large part of our community conservation projects on the Manhood Peninsula. Education is the key to fostering a generation of children and young adults that have a respect for the local environment and its wildlife. A large part of the MWHG's work is based upon our educational work in schools, uniformed groups and the wider community. Our aim is to teach and engage youngsters about the amazing wildlife and habitats in our locality by delivering practical, outdoor nature- based activities.



The MWHG has increased its provision of educational sessions over the last year. We have successfully delivered our 'Wildlife Warriors' sessions in six primary schools on the Manhood Peninsula, including West Wittering, East Wittering, Birdham, Sidlesham, Medmerry and Seal Primary Academy in Selsey. In fact, we have made repeat visits to all of these schools, bringing our nature-based sessions to different age groups, reaching more children.

Our Wildlife Warriors sessions are free for schools and uniformed groups and generally take place for an hour or so, with a group, or sometimes a whole class of youngsters. The activities take place in the school grounds or nearby outdoor settings. Some of our sessions are run as after school clubs, while others take place during the school day. We have been able to assist schools in teaching environmental topics, offering bespoke lessons on themes such as, 'looking after our world' and 'our local wildlife', covering issues such as saving water and soil health, amongst other subjects.

Our wildlife activities are designed to be fun, practical and educational, based on the National Curriculum for Science and they support schools' efforts to promote wellbeing amongst pupils. We are increasingly recognising the benefits that outdoor activities in nature can bring to our mental health, with 'less screen time and more green time'. There is a lot of evidence to suggest that children are happier, healthier and more creative when they are connected to the natural world, in their local environment. During our Wildlife Warriors sessions, we show youngsters how to look more closely at plants and animals which helps to foster an appreciation of the natural world.



We work in collaboration with school staff and community leaders to help improve the biodiversity of their grounds, with the children adding features such as log piles, bug hotels and hedgehog houses, bird and bat boxes, trees and wildflowers. Pupils often get to make items to take home, such as mini bug houses, seed bombs and sunflower seed pots, as well as wildlife crafts. Interactive activities such as pond dipping and dissecting owl pellets is not only educational but engenders a sense of wonder and curiosity in nature and its processes.

Wildlife Warriors sessions are guided by the seasons. In spring we run activities such as sowing seeds and look at topics such as new life and animal babies, growth and animal homes. Summer is a great time to explore outdoors, looking at habitats, pondlife and wildflowers. During the autumn, we look at topics such as hibernation, installing hedgehog houses and bug hotels. The children enjoy collecting tree seeds such as acorns to plant and grow on at home. Winter activities include making bird seed cakes and caring for the birds.

We have also visited a number of uniformed groups on the Manhood Peninsula to deliver wildlife sessions. This includes 1st Birdham and Witterings Beavers and East Witterings Rainbows, Brownies and Guides. We have forged links with other local groups including the team at Selsey Youth Dreams, who invited us to run three whole days of environmental activities during the summer holidays in 2025. The Hidden Gardens in Selsey was our amazing venue for wildlife activities with the Selsey Youth Dreams holiday club, as well as for pupils from Medmerry Primary school, which is just across the road form the gardens. We have also worked closely with other community organisations and individuals in order to provide resources for our educational activities. These include the team at 'Men in Sheds', who have supplied fabulous hedgehog houses, bug hotels and signage at low cost. We have also got to thank our very creative volunteer Graham, who has given up his time to provide scores of bird boxes and bug boxes at next to no cost, using recycled wood from old wine crates!



The MWHG is also committed to engaging with the wider community, providing enriching and educational 'Nature Days' for families and children across a number of churchyards on the Manhood Peninsula. During the summer of 2025, the MWHG team, in collaboration with church representatives, delivered 'Nature Days' at St. James' Church in Birdham, St. Mary's Church in Sidlesham, St. Peter and St. Paul's Church in West Wittering and Itchenor Memorial Hall.

