

Task days will be kept under review and may be cancelled depending on Government advice.

We normally meet on the 3rd Sunday in the Month at 10.00am in the Mill Road Car Park.

Next dates:

19th April

17th May

21st June

Useful contacts:

Henry Heath (Chairman) 07776 144 053

Sue Crowhurst (Membership Secretary) 01903 368978

Adrienne Stevenson (Secretary) 01903 753977

Email: AdrienneStevenson@gmail.com

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<https://en-gb.facebook.com/friendslancingring/>

Website: <https://folr.wordpress.com/>

Thanks to all those who come along to help.

Our thanks also to the South Downs National Park Rangers who helped us recently in the chalk pit.



**SPRING NEWSLETTER
2020**

What can we say? It may be time for our spring newsletter, but we have never had to produce one under such exceptional and uncertain circumstances. We know that many are having to stay isolated at home, many without any company, so we hope this newsletter with news of our lovely Reserve will bring a little cheer and some contact with the outside world. We will try to keep the news here as positive as possible.

WINTER

The Reserve took quite a battering over the winter from the constant rain and some very high winds. For most of the winter we were paddling through thick mud, slippery paths and running water which did not make for pleasant walking. The weather also took quite a toll on the wear and tear of the paths. However, it is surprising how quickly things have dried out with a few days of better weather and the ground has been firming up well.

Many people think of the winter months as a quiet time, but on the Reserve it is a time for activity. The mowing is always done at this time of year and the Council completed it in good time despite the weather. Many of the flowers that we love to see in the summer cannot compete with long grass, so by mowing we give them the chance to grow and that in turn encourages insects and butterflies.

IS SPRING HERE?

On a positive note, there is evidence that spring is finally getting going. Every year the sweet violets in the wooded areas have been spreading into thick carpets and the smell from so many flowers has been glorious. Looking around, there are also a lot of very bright splashes of yellow. The gorse is in bloom and has evidently enjoyed the wet season. If you come across the flowers, try smelling them; they have a distinctly coconut smell. On dry, sunny days you may hear the ripe gorse seeds popping as they explode from the plant. They are designed to spread as far as possible from the parent plant

and it is said that they can scatter as far away as 30 ft. The old saying is that kissing is in season when gorse is in bloom, but I fear that this year's flowers will be wasted in these days of social distancing!

ADUR & WORTHING COUNCIL – there have been further changes at the Council and we have a designated Ranger for our area. You may see Keith out and about. We will be working closely with both Keith and Anthony, the Head Ranger. The Council have been felling some dead and diseased trees in the woods either side of MacIntyres field. They have yet to cut the dead ash trees identified as needing to come down, but this will be done. We will then have an opportunity to work together to plant new trees and help the Reserve to regenerate. Possibly in the autumn or winter.

AGM / COFFEE MORNING & MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Unfortunately we are going to cancel the AGM in April. This seemed the only responsible thing to do under the circumstances. This is usually membership renewal time too, but we also realise that this will present difficulties for members. Many renew at our AGM and others post or take their subs to shops and houses. To prevent people having to make unnecessary journeys, we have decided to delay collecting this year's subs until October. There will be further details in following newsletters, but, for the moment, please hold on to your money. This is a slight risk for us, but we hope that you will still support us and, when the time comes, pay the subs which we so rely on to continue our work.

We wish all our members all the very best for the coming weeks. Enjoy the Reserve if you are able to get there, but, if not, and you have somewhere safe to sit on a sunny day, why not let Mother Nature do her best to cheer you up and take a moment to listen to the variety of bird songs as birds establish their territories and try to attract a mate. There's nothing quite so cheering as the melodic sound of a blackbird, the repetitive and varied song of a thrush, the "teacher-teacher" call of the great tit, or even the sparrow's argumentative chatter. Take care.