

# CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH BIODIVERSITY PROJECT FUND Project Proposal Form

Docwra's Meadow Enhancement September 2007

## **Discussion in Projects Group**

The project is asking for money for desilting the pond and planting wild flowers in the meadow. The project had applied for Breathing Places but was unsuccessful, has now downscaled the project for the Biodiversity Partnership grant.

## **Positive:**

- Support for the project will encourage landowner to keep up the long term management after wildflower meadow has been established and pond restored
- Community involvement element (work parties, meadow awareness event), meadow publicly accessible for the villagers

## *Recommendation*

- Recommended for funding with the **full amount of £1225**

## **Conditions:**

- Ensure monitoring of the progress:
  - a criss cross of transects to be monitored
  - monitor the pond, it's also possible that somebody in the village can monitor butterflies
- Data captured within the project needs to be accessible publicly through the Biological Records Centre (BRC) in a format to be agreed with the BRC.
- Publicity for the project is to be approved by the Biodiversity Partnership

## **PROJECT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

### **Essential**

*Project proposals must:*

- Be clearly linked to the achievement of targets and/or the implementation of priority actions contained within a Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Species Action Plan or Habitat Action Plan, or to the aims and objectives of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough BAP more broadly;  
→ **contributions to Meadows and Pasture BAP (restoration/creation of 0.5 ha neutral grassland meadow), Great Crested Newt BAP, Song Thrush BAP and Pipistrelle Bat BAP, Water vole BAP**
- Demonstrate sound project design and internal logic (i.e., projects should be feasible, have realistic and cost-effective budgets, and demonstrate clear linkages among their objectives, outputs and activities);

→ **sound project design, including wildflower planting, desilting of GCN pond, routine management by volunteers + celebration event in mid summer 2008**

→ **cost-effective budget, good deal for pond restoration**

- Demonstrate partnership working;  
→ **ForShep group in partnership with landowner; work overseen by SCDC ecologist**
- Demonstrate the use of matching funds or in-kind contributions for all projects seeking £1,000 or more from the Biodiversity Project Fund.  
→ **Matching Funds from SCDC, ForShep and landowner of overall £1913**
- Include publicity and awareness-raising for biodiversity  
→ **Meadow is used frequently by local community, mid summer celebration event 2008**

### Desirable

*Where possible and appropriate, project proposals should:*

- Encourage local involvement.  
→ **ForShep is a group of local volunteers**

### Other Criteria

- Preference will be accorded to innovative and catalytic activities that lever in other funds as well as the involvement of others;
- Support will not normally be provided for routine, site management activities;
- Support will not be provided for retrospective activities;

In reviewing the proposals, the Surveys and Projects Group will try to ensure that a range of different project types is funded, across different Species and Habitat Action Plans.

## PROJECT TITLE

Docwra's Meadow Enhancement Project (ForShep)

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- *Name of the Group putting forward the proposal;*
- *Brief overview of the origins of the project (including information about liasing with a member of the Surveys and Projects Group).*
- Friends of the River Shep (ForShep).
- The project was devised from initial discussions between SCDC ecologist and ForShep in Jan 2003 together with close involvement with the land owner. A management plan was produced and has been implemented in part subject to vegetation growth, resources and volunteer time.
- ForShep are a local community based conservation group formed in 1999 that exist to protect and enhance the River Shep and its habitats. Docwra's Meadow is a publicly accessible meadow adjacent to the River Shep in the very heart of Shepreth village.
- In October 2006 ForShep entered an application to the BBC's Breathing Places grant scheme for a total of £3,500. In May 2007 ForShep learnt that the application had been unsuccessful. Nevertheless, the landowner has continued to pay for essential meadow cutting in order to sustain its habitats and volunteers have raked up the cuttings. In previous years the landowner and ForShep have paid for meadow cutting by the Green Belt Project or a local grounds contractor. ForShep volunteers and the Harston Scouts have leant a hand with various tasks.
- SCDC ecologist suggested that ForShep consider applying to the Partnership for funding for aspects of the works that will contribute to BAP targets. The original Breathing Places application has thus been reviewed and re-written. SCDC have offered a grant of £1,000 that can be used to towards various access and safety issues associated with the meadow.

