

# Valley Conservation Society



*doing nothing is not an option*

Members' newsletter No 157 We are a non-political organisation

April 2018

## Join Us For Our Spring Walk

*Complimentary copy  
for your interest*

You are invited to join us for a Spring Walk. Meet at the Conservation Cabin in Cave Hill at 10am on **Saturday, April 28**, for a guided tour of the Society's land and the Hayle Park Nature Reserve. The guides will explain the work carried out by the Society during the past year. The walk finishes at The Manor in Hayle Place where tea and cakes will be served. All welcome – bring your friends. (Dogs should be kept on the lead while in The Manor gGrounds.)

## Election

You will undoubtedly be aware that an election is under way for 18 seats on Maidstone council – including our own South Ward.

It is probably a measure of our success that several of the candidates have sought to align themselves with the Society. However, we draw your attention to the masthead at the top of this page – we are a non-political body and are not supporting any party.

The Conservative candidate has issued a leaflet suggesting we back his campaign for the Leeds/Langley Relief Road. That was done without the Society's knowledge or permission and we have asked him to desist. The Society is a conservation body and has no position on the Leeds/Langley Relief Road.

## Membership subscriptions

Membership fees were due at the start of the year. We are grateful that 433 members have already renewed their membership, but there are still around 50 members who haven't yet done so. If you are one of them, you can email our new membership secretary, Tony Day, on [vcmembership@btinternet.com](mailto:vcmembership@btinternet.com) or phone him on 01622 676810. There is an application form at the end of this newsletter. The annual subscription remains at just £2 a year – a bargain!

# Annual General Meeting

The Society's annual general meeting was held in February, with more than 40 members in attendance.

Our funding secretary reported that around £2,500 had been raised during the year in cash or donations in kind from various sponsors.

The secretary reported that it had been a relatively quiet year for planning applications in our area, although two outstanding applications had yet to be determined: one for 108 homes to be built in Tovil Quarry – the old SBS site off Straw Mill Hill, and one for 18 flats on the adjacent JB Garage Doors site. An application previously given planning permission, for 62 homes off Postley Road behind Richmond Way, had yet to be built.

The treasurer presented his audited accounts to the meeting and reported that income had exceeded expenditure across the year by £162, but the Society was still in a healthy financial position.

Social media was gradually becoming more important to the Society, with some of our posts on Facebook attracted upwards of 800 hits. If you haven't yet tried it, catch us on [www.facebook.com/Valley-Conservation-Society-220452617972888/](http://www.facebook.com/Valley-Conservation-Society-220452617972888/)

The chairman, Bryn, Cornwell, gave a detailed account of the work carried out on the Society's land over the past year, with the single biggest project being the restoration of the ragstone wall in Crisbrook Meadow.

Paul Wilby, chairman of trustees of the Hayle Park Nature Reserve, gave a report on the progress at the reserve and thanked the VCS work party for their hard work on the park.

The meeting concluded with the election of the executive committee for 2018. All the members from the 2017 committee were willing to stand again and were duly re-appointed by a unanimous vote of the members present. They are:

**Chairman:** [Bryn Cornwell](#)  
**Secretary:** [Alan Smith](#)

**Vice Chairman:** [Jane Holman](#)  
**Treasurer:** [Terry Moore](#)

## **Executive committee (eight vacancies)**

[Tony Day](#)  
[Jill Lee](#)  
[Bryan Stovell](#)

[Peter Hobden](#)  
[Brian Shingleton](#)  
[Dennis Usmar.](#)

[Colin Holman](#)  
[John Smith](#)

We remind you that any member can attend a meeting of the executive committee if they wish. The meetings are at 7.30pm on the first Wednesday of every month, but the venue does vary, so ring the chairman, Bryn, on 01622 746514 in advance for details.

# Tesco Bags of Help grant

We are delighted to announce that VCS has been selected to take part in the Tesco Bags of Help grant scheme.

The money collected by Tesco from its sales of 5p plastic carrier bags is re-distributed to local good causes via a customer ballot.

The store has three transparent ballot boxes, featuring three good causes, and customers are invited to vote for their favourite using a blue token issued at the check-out when they pay for their shopping.

Voting is over a period of two months, and at the end of that period, the good causes are ranked into a first, second and third place according to the number of tokens cast for each across the eight participating stores.