Churchyards are special places that have often been in existence for many centuries, allowing plant and animal populations to thrive. In fact, many churchyards contain mature and ancient trees, some of which pre-date the church buildings themselves. These largely quiet and undisturbed places often contain diverse habitats and are a valuable haven for wildlife. Recent research by the charity, 'Caring for God's Acre', discovered that cemeteries and churchyards were home to a huge variety of rare wildlife, with over a quarter of species recorded featuring on the 'Red List' of endangered species. Therefore, these wildlife hotspots are the perfect location for our annual Nature Day events.



A huge amount of planning, preparation and work goes into delivering each Nature Day. The dates are negotiated with church officials months in advance, so as not to clash with Saturday weddings! Resources for a great number of stalls and activities are transported to the church sites, to be set up according to risk assessments and weather forecasts. From heavy items such as gazebos, tables and displays, to small but essential items like owl pellets, sunflower seeds and coconut oil, hundreds of resources are moved into place. It is a massive team operation involving numerous dedicated volunteers from the MWHG and church representatives over at least two days. Each event is open to the community, for free, from 10am - 1pm and we get many families and children in attendance that really love the activities and displays. It is very rewarding to see the youngsters getting their hands dirty, for example, decorating bird boxes and making seed bombs to take home and getting excited at going on a bug hunt around the church yard. We have had many parents and carers tell us how much their children have enjoyed the activities and how much they've learnt about wildlife at the Nature Days. It makes all the work and effort worthwhile.



In addition to our family Church Nature Days, the MWHG has been fortunate to have attended a number of summer community events, including Selsey Lifeboat day, Sidlesham Fete, Mundham Gala and Flower Show and Bracklesham Community event. During these events, we have shown displays of the work we do and have talked to visitors about our charity's environmental work, as well as run wildlife craft activities for the children.

The MWHG is incredibly grateful to all the fantastic volunteers that help support our educational work in schools, community groups, Nature Days and summer events. We had 15 different volunteers assisting with our school and uniformed groups alone, even more if you include all those that gave up their time to help run activities and stalls at the churchyard Nature Days and other community events. We are very lucky and grateful to have such brilliant, enthusiastic supporters, we couldn't manage without you. We are always keen to recruit more volunteers to support our educational work, so if you enjoy working with children and would love to share your knowledge of animals and nature with the next generation, we'd love to hear from you. No experience is required and you can do as much or as little as you like.

We are very proud to have delivered a total of 54 Wildlife Warrior sessions in the period 1st April 2025 - 31st March 2026 in schools and local community groups. Our provision is growing year on year as new groups are keen for us to deliver our wildlife sessions for the benefit of their youngsters.



It's wonderful to see the children's excitement when taking part in our practical wildlife activities. They learn new skills, socialise with other children and get hands on with tasks which bring them enjoyment and a love of nature.

Emma Horton, Project Officer

Wittering Area Community Conservation Project

The F Glenister Woodger Trust funded Wittering Area Community Conservation project has been running for four years and there are four key areas of activity:

1. Education
2. Community engagement
3. Volunteer engagement and activity
4. Parish Council support

EDUCATION

Emma Horton, our Education Officer, covers this area of work on pages 9 to 12.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Presentations

1. Manhood Trefoil Guild, May 2025
2. Surface Water Improvement & Solutions Group, June 2025
3. Southbourne Environment Group, October 2025

Corporate involvement and engagement

1. October 2025, **21 people** came from SiteDefender to help Webbs Estate planting trees.
2. October 2025, **4 people** came from Target to help at Triangle pond with vegetation cutting and woodchip spreading.
3. January 2025, **5 people** from Western Sussex Rivers Trust came to help plant trees to create a hedge in West Wittering.





VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT AND ACTIVITY



65 volunteer sessions, totalling **1376** hours, were held with between **2** and **23** volunteers attending across the parishes of West Wittering, East Wittering and Bracklesham, Birdham, West Itchenor and Earnley to carry out habitat improvement, flood risk reduction, invasive species removal, wildflower strip creation, litter picking, wildlife surveying, tree planting, education and engagement.

The sites worked on were: Kingfisher pond, Triangle pond, Birdham Village Pond in Birdham; Haydons Pond in Earnley; Marine Drive, West Wittering Tree Nursery, West Wittering Village Green, Bus stop area, Cakeham Manor Estates, Webbs Estate and Snow Hill in West Wittering; and Hilton Park Pond in East Wittering.

