

MANAGEMENT REPORT

given at the AGM by Strutt & Parker

Let me start by introducing myself, I'm Laura Prior and have been assisting in the management of the Harnham Water Meadows for much of the last year. I am just going to take a few moments to provide you with an overview of the management activity by the Harnham Water Meadows Trust over the last 12 months.

Starting with **Rose Cottage**; Damp proofing works have now been completed with a lining installed behind the walls. Whilst these works were ongoing additional structural works were done to shore-up the chimney breast which has gradually been moving away from the main body of the building. The electrics in the building have now been reconnected and John Beckett has been overseeing the daily use of a dehumidifier to dry out the plaster work.

The only major works within the **Rose Cottage garden** have been to fell the two lombardy poplars on the river bank. Both trees had reached the end of their natural life and concerns were

raised on how sound they would be in high winds.

In terms of **meadows management**, the primary focus through the past year has been in entering into an environmental scheme with Natural England. The agreement is for a 10 year term and covers the management of water meadows and grassland and also includes some obligations on the grazing across the site.

Many of you may have noticed the introduction of Jacob sheep onto the meadows. These are part of this higher level scheme of environmental stewardship and are a native rare breed which the grazier is currently running alongside his commercial flock.

In terms of winter works the Trust has concentrated on scrub clearance and particularly fence lines where encroaching scrub has been damaging fence lines across the site. The larger items, such as the pollarding of willows across the meadows, was badly affected by the cold and wet weather through the winter and

consequently will be prioritised within the schedule of works at the start of the next season.

The nettle spraying was completed in timely fashion, using a new contractor.

Hedge planting and restoration is also emphasised within the higher level scheme and the Trust is consulting with our resident expert John Vickerman on the type and mix of hedge plants used to create a sympathetic habitat for birds. Channels and draining are being continued by Hadrian Cook with his volunteers.

Finally, the Trust has also completed the restoration of a major sluice adjacent to the Town Path, with the help of grant funding from the Environment Agency and Salisbury District Council. The work has been finished to an excellent standard by Mike Whitlock and the restoration will allow more efficient irrigation through the coming winter months over a greater area of the meadows.