

**Registered Office:**

Guildhall, Cattle Market,  
Sandwich Kent CT13 9AH

**Registered Charity No.** 1118116

**Charitable Company No.** 5916737

**Email:** [gazenfriends@gmail.com](mailto:gazenfriends@gmail.com)

**Tel:** 07889866959 (Warden/Projects Manger)



*WINTER/SPRING NEWSLETTER  
APRIL 2012*

*Dear Gazen Friends -*

I am delighted to be able to write a very special newsletter this Spring. As the news release below outlines, we have secured a significant grant for substantial capital works on the Reserve in the form of a grant for £24,901 made by **The Veolia Environmental Trust through the Landfill Communities Fund.**

The Gazen Salts Directors and I would like to thank each and every Gazen Friend, supporter and funder personally – without whose sponsorship this exciting new opportunity and achievement would not have been possible. Thank you all.

Your support is still needed and very greatly appreciated. We have been working hard to raise running cost funds as well and have nearly reached the financial target for this year. We also greatly appreciate the support of Dover District Council and Sandwich Town Council who have allocated grants to us again this year at the same level as last year - £4,500 and £4,000 respectively. This ongoing support is key to attracting other funding.

*Karen Potter - Projects Manager/Warden*

*WETLAND HABITAT RESTORATION PROGRAMME*



**NEWS RELEASE**

17 April 2012

**Revamp for Ratty at Sandwich nature site**

One of the UK's rarest species is to get a boost right in the heart of Sandwich.

Work is underway on a scheme to restore an important wetland area located in the town's Gazen Salts Nature Reserve. The area is home to a number of important and rare species, including water voles, also known as Ratty in Kenneth Graeme's 'Wind in the Willows'.

The Gazen Salts Nature Reserve is leading the £24,901 scheme. It will restore the valuable open standing water and reed bed as well as improve water supply and quality, its habitat potential for plant, bird and insects, and its accessibility for all, including people with disabilities.

Overgrown areas of scrub have already been cleared and a digger was used to create a 50m long drainage channel that will improve water flow from the nearby river Stour into the wetland.

Funding for the work is coming in the form of a grant for £24,901 from The Veolia Environmental Trust made through the Landfill Communities Fund.

Parts of the area will be planted with trees and shrubs and overgrown trees will be managed and cut back. A new 50m long species-rich hedge will provide habitat for birds and mammals. New wildflowers and plants will also provide food for species living in the wetland, including the water voles.

Safety fencing will be installed, as will a system to collect and store rainwater so that it can be used to supply the wetland. Finally, two bridges will be widened to improve access for motorised wheelchairs.

Volunteers, including people currently out of work and those taking part in work experience, will undertake much of the work and the scheme will provide them with training and skills in a number of different activities.

The project is being undertaken after research identified the need for improved access for motorised wheelchairs, solutions to depleted water levels, immediate water vole protection, and a reduction in anti-social behaviour.

Project Manager at the Reserve, Karen Potter says, "This popular site will be greatly enhanced, making it better for birds, animals and people. Widening the two bridges will enable motorised wheelchair users to enjoy more of the site."

"The volunteering and training opportunities provided will also relieve isolation and improve career, employment and personal development. It's great that work is getting underway and we cannot wait to see the completed results."

The Executive Director of The Veolia Environmental Trust, Margaret Cobbold, adds "This project will have many benefits for people and wildlife and we are happy to be able to support it. It is also great to see that it will involve volunteers and that they will be learning new skills. We look forward to seeing the results of their hard work."

ends .....

Press information issued by Oliver Blackburn

Tel: 01902 794669

Email: [oliver.blackburn@violiatrust.org](mailto:oliver.blackburn@violiatrust.org)

Project number: 1763/DA

Editor's notes

Anyone interested in volunteering can contact the Project Manager Karen Potter 07889 866959 or at [gazensalts@gmail.com](mailto:gazensalts@gmail.com) for further details.

**Gazen Salts Nature Reserve** manages the 15-acre site centrally located in Sandwich. Its objectives are to create and manage an array of wildlife habitats e.g. woodland, wetland, scrub, grassland, fresh and brackish waters to increase biodiversity of flora and fauna with emphasis to species of conservation concern.