The seasons dictate the activities we carry out so in the autumn and winter we are cutting back vegetation, trimming trees and planting trees. The spring sees us cutting out turf for wildflower seeding and carrying out floral surveys across our sites. In the summer we focus on moth trapping at locations across the Manhood Peninsula. This data adds to the national and regional information about these important nocturnal pollinating insects, many seldom seen.



PROVIDING LOCAL PARISH SUPPORT

The main drainage ditches and channels were reviewed in January 2026 and a report given to West Wittering Parish Council with recommendations for ongoing actions and maintenance to reduce flood risk in the parish.





Biodiversity and habitat management advice

We continue to offer advice to parish councils on biodiversity, habitat management and flood risk reduction. This includes:



- A management plan was completed for Snowhill Triangle and was accepted by the Parish Council. The new management plan put biodiversity improvement at the heart of the new regime to try and give this site more value for wildlife. The management of the site using contractors is now following this work program.
- Cakeham Road cycle path hedge was completed over the winter months with trees purchased via a Chichester District Council 'Trees Outside of Woodlands' grant. A total of 4386 trees creating 792 metres of new native hedgerow was achieved. The trees were then well mulched with woodchip which has served them well over the long hot summer. It took 8 volunteer work parties to achieve this and we had between 4 and 11 volunteers help us.





- The West Wittering Tree Nursery grows locally sourced trees from seed, with the aim of putting back the two-year-old trees into new local hedges. We also over summered some trees left over from last year and dug them out for planting in West Wittering field hedgerows.



Huge thanks to the **The F Glenister Woodger Trust** for all the funding that has helped us to deliver so many activities for local people, to make a difference locally to biodiversity and to continue to educate and engage children about the natural world around them.

Jane Reeve, Project Officer

Selsey Heritage Trail



It was a quiet year for the trail, with no plaques refurbished or new ones added. However, plans were well advanced for the addition of a plaque to commemorate Vera Buxton-Knight (pictured centrally) for her efforts in helping to lead Selsey's civil defence, evacuee care and fundraising, during World War II.

Huge thanks to Nicky Jones for her extensive research of Vera Buxton-Knight's life and for championing her inclusion in the trail. She is the first woman to be recognised with a blue plaque in the trail. Hopefully there will be more to come.

The plaque will be sited at 'Redhatch' in Vincent Road, which was Vera's former home, and an unveiling ceremony is planned for later in April 2026.

If anyone has any ideas about future plaques, do get in touch.

Joe Savill, Selsey Heritage Trail Coordinator

Vitacress Wildlife Survey Project



Volunteers conduct surveys of birds, butterflies and pollinators between May and September at the Vitacress Runcton site to help monitor the implementation of their Biodiversity Management Plan.

This year we attempted to count all the different pollinators we saw rather than focusing on a selection of flower patches within each different habitat. Thus, inevitably, we recorded a great number of bumblebees, hoverflies etc. This enabled us to record which flower species were particularly attractive. Notable examples being the abundance of beetles and hoverflies attracted to Hogweed and wasps attracted to Ivy.

Bioacoustics provided by Carbon Rewild are also being used to monitor the birds and bats using these sites, and our bird surveys are proving useful confirmation for their findings

The most recorded bird was the Woodpigeon (same as last year). Linnet, Whitethroat, Reed Warbler and Blackcap were some of the less common birds recorded of the 23 bird species recorded. We used the Merlin App more extensively this year which proved very helpful.



The most recorded butterflies were the Small White and Gatekeeper. Green Veined White was a highlight from the 12 butterfly species seen. A moth survey was also conducted thanks to Jane Reeve and her expert volunteer team. The excellent photos taken by our volunteers made it very interesting to identify these different pollinators.

The survey results were analysed by Leah Mathias-Collins, the Group Environment Manager at Vitacress, and entered into iRecord. In November she presented the encouraging survey data and reiterated Vitacress' commitment to increasing biodiversity.

