

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!

Valley Conservation Society

doing nothing is not an option



Members' newsletter No 162 We are a non-political organisation

January 2019

Owl Box Theft

*Complimentary copy
for your interest*

Incredible as it may seem, someone has stolen the owl nesting box that we erected a year ago in the Hayle Park Nature Reserve.

The box was sited in an old oak tree to encourage Barn Owls.

To steal the box would have required a ladder to reach it and some effort to remove it since it was large and heavy, so there was probably more than one person involved. (It took four of us to put it up.)

The box cost the reserve £90 to purchase.

If you have any clues as to the culprit, please tell the police using 101 or call our chairman Bryn Cornwell on 01622 746514.



The owl box in happier times

Annual General Meeting

It is now time to look forward to the Society's Annual General Meeting, which will be held next month at the Eling Court Day Centre, which is off Hilden Shaw on the Broadoak Avenue estate (postcode ME15 6DE).

The AGM, on **Saturday, February 16**, is your opportunity to hear reports of all the Society's activities during the past year, and your chance to elect a new committee to run the Society.

Importantly it is also the best opportunity to raise any concerns you may have or to proffer any suggestions or ideas for the future course of the Society.

The meeting starts at 10am and usually ends around 12.30pm. Coffee will be served.

In accordance with the constitution, all the existing executive committee members must step down and members will have the opportunity to re-elect them or to elect new members.

If any members are considering standing for the committee, it would probably be useful for them to attend the next committee meeting, so as to experience a flavour of what is expected.

The meeting is on Wednesday, February 6, at Flat 3, The Manor, Hayle Place, ME15 6DW, (the home of Colin and Jane Holman), starting at 7.30pm.

The AGM will include an open session for points raised from the floor, but members can also ask for items to be placed on the agenda by prior notice to the secretary Alan Smith on 01622 751926 or email a128smith@btinternet.com

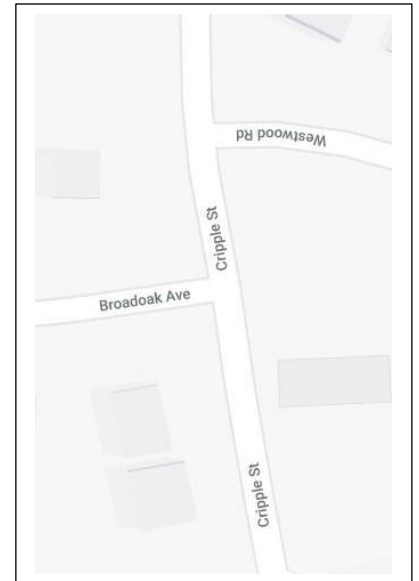
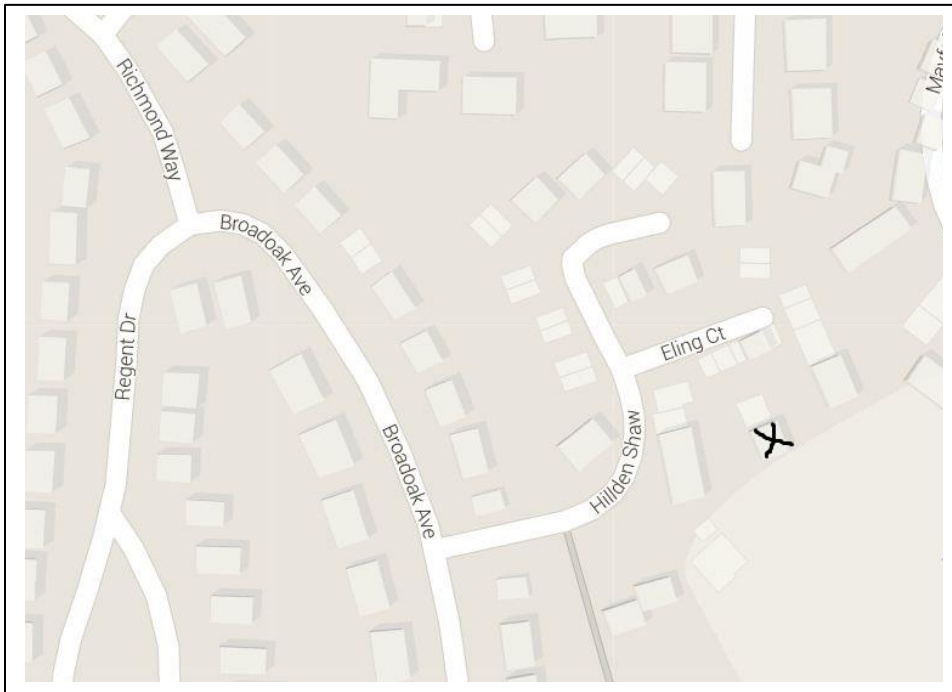
Of course, to vote you must be a paid-up member of the Society, and so it is time once again to ask you to renew your membership subscription.

A membership application is attached at the end of this newsletter.

We are retaining the membership fee at the nominal sum of £2 per person, but of course we are always happy to receive additional donations.