The site provides good year-round public access, open without time restriction. Admission is free and approximately 10,000 people of all ages and abilities visit every year. The organisation places great emphasis on providing experience based training via volunteering, community participation, working with schools, colleges, training agencies and charities to provide work experience that aids career and personal goals.

The Board of Directors comprises of representatives from local organisations, individuals and councillors representing community views. There is also a group of regular visitors and supporters.

The Veolia Environmental Trust has been supporting community and environmental projects for 14 year. Under the Landfill Communities Fund, landfill site operators can donate a percentage, currently 5.6%, of their landfill tax payment to these projects. Since its inception, Veolia Environmental Services (UK) plc has supported the Trust with contributions of over £47.5 million to 1320 projects.

The Trust has helped fund a diverse range of projects, including the repair of woodland footpaths, the renovation of community halls and the installation of playgrounds and play areas. For more information, or to find out how to apply for funding, visit the Trust's website [www.veoliatrust.org](http://www.veoliatrust.org)

### ***WINTER NEWS***

As always seems to be the case with every season it has been an eventful Winter. Gales battered the tress causing much damage but the delight of species, such as Willow, that dominate Gazen is that the next growing season affected trees grow back in profusion. The Christmas period was not quite the relaxing time planned when on the 27 December; a bank collapse at the sluice gate opened a significant leak allowing water to flow in and out of the Reserve uncontrolled. After several weeks of repairs this has been stemmed. It is that certain law of life that when work requires arms and legs to be in water, frosts and snow arrive! My greatest thanks to all those who helped with this less than appealing job.

### ***WINTER AND EARLY SPRING SIGHTINGS***

The greatest topic of interest for many of our visitors is the puzzle of where all the Mallard have gone, as only small number are on the Reserve at the moment. Tufted Duck, Shoveller and Teal accompanied the usual numbers of Mallard up until the hard frosts and snow arrived. As the snow froze on the footpaths many visitors understandably thought better of skating their way to the lake to feed the ducks. The Mallard followed their tummies and moved off to the Butts, Quay and Co-op area where more food was available. They have remained there ever since.

In light of the poor year for Water Voles last year it has been delightful to see them this year already. Three individuals are present on the ditch that has recently been dug out undisturbed by all the activity. Other sightings include Hen Harrier, Buzzard and Treecreeper in addition to all the regular residents.

### ***SPRING DELIGHTS***

Spring is always a welcome sight and is for many when Gazen is at its best. Winter Aconite were the first flowers to emerge, shortly followed by Butterbur, Primroses, Violets and Celandine now out in profusion – accompanied by Wood Anemone, Honesty, Marsh Marigold, Greater Stitchwort and Cowslips to name but a few. Everyday another wildflower species breaks into flower.

To date, the butterflies to emerge include Peacock, Comma, Large White, Green Veined White and Speckled Wood. Birdlife has been busy preparing for nesting since the lovely warm spell in March. Of the regular migrants – Blackcap, Chiffchaff, Swallow and Cuckoo are in.

## ***VOLUNTEERING***

My thanks to all those volunteers who have helped play such a vital role in Gazen's success both on the Reserve and behind the scenes. Plucky work experience students worked with us for 3 weeks over February and March. So far, a further 10 weeks of placements are booked for the summer. There will be a great many opportunities for volunteers to help with the new project. Please contact Karen Potter on 07889866959 or [gazensalts@gmail.com](mailto:gazensalts@gmail.com) if you would like to join in. We will be able to assist with travel expenses during this time – please get in touch for further details.

## ***SPONSORSHIP***

Our thanks to DTM Consulting for sponsoring habitat creation work which has to far funded a new hedge to be planted, designed to provide highly valuable future nesting sites for Turtle Doves and other birds. Further work will follow.

## ***INCREASED GIFT AID OPPORTUNITIES***

We are now able to claim gift aid on donations collected in boxes such as the Reserve site box, without gaining the signature of the donor. Please give as generously as you can when visiting. Thank you.

## ***ARE YOU RECEIVING US .....***

Many Gazen Friends, who have internet access, have opted to have newsletters and other communications sent by email. However, we have heard recently from a few people who have either not received the emails that we sent or have not been able to open document attachments. If you have experienced any difficulties please let us know.

*As always we greatly welcome your feedback and comments on the Reserve and this newsletter - should you wish to contact us and give us your views, please email or write to us at the address at the top of this newsletter.*