I would like to thank our volunteers for their commitment to this long-term project. And my thanks also go to Leah, Simon Chant and the reception staff at Runcton for all their support and hospitality. We always feel very welcome. We are also very grateful for the donations they continue to provide in recognition of our work.

Joe Savill, Project Coordinator

Beryl James Selsey Tree Nursery

In May 2025 we created several more beds by cutting sections out of the weed suppressant which now covers all the site. These were filled with trees left over from the winter tree planting season and other donated trees. Those we'd collected and sown in autumn 2023 were still being grown on in my garden, ready for transferring to the nursery.



Before the summer these were planted in the new beds along with trees to create a hedge at Seal Primary School, Selsey. Hence, over the summer we were caring for hundreds of trees. Fortunately, considering the very dry weather, they coped well, thanks in no small part to timely watering by a few of our dedicated team.

More young trees grown from seed collected in 2024 were added to the site in September 2025 and the annual seed collection was carried out.

On 21st October 2025 many of the trees were lifted for planting out. Some were taken to create a new hedgerow, helping to restore the network across the peninsula, as part of the 'Hedging Our Future Project'. Others were planted around the wildlife area at Seal Primary School, Selsey, to provide a new hedgerow habitat.

It is great to have a holding space for trees and very satisfying to see the being used in such superb projects.

Before the end of 2025 the empty beds were tidied and topped up with more compost, ready for 2026. About 500 smaller trees were left in the nursery for growing on. These are all grown from locally collected seed, sown in 2023 or 2024.



Thankfully, many of the tree seeds that we collected in autumn 2025 germinated, with the help of the fridge for some species. And we now have a variety of seedlings growing including Crab Apple, Blackthorn, Oak, Sweet Chestnut, Hazel and Field Maple. All these are still too small to plant at the nursery, including

some Alder, Birch and Wild Rose from 2024. Until they are ready, they are being cared for in various gardens and at The Hidden Garden in Selsey. So, by the autumn all the beds will be full again, including more newly created ones.

The nursery is thus developing as planned with more trees being successfully grown from locally collected seed. This is thanks to a dedicated team of committed volunteers, many of whom are involved with other projects as well and huge thanks to Jane and her volunteers for helping with the larger tasks.

If you would like to get involved at the nursery or you'd be happy to foster some baby trees for us next year or grow some from seed yourself, please get in touch.

Joe Savill, Project Coordinator

Land Settlement Association Project



BBC Sussex reported that the Weald and Downland Living Museum has started fund raising to rebuild the LSA house. It was also recorded on their Facebook and received 37 comments, some from new contacts related to former LSA tenants.

The Weald and Downland Living Museum has updated it website to include the LSA Project - Our LSA Building: A Part of Britain's Rural Revolution. Part of the overall fundraising strategy will involve 'Buy A Memory' whereby people will be able to donate on behalf of former LSA tenant or staff member and have their name displayed in the house. My personal challenge is to get a memory from each of the 20 LSAs.

Bill Martin, Project Coordinator

Selsey Tramway Project

After two years the exhibition on the Selsey Tramway at the Novium has now finished. However, our film is still available on YouTube - The Selsey Tramway.

MWHG volunteers continue to clear bramble and undergrowth from the platform of Chalder Station. Meanwhile negotiations continue with the Church Commissioners to secure their permission to progress the restoration of the site.



Bill Martin, Project Coordinator

More Heritage News

We now have three podcasts in the Secret Sussex Series on BBC Sounds - Surprising Selsey, The Hapless Sidlesham Snail, and The Sidlesham Experiment.

The 'Discover Heritage' section of the MWHG website has now been updated to include 'significant' buildings and other assets in each of the Parishes on the Manhood Peninsula.

Sidlesham WI closed in March 2025 after 98 years, 2 short of its 100. The balance of their funds was donated to the Weald and Downland Living Museum in recognition of all its members who were also on the Land Settlement. I have access to their documentation which dates back to 1928 and will form the basis of a history of the WI.