What is very important to us is that you sign up **every member of your family**, rather than just one per household. In our dealings with funding bodies, with the borough council and others, the more members we can honestly claim to represent, the more influence we are likely to be able to wield.

It is helpful to us if members are willing to receive their newsletters by email as it saves costs. Please be careful to give your exact email detail - and don't forget to notify us if during the course of the year you change it!



Broadoak Avenue is a turning off Cripple St.

X marks the spot for the Eling Court Day Centre and our AGM

Society's biggest expenditure to date

The Society is about undertake its single most costly project to date.

We have engaged an arboriculturalist to advise us on the condition of the trees on the land that we own in the valley.

His advice was that unfortunately a number of trees in Treacle Wood close to Hayle Road need to be felled or seriously coppiced because they are diseased or for safety reasons.

Nobody is more opposed to the felling of trees than our chairman, but now that we have received this professional advice it would be remiss of us to ignore it.

We have therefore commissioned local tree surgeon Hoods Tree Services (run by the son of Loose Amenities Association founder Roy Hood) to carry out the work.

The expected bill will be in the region of £6,000, which will make a serious hole in our finances.

Work Party

The Society saves enormous amounts of money through the voluntary efforts of the work party who put in their time for free.

It's a good crowd of usually around a dozen who turn up every Tuesday, meeting at 10am at the Conservation Cabin in Cave Hill.

Or course more willing hands are always welcome. You don't have to stay all day if you can only spare a couple of hours. Call Bryn on 01622 746514.

Put a lid on it

The work party has completed the task of installing new sand and stone storage bins in their new less obtrusive location just below Mount Ararat.

The work has enabled us to remove the old wooden store bins near the main entrance to Crisbrook Meadow from Cave Hill, which everyone admits were a bit of an eyesore.

The final task was topping the new bins off with secure metal lids.

The lids were fabricated for us by Stead and Wilkins, the company belonging to former executive committee member Gary Stead, and donated to us free of charge. Once again, Gary, thanks for your time and generosity.



But it's not all work for the work party – seen here enjoying the first round of their Christmas drink together, bought with a donation from a wellwisher.





Blue Tit rescue

Our member Tim Harris, from Weaving, sent us this picture of a blue tit nestling in his hand.

He said: "The poor fellow flew straight into my conservatory glass and lay – I thought - dead on the patio on its back with its wings out.

"I picked it up and stroked it and it came too!

"Its little claws held onto my finger for about 10 minutes. Eventually I put it back on the patio where it stayed still for another 20 minutes.

"Eventually I thought I had better bring it back inside - when it took off like a rocket!"

Saxon Way

We are pleased to announce that Maidstone council has refused planning permission for a side and rear extension at 36 Saxon Way.

The official explanation was *"The extension would be materially harmful to the spacious character of the plot, and the appearance of the streetscene and general locality, contrary to policy DM1 and DM9 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan and the Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (adopted May 2009)."*

No mention of the danger to the adjacent hedgerow, which is what the Society was worried about, but nevertheless a satisfactory conclusion.

Application number 18/505385 refers.

There's no seasonal rest for the Work Party



Featuring from top left clockwise: picture 1, Caine, Phil Smith, Dave Hill; picture 2, Michael Lamb, Gordon Luck, Peter Hobden; picture 3, Michael Lamb, Gordon Luck, Andrew Norton; picture 4, John Smith, Bryan Stovell, Bryn Cornwell, Michael Lamb, John Robertson and Kevin Shanahan.

VALLEY CONSERVATION SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2019

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

Names:

.....

Address:

.....

.....Postcode.....

Phone: E-mail:

.

Mobile:

Would you prefer to receive newsletters by e-mail? Yes / No

Signature(s)

Membership is £2 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)

General Data Protection Regulations

Please tick the box if you consent to the Valley Conservation Society retaining the details on this form

☐

Our legal basis for holding and processing the data you provide is our legitimate interest as a membership organisation and we will use it to send you newsletters and other information we consider relevant and useful. We will not disclose it to any third party

Office use only:

Issued:

Donation: £

Membership Nos

Valley Conservation Society

doing nothing is not an option

www.valleyconservation.org.uk

It would greatly assist us if you are willing to pay by standing order.

If you set up a Standing Order **online**, could you please email vcsmembership@btinternet.com giving the names of the members it covers, so we can credit your payment to each member.

Alternatively, use the form below. Complete it with **YOUR** bank details and send it along with your membership application form to:

Tony Day, VCS Membership, 57 Mayfair Avenue, Maidstone, ME15 6BY

Tony will do the rest.

The annual subscription is £2 per person (50p for 14 to 18-year-olds).

Of course, additional donations are always welcome!

[illegible]

STANDING ORDER MANDATE

To: **The Manager,** (add name and address of your bank/building society)

.....

.....

Name(s) of Account Holders

Account Number: Sort Code:

Please pay:

Lloyds Bank plc, Week Street, Maidstone (309537) Branch, PO Box 1000, Box BX1 1LT

For the credit of: **Valley Conservation Society**

Account Number: **02166853** Sort Code: **30 95 37**

The sum of £..... starting on2019 and thereafter on 1st day of January every year until further notice.

Signature(s) Date: