

# Little Belhus Country Park Newsletter

– March 2014



Copyrights © Water vole: Peter G. Trimming, Reedbed: Hugh Venables, Kingfisher : Andreas Trepte, Wildflowers: Richard Croft

## Welcome

Welcome to the fourth Little Belhus Country Park newsletter.

My name is Dhruti Bell, please let me introduce myself as the new ranger for Little Belhus Country Park. My role is to work with the community to build Little Belhus Country Park into a publicly accessible area for people to enjoy in a place where wildlife can thrive.

Work began on the restoration of the former Belhus Landfill Site, Arisdale Avenue a little over three and a half years ago. Though the land is privately owned, this exciting project will be phased over the next 8 years to transform the site into an open space for the community.

**RURAL ARISINGS**, with its professional team of engineers and ecologists, is working in partnership with **GOING GREEN RESTORATION**, by creating ‘new nature’, achieved by engineering and science. There will be ponds, reed beds, dedicated walking & cycling trails together with woodlands and wildflower meadows.

## Progress

The northern half of the field is shaping up well. We have created our **water vole** ditches which are going to be sited in the midst of a **reedbed** area. We are now focussing on how we can maximise this area for wildlife by varying ditch profiles and creating islands and ponds.

**Wildflower** meadows will be established in this Northern section and we are looking to source seeds either via green hay from another local wildlife site, or by sowing seeds.

We have planted two **hedgerows**, with the help of the local cub, scout probation groups, families and other interested parties, with some fun and rewarding days being had by everyone.

Work has started on the East Field. Part of this area will include the car park and part will be a local wildlife site which we will let develop naturally to encourage the unusual **insect** life found in this part of the country (around the Thames). In fact the insect life in this part of the country is so unusual it even has its own terminology the ‘Thames Terrace Invertebrate Assemblage’ – although it is a mouthful to say!

We are now planning the earthworks on the South Field. Initially it will just be enabling work such as building perimeter hibernacula (a place where **reptiles** can

hibernate, but which also doubles up as a secure site boundary) and forming an access road so that the Going Green Restoration team can access areas to work existing trees before the **bird breeding season** commences in March. It is an offence to disturb them when they have started nesting. We have also revised the park design to include the new playing fields for the Ockendon Academy, which have now been granted planning permission.

## Wildlife sightings

Kingfisher, a 'deceit' of Lapwing, Green Woodpecker, Kestrel. Our very first Brimstone and Peacock butterflies of the year were seen towards the end of February.

## Can you help?

We need volunteers to help with the development of the park. Whether your interests lie in wildlife, the outdoors, education, DIY or you just want to do something different and learn new skills or think you can offer any of your existing skills please contact us... on 07725246192 or email: [dhrutibell@ruralarisings.co.uk](mailto:dhrutibell@ruralarisings.co.uk). There will be no end of tasks to get involved in...

At present we need help with planting more trees, cleaning up the site, and assisting with monitoring the wildlife.

We do hope to hear from you! ☺

## Site Access

Hooray! Part of the site is going to be accessible towards the end of the year! There may not be a lot to look at habitat-wise, remember we are starting from scratch – but we want you to come and see how the park develops over time.

At present the use of heavy machinery means that members of the public are prohibited to enter the site. We also advise that parents explain the dangers of construction sites to their children. If you would like to have a look around in the meantime, please contact me to arrange a visit.

## Contact us

**For Rural Arisings Site Office:**

Dhruti Bell – Park Ranger

[dhrutibell@ruralarisings.co.uk](mailto:dhrutibell@ruralarisings.co.uk)

Tel 01708 857245/07725246192

**For Going Green Restoration:**

Trevor Jones – Contracts Manager

[ggrlittlebelhus@gmail.com](mailto:ggrlittlebelhus@gmail.com)

Tel 01708 858357

**Out of Hours Emergency:**

07801861899

**For further reference please visit:** [www.ruralarisings.co.uk](http://www.ruralarisings.co.uk)

where you can also find a link to the **Little Belhus blog**, keeping you up to date with the latest progress and wildlife sightings.

Environment first: Our aim is to deliver this Newsletter to you electronically.

To register for your copy, please email your details to [info@ruralarisings.co.uk](mailto:info@ruralarisings.co.uk)