Bill Martin

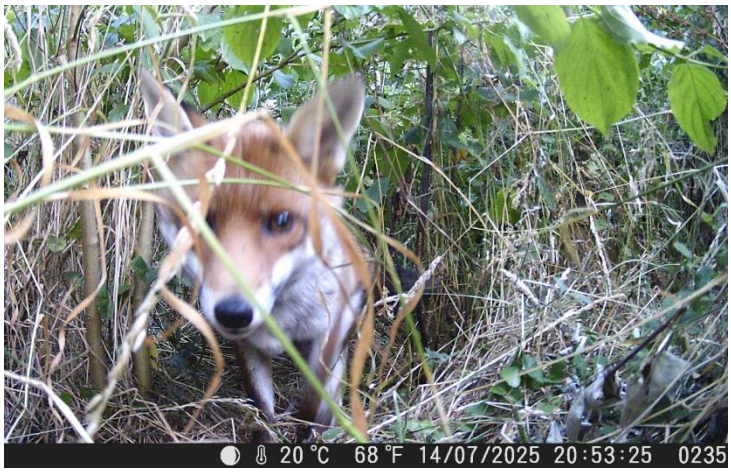
Find Wildlife From Home Survey

Surveying is a key part of many of our projects, helping us to monitor the effects of climate change and human activity. The Find Wildlife From Home survey allows people to contribute valuable data for the Manhood Peninsula from their garden or local green space, with each record also added to the Biological Records Centre database.

Between April 2025 and March 2026, records of 473 individual flora and fauna were submitted, along with 46 photographs. The most frequently recorded species in the following categories were:

Birds		**Butterflies**	
Starling	181	Red Admiral	11
Curlew	60	Peacock	6
Wood Pigeon	48	Common Blue	4
Dunnock	37	Large White	4
Mammals		**Moths**	
Red Fox	10	Jersey Tiger	2
Bats	1	Beautiful Plume	1
Other Insects			
7-spot Ladybird	3	Common Wasp	7
Rose Beetle	1	Buff-tailed Bumblebee	3

Nikki Timney, Survey Coordinator



Fox by David Wyatt, 2025



Jersey Tiger by Felicity McStea, 2025

Selsey Photo Archive



The main events this year have been those to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE and VJ Day.

We provided photographs for Selsey Town Council's successful Civil Ceremony marking the 80th anniversary of VE Day on 8 May, focusing on Selsey's Home Front. It was a moving occasion.

Then on the 15th-17th August we held our own 'Selsey at War' exhibition in the Selsey Pavilion, organised in association with The Selsey Pavilion Trust. It proved to be an excellent venue and was well attended, with very useful information contributed by visitors. The exhibition was then requested by East Beach Evangelical Church and used in their Remembrance Day Service in November. Following this The Academy Selsey welcomed it for use by their students. It was great to have the life of the exhibition extended in these ways as they take a considerable amount of time and effort to create. Something we will continue to explore.

As work on the Past/Present photo book, which we are producing in partnership with The Selsey Pavilion Trust, has been put on hold, our focus has now turned to a Selsey High Street Project. The purpose of this is to record the memories of those who have worked in and/or owned businesses in the High Street, as well as those who have regularly used them. This we feel will focus our Oral History work and help to preserve the heritage of the High Street through the stories people contribute. The aim is to



make these accessible via the website, QR codes along the street, displays/exhibitions and performance events.

The general activities have continued including scanning the new collections that have been donated or loaned to us, continuing to catalogue these, replying to requests for information or photos, uploading photos to the website and recording more memories of local residents.

We are particularly working on the collections that Ruth Mariner left in our care. The Molly Tupper collection is a major one which has a considerable number of fascinating photos – many of which we have not seen before. Molly, who was keenly interested in local history, added notes about many of the photos based on her first-hand knowledge and research, which greatly adds to the value of the collection.

Much of Molly's collection will be passed on to the Record Office in Chichester once our work is completed but we still have a growing Selsey Archive which requires sorting and a better place to store it. We continue to investigate possibilities but do get in touch if you have any ideas.

We continue to receive requests for photos and help with research via the website. We always do our best to help where we can as it is always rewarding to see people using our work and taking an interest in Selsey's heritage. The Selsey Shantymen used several of our photos to accompany their concert at Chichester Festival Theatre.

