

Valley Conservation Society



doing nothing is not an option

Members' newsletter No 190

We are a non-political organisation

January 2025

Happy New Year!



We are delighted to report that this year's calendar sold out! We are now looking for contributions for next year – and remember we need a photo for each month! This lovely picture of Crisbrook Meadow during the recent frosty weather has been submitted as a contender for January by Sandra Gilham. Send your entries to Alan Smith on a128smith@btinternet.com

Please, landscape-shape photos only!

Advance notice of AGM

It will soon be time for the Society to hold its annual meeting.

The date has been set for **Saturday, April 12**, starting at 10am, and the venue will be the same as last year, the **King George V Pavilion** off Walnut Tree Lane in Loose, ME15 9RG.



The KGV Pavilion

It will be your chance to hear reports from the executive committee on our activities during the past year and to raise any suggestions or ideas.

The Society's audited accounts will also be presented.

It is also your opportunity to elect new committee members for the coming year.

It is anticipated that some of our existing committee will be stepping down this time, so there is space for anyone who feels they can lend a hand.

The executive committee meetings take place once a month, usually on the first Wednesday of the month, and most committee members also take on some extra role according to their skill set, and all help out at events such as the annual barbecue.

If you feel that you might be interested, you could phone the secretary, Alan Smith, for further details on **07860 909903**, or better still come along to one of our next meetings – on February 5 or March 5, to find out what goes on and see if it is for you.

Under the terms of our constitution, all nominations for the executive committee have to be submitted in writing (email is acceptable to a128smith@btinternet.com) 14 days in advance of the AGM, so by **Saturday, March 29**.

There is always a public open session at the meeting, but members wishing the meeting to consider a formal motion should also submit it in writing to the secretary by **March 29**.

A reminder, that with the start of the new year, it is time also to renew your membership.

Many members now pay by annual direct debit, but otherwise there is a membership renewal form at the end of this newsletter.

Remember only paid-up members can vote at the AGM.

Repair Café – help needed

We expect some members will already have heard of Repair Cafés – and perhaps even visited the two that already operate in Maidstone, at Bearsted and in the market buildings in the town centre.

Recently a group of like-minded Tovil residents have got together to form a new group called Carbon Action Tovil (CAT for short).

Their aim is to encourage people to take a more responsible approach towards the planet's resources – cutting back on plastic consumption, encouraging walking and cycling etc.



Their first big project coming up is to organise a Repair Café in Tovil.

The idea is that people bring along their broken or damaged items and volunteers will do their best to fix them – and so avoid their items being just thrown away.

The event will be on Saturday, March 8 from 2pm till 4pm.

The CAT group is asking whether any VCS members would be willing to lend hand?

They need people with a skill in electrics, woodwork, or computers, sewing, bicycle maintenance – anything really that might be handy.

If you have a knack for repairs in a certain area and can give up two hours of your time as a volunteer repairer, email Eileen Lewis on eileenmlewis@sky.com or call her on **07709 031365**.

The “Café” part of the Repair Café is that refreshments are offered and there is the chance to sit and have a cake and a natter at the event.

So CAT would also like to hear from anyone who can bake a few buns or can serve at the tea counter on the day.

There's also a need for volunteers to (wo)man a registration desk and direct visitors to the right repairer.

Again if you can help in any way, please contact Eileen.

There is a chance to find out more by attending a meeting of the CAT group this Monday. They are gathering in the side room of the Tovil Workingmen's Club (ME15 6QS) on Monday, January 27, at 6.30pm. All welcome – even if not from Tovil!



Copping in Crisbrook Meadow

Work Party

The Tuesday work party continues to meet every week from 10am at the Conservation Cabin. This week, the gang also had a visit from Kent-based housebuilder Redrow South East.

Redrow were so impressed with the work done by our volunteers, and by the Society more generally, that they have given us a £750 grant from their Community Fund.

Redrow's divisional marketing manager, Lucy Brobyn, said: "The Society's mission aligns with our ethos to create better places to live, so we are proud to support your efforts.

"We hope our contribution makes a real difference to Tovil residents and to the many visitors to Crisbrook Meadow and the Society's ponds."

The money will be spent on new hand tools and chainsaw maintenance. Our thanks to Redrow, and to Dennis Usmar who does such a great job in securing funding for us.



Pictured from left are:

Sam Hipwell
Dennis Usmar
Sandra Gilham
Kevin Shanahan
Lucy Brobyn (from Redrow)
and David Hill

The work party welcomes new volunteers. Stay for an hour or all day. All equipment provided.

Just bring stout shoes and your lunch!

Valley Conservation Society

Membership Application 2025

Names:

Address:

..... Postcode.....

Email(s) **please print**

Phone Mobile

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

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

Cheques (payable to Valley Conservation Society) or cash can be delivered with your form to:
Jonathan Leeson, Membership Secretary, Ridgeways, Cripple Street, Maidstone, ME15 6DN

Alternatively, it would assist us if you can pay by setting up a standing order or bank transfer using the details below.

STANDING ORDER MANDATE

(please allow at least 14 days to start date for bank processing)

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 on2025

and thereafter on 1st day of January every year until further notice.

Signature(s) Date:

**Please email - VCSMembership@btinternet.com with your name and address
if you choose this option to confirm payment**

General Data Protection Regulations: *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. We will not disclose it to any third party.*

Please tick the box if you consent to VCS retaining the details on this form