The “winner” will receive £4,000, second place £2,000 and third place £1,000.

This means just by taking part we are assured of £1,000 which is great, but of course it would be four times as good if we could win the £4,000!

**We ask all members to consider shopping at Tesco during the period Tuesday, 1st May, to Saturday, 30th June.**

You are entitled to receive a token each time you shop – even if you have only purchased one item. It is NOT necessary to purchase a carrier bag.

Do please always ask for your token, as sometimes the busy shop assistants forget to issue them.

The participating stores are:

The Tovil and Grove Green supermarkets.

The Tesco Express stores in Bearsted; London Road, Maidstone; Loose Road, Maidstone; Oakwood Park; Week Street, Maidstone, and Tonbridge Road, Maidstone.

**Please use your token to vote us into first place!**

# Work Party Report

The lads of the Tuesday work party had to deal with a unusual challenge in March.

A very large branch from a tree in Treacle Wood had become detached from the trunk in high winds only to be caught and held up in the other branches leaving it perilously overhanging the road.



There was a danger that another strong wind could dislodge it and send it crashing down onto pedestrians or motorists passing underneath.

Because it was so high up, it was not an easy task to dislodge, but eventually , while some volunteers sealed off the road at each end, others were able to encourage the branch to fall safely to the ground.



Job done!



Of course that was not the only task of the work party:



Stone chippings have been laid to divert the wheelchair accessible path to one of the benches by Lower Crisbrook Pond away from tree roots.



The banks have been tidied up around the ponds, where Dennis Usmar swears he has seen a crocodile!

(below)

The work party meets every Tuesday at the Conservation Cabin in Cave Hill at 10am.

More volunteers are always welcome.





# Fly-tipping

The area has been plagued by fly-tipping recently. Three separate loads of garden material appeared overnight along the length of the valley, and an abandoned car was left in Cave Hill. All were eventually removed by the local authority. More recently not far away in Forge Lane, East Farleigh, so much rubbish was tipped that the road was closed to traffic.



Cripple Street



Cave Hill

What is the mentality of these people when the Tovil Tip is less than half a mile away, where they can dispose of their rubbish in safety for free?

# Hayle Park Nature Reserve

Valley Conservation has three representatives on the nine-strong board of the trust.

The trust will soon be building a tractor shed in the reserve, near the entrance from Fieldfare Drive. The building will not only give the trust a secure area to store its growing collection of tools, but the provision of a kitchen and toilet will surely bring some relief to the work party volunteers, who currently have to lunch outdoors - no matter what the weather!



Le déjeuner en plein air

The trust has recently erected a new boundary fence along its southern border and now intends to repair another section of the ragstone wall facing Hayle Mill Road.

Work will be carried out over four weeks from Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> August, and will require Hayle Mill Road to be closed to through traffic during that period. The date has been scheduled to coincide with the school holidays, when the traffic is less.

## Dates for your diary

The annual meeting for Loose Parish is on Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> April, starting at 7pm. It will be in the Loose Parish Pavilion, King George V playing field, Walnut Tree Lane, Loose, ME15 9RQ.

Anyone living in - or with an interest in - Loose is welcome to attend.

The annual Valley Conservation barbecue in the grounds of The Manor at Haye Place will be on Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> July. Ticket details will be in our next newsletter.

## New printer

Overleaf you will find a membership application form to return to our new membership secretary if you haven't yet renewed. Or pass it to a friend or neighbour if you have.

We hope you have enjoyed this newsletter, which for the first time we have had professionally printed.

# VALLEY CONSERVATION SOCIETY

"DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION"

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2018

I/We should like to (re)join the Society: *(Please include your title and first name)*

Names: .....

.....

Address: .....

.....

.....Postcode.....

Phone: ..... E-mail: .....

Mobile: .....

I would prefer to receive newsletters by e-mail: Yes/No

Signature(s) .....

.....

Membership is £2 per person per year (or 50p for young people aged 14 to 18). Send your application form and your cheque made payable to Valley Conservation Society to:

**Tony Day, Membership Secretary, 57 Mayfair Avenue,  
MAIDSTONE, ME15 6BY**

I enclose a cheque/cash for £..... (Donations welcome)

*If you are willing to play an active role in the Society, tick the box you are interested in:*

Leaflet delivery  work parties  fund-raising

---

**Office use only:**

Issued:

Donation: £

Membership Nos