Finally, I would like to thank all those within the Project Team for their continued dedication and commitment to the Selsey Photo Archive Project. We fortunately welcomed two new volunteers this year, both who have brought cataloguing skills and much more. Do get in touch if you would like to join our friendly team.

Joe Savill, Project Coordinator



Local Planning Issues

MWHG reviews all planning applications, other than those for changes to residential property, to Central Government's objectives “that development should lead to an environmental gain”. It addresses issues such as flood risk and the basic inappropriateness and incompatibility of development particularly where biodiversity, wildlife and heritage are a challenge.

Planning issues over the last report period within the Manhood Peninsula have been directly influenced by the multiple changes central government continues to make to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This document has, as its primary purpose, the pursuit of Government’s goal to build 1.5 million new houses and translates for much of the environmental and biodiversity community as a developers charter.

On the Peninsula there are a number of new planning proposals, mainly housing sites, in various stages of development or in various stages of the planning process. Common to all will be the further stress they will place on an already fragile environment with little or no chance of mitigating their impacts. The balance between development and the natural environment is now shifting to a point of being irretrievable for the latter to recover.

Legislation demands that development should lead to environmental gain- there is little evidence of any good outcomes. What is invariably being left is the requirement that the environment has had to adapt, but on the way is the loss of scarce habitats and the precious flora and fauna they contain.

A concept in town and country planning long held, but now often missing from much decision making, is an area’s ‘carrying capacity’ that is its capability to absorb development and change without detriment to the quality and character of what is already there. It is becoming very apparent that the Peninsula is being forced to exceed its carrying capacity.

A new local plan is currently being developed by Chichester District Council on the instruction of Central Government. It is essential that the acceptance of no new housing on the Peninsula agreed in the current plan is carried forward to any new plan. There are, however, no assurances being given that the criteria that backed ‘no new housing’ will be upheld in future as Government pressures for housing continue to increase.

Issues such as highway access are dire not only on the two primary access routes, the A286 and B2145, but on linking roads that increasingly are being used as ‘cut through rat runs’ to avoid the congestion on the A27.

The conflict between vehicles, increasing numbers of which are often large articulated lorries, and other road users produce dangerous conditions that inhibit use, often defeating any objectives of sustainable transport.

Communities and the people who live by the roads are often divided by heavy constant transport flows and suffer high levels of pollution. The impact of busy roads that were once quiet areas have on wildlife, their connecting networks, noise and general disturbance are increasing concerns. A decreasing number of truly 'tranquil' areas now exist on the Peninsula.

Added to all this is the lack of any resolution to the junctions from the Peninsula to the A27.

Water has now gained the prominence it deserves - too much in the wrong place and at the wrong time on one hand compared to insufficient at other times and places. The threat of sea level rise has resulted in the refusal of one coastal housing development - a significant decision for the Peninsula - but this decision is being legally challenged by the developers.

Ensuring there is 'space for water' and its conservation and protection is an increasing concern for MWHG's work. Its 'groundbreaking' initiative 'Fixing and Linking Our Wetlands' (FLOW) set the scene as to how crucial the Peninsula's ditch, pond, wetland and rife system was to drainage, water conservation and the flora and fauna that inhabit these areas and their margins. This work now needs to be fully incorporated into how the future for water is planned.

Farmers on the Peninsula are increasingly building reservoirs as the threat of water shortage for irrigation and drinking water for stock increases. Planning for new reservoirs needs to feature prominently in the land use planning process as their requirement for land is substantial. Reservoirs often are attractive to wildlife and, where practical, safe use should be built into designs to enable entry and exit from the water surface for wildlife.

Combating waste water disposal has continued to be increasingly problematic. The capacity and capability of waste water treatment works (WWTW) at Sidlesham and Appledram to cope with existing demand without any new development pressures is already evident. A recent new housing development has failed to be able to be connected to the main system and now needs a system, once common and most unsatisfactory on the Peninsula, of a form of cesspit drainage to be introduced.

