

Seaford Head Dewpond Renovation

Phase One Finishes – Phase Two Begins

The Seaford Natural History Society project to initiate the restoration and renovation of the long-neglected Dewpond on Seaford Head, has been going on throughout 2022, with the aims of –

- Removing and controlling the non-native invasive weeds.
- Increase the biodiversity of the Dewpond and its surrounds for the benefit of wildlife.
- Establish a local group of volunteers to continue the work, once the funded stage ends.
- 30 local people came forward to form the 'Friends'. They were divided into groups, which accumulated over 500 hours of project work between them. This fantastic effort has paid great dividends, with perhaps half of the pond area now with clear surface water, whereas there was virtually none originally. Much of the invasive weed has been removed, and burnt on site, as great care is needed to avoid it being spread to any other susceptible locations.

Although slowing down over the winter, the 'Friends' will still be on site from time to time, ensuring that the invasive weed doesn't get chance to grow back before the renovation continues in earnest next spring.

As well as the invasive weed, some of the existing rushes and Iris have also been reduced, a surrounding path is being created, and two hibernacula dug, for overwintering amphibians and reptiles. Local wildlife has been showing its appreciation of the changes, with newts, dragonfly, insects and birds enjoying the only fresh water on Seaford Head. The wildlife has been surveyed during the year, and some 200 species have now been recorded, including the nymph of a rare Lesser Emperor dragonfly, the first record of this species breeding in UK – a very exciting coup; we are very grateful to SNHS member and insect specialist Mike Kerry for spotting this.

By November, the aims of the original project had been achieved, and we hope that visitors to the area will appreciate what an improvement has been made to the pond, thanks to the hard work of a dedicated team of volunteers.

On a wet and windy afternoon in November, the Mayor of Seaford, Councillor Olivia Honeyman, met with a group of the Friends and Seaford Natural History Society members, to celebrate what has been achieved and to look forward to continuing the restoration work under the auspices of the Friends. Paul Baker received a well-deserved round of applause for his dogged determination for seeing the project through. As the weather improved (slightly), we managed a short inspection of the pond, taking care to clean any of the invasive weeds off our shoes before leaving!

For more information about the Friends of the Dewpond or Seaford Natural History Society, please contact Paul Baker (prbaker2ep@btinternet.com).

Jim Howell