



Fixing and Linking Our Wetlands on the Manhood Peninsula.

We are privileged to be surrounded by nature here on the Manhood Peninsula. In every direction you will find nature reserves, salt marshes, semi-ancient woodlands, and in the distance the South Downs rise. However, wildlife habitats found in-between these areas have degraded with the demand for highly productive arable fields and urban sprawl. Sadly, we have lost a significant number of trees, hedgerows and well-connected rifes and ditches which has worsened local flooding.

The Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group's Fixing and Linking Our Wetlands (FLOW) project has been surveying the condition of the Peninsula's ditches. Wherever we find ditches in poor condition i.e. full of litter, overgrown with brambles, blocked culverts, we carry out physical improvement works to reconnect the network of ditches that need to be linked together to carry flood water away.



Improved pond in Hunston

Simultaneously we create habitats for wildlife such as bats, birds, pollinators and water voles. Water voles used to be a common wetland species, but their population is estimated to have dropped by a staggering 90% in the last 60 years. By linking up ditches and waterways we help them move freely and safely within their habitat.

We also work closely with farmers and landowners, offering advice on how they can enrich their land for wildlife.

Since 2015, FLOW staff and volunteers have surveyed 1,000+ ditches and 350+ hedgerows; advised 26 landowners; and surveyed and improved 47 ponds/wetland sites. We have improved many visible sites such as The Wad in West Wittering,

Willow Glen on the B2145 in Sidlesham, West Itchenor pond, Hunston pond, Birdham ponds and more. Other MWHG volunteers self-manage East Beach Pond and Manor Green Park, two familiar sites in Selsey.

Taking Willow Glen as an example, we carried out physical improvement works with our team of volunteers who helped us transform the site by cutting back and removing overgrown willow, digging it out to allow flood water to collect here, planting a mixed fruiting hedge, wildflower seeds and installing coir rolls – a degradable growing medium for wetland plants submerged in water.

We are always looking for new volunteers to join us – we have lots to do and the more the merrier! Everyone goes at their own pace and there are no time commitments. We provide all the tools you need and plenty of great refreshments.

Sign up to receive information about our upcoming task days by emailing: hello@mwhg.org.uk

By Emily Sabin, FLOW Communications and Engagement Officer

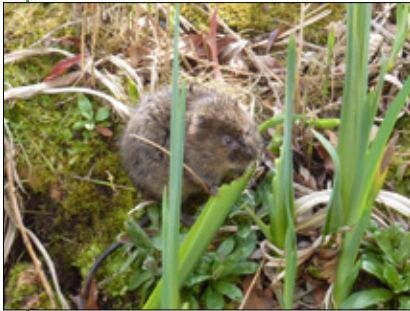
Willow Glen Before



Willow Glen After



Pond Wildlife Survey



Water Vole