The majority of the sewage and drainage system was designed for 'dry flows', i.e. without moderate rainfall, and becomes quickly overwhelmed with the often high concentrated levels of rain we now experience as climate change affects the severity and frequency of extreme weather. However, even in moderate rainfall and dry

weather there are partially untreated outflows from the Peninsula's waste water treatment works (WWTW).

The outflows from WWTW entering highly sensitive water such as Pagham Harbour and Fishbourne Creek in Chichester Harbour create increasing detriment to those habitats creating algal blooms, for instance, that destroy other inhabitants of the water areas. Added to sewage are the run offs of phosphates from agricultural land entering ditches and our rifes from fertiliser use.

We are to a greater extent fortunate with our potable (drinking) water supply by Portsmouth Water and their forward planning creating for future supply at Havant Thicket Reservoir. However, future water stress will become an issue for all in our climate changed future - it's essential that space is made for water and its conservation as an essential component of land use planning on our Peninsula.

Achieving net zero by, for example, field based arrays of solar photovoltaic panels has become prominent on the Peninsula. Such arrays on marginally productive farm land with equally marginal biodiversity has merit, but taking productive farmland, part of often complex environmental and biodiverse networks, is negative. The development of arrays offers land owners often substantially better financial returns than farming it.

Sites in South Mundham are raising issues of appropriateness on the already crowded Peninsula. One is to be the subject of an appeal for the second time, and the outcome will have significant implications as to other sites coming forward. MWHG has been involved in this case championing environment and biodiversity concerns.

The capacity of the national grid to accept new electricity generation is also becoming a problem.

Heritage is around us on the Peninsula, it offers distinctive landscape with long views of the cathedral in one direction and the eastern Solent and IoW in the other.

Blended into this are the shores of Chichester and Pagham Harbours and the Bill itself. MWHG seeks to preserve and gain recognition for heritage in all its planning based work and particular emphasis has been placed on the unique role the formation of the Land Settlement Association (LSA) has played in social history and in the formation of settlements on the Peninsula.

Specific work has been carried out on preserving the Selsey Tram Way, its stations and route, and integrating this into the tourism and overall sense of place that the Manhood Peninsula is.

Paul Bedford, Management Team

Funding and Finance

We have had another successful year of funding and are extremely grateful to all the donors and funders who enable us to carry out our work.

As a small charity we keep our overheads to the bare minimum. Our main costs are our part-time contract Project Leaders Jane Reeve and Emma Horton who organise and run our volunteer sessions, corporate days, family engagement days and after school clubs. Without them we wouldn't be able to run our programmes. We are also very grateful to Nikki Timney who helps with our IT and website. Everything else is run entirely by unpaid volunteers. Our small office and storage in the Selsey Town Hall are kindly provided free of charge by Selsey Town Council.

We would like to extend our gratitude and thanks to the following organisations and individuals who provided funding during the 2025-26 financial year:

- **The F Glenister Woodger Trust** - core funding for volunteer conservation activities, after school clubs and summer holiday events for children and families.
- **Nature's Way** - funding for our activities.
- **Co-op** - funding for Family Engagement Days.
- **Earnley Parish Council** – donation to support our work in Earnley Parish.
- **CPRE** – funding for the Hedgerow Heros project.
- **Portsmouth Water** - funding for Pond Power project.
- **Ferry Farm** - funding towards the Pollinator Highway Project.
- **Vitacress** - donation to Selsey Tree Nursery.
- **Gina Scott** – personal donation to fund our work.
- **John Hiscock** – donations in memory of John Hiscock. We are very grateful to John's friends and family for nominating us as their charity.

Accounts

A full set of accounts are available as a separate document. We are very grateful to Wendy Peters at Workspace Accounting Ltd for acting as the Independent Examiner of the accounts.

Jane Scotland, Treasurer

Learn More and Get Involved

Volunteer

www.mwhg.org.uk/volunteer

As a volunteer, you will receive details of upcoming activities you can get involved with. There is no time commitment required, so you can choose how much you do.

Corporate Volunteer Days

www.mwhg.org.uk/corporate-volunteering-days

Does your company offer opportunities for employees to volunteer? We can organise specific volunteering days for your organisation.

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