### 2. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

- *Brief summary of the reasons for initiating the project;*
- *Identification of the ways in which the proposed project helps to achieve the targets and/or implement the priority actions contained in a Species Action Plan or Habitat Action Plan, or contributes to the overall aims and objectives of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough BAP more generally.*
- The River Shep is a small **chalk river (within the rivers and streams HAP)**, that runs through the village of Shepreth. Docwra's Meadow sits adjacent to the River Shep where a mill pond is formed behind Delahays Mill. The meadow is in the very heart of the village and so represents an important natural asset to Shepreth residents. The meadow is accessible via a public footpath that crosses it. By increasing the biodiversity value of the site and by generating a greater level of community involvement it is hoped to increase local appreciation of the meadow.
- Docwra's Meadow is believed to be **unploughed pasture** as it has many strange undulations within it. However, the meadow is quite species poor

due to historic neglect and invasion by nettles, cow parsley and couch grass. However, the previous four years of management have started to reduce the dominance of these species. One area of drier ground is managed as a flowery meadow with introduced species of cowslip, meadow cranesbill, field scabious, lesser knapweed and yellow rattle.

- The banks of the mill pond used to provide a habitat for **water voles**. In recent years only occasional sightings have been made.
- **Bats** are frequently seen in the meadow on summer evenings as little light falls upon the meadow.
- **Song thrushes** are regularly seen and heard calling from the adjacent tall trees and they nest in the hedgerow.

#### Contribution to BAPs

The Cambs **Meadows and Pastures BAP** includes the following objective:

Recreate and rehabilitate meadows and pastures.

The Cambs **Great Crested Newt BAP** includes the following objective:

Halt the further loss of Great Crested Newt sites through development, pond deterioration/loss, loss of terrestrial habitat.

The Cambs **Song Thrush BAP** includes the following objective:

Maintain the range and population levels of song thrush, and where possible restore them to that of the 1970 estimate by 2005.

The Cambs **Pipestrelle Bat BAP** includes the following objective:

Restore populations to pre-1970 numbers.

The Cambs Water Vole BAP includes the following objective:

To restore areas of habitat within the former range in order to support expansion of the current population.

### **3. OBJECTIVES**

- *Description of the desired state or condition towards which the project is working.*
- The creation/restoration of a 0.5hc neutral grassland meadow.
- Undesirable plant species such as nettle, cow parsley and couch grass controlled to an acceptable level.
- The meadow will be safely accessible to all members of the local community.
- The great crested newt pond will be partially desilted to retain water for a greater period of time.
- A greater diversity of bird species and bat species will be present in the meadow.

### **4. ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS**

- *Brief description of key project activities and their associated outputs.*
- Wildflower planting of 240 ½ litre pot grown plants, autumn 07, species to include (subject to availability): fen bedstraw, ragged robin, cuckoo flower (as plug plants), meadow rue, meadow sweet, hemp agrimony, fleabane, devils bit scabious (these plants can all be found on the Shepreth L-Moor SSSI).
- Planting of one native black poplar (cutting to be taken from a female tree within the village), winter 08.
- Restoration of the great crested newt pond including the construction of a hibernaculum), October 07.
- River bank stabilisation using timber from within the site, autumn 07.
- Tree safety works, winter 08.
- Tree thinning works, winter 08.
- Meadow management (two cuts per year)
- Two new gates
- Erection of bird and bat boxes x10, winter 08.
- Guided great crested newt survey evenings, spring 08.
- Meadow awareness event / barbecue summer 08.

## **5. ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

- *Identification of lead organisation and lead contact;*
- *Description of the roles and responsibilities of all participating organisations;*
- *For larger projects, a description of formal project structures (e.g., steering committees or advisory groups).*
- The project will be administered by ForShep in partnership with the landowner. ForShep will be entirely responsible for ensuring that the quality of the work is of the correct standard.
- SCDC ecologist will oversee the desilting of the great crested newt pond (GCN conservation license to be obtained).
- ForShep volunteers will undertake the routine management tasks such as grass raking, wildflower planting and bird boxes erection.
- The meadow will remain accessible via its public footpath.

## **6. TIMEFRAME AND WORKPLAN**

- *Duration of the project;*
- *Key milestones.*
- The planting of pot-grown wildflowers is set to take places in autumn 07.
- The desilting of the great crested newt pond is set to take place in October 07 (subject to water levels).
- Tree safety works to take place in winter 08 (subject to TPO permissions being sought)
- The meadow will be cut and raked in early Oct 07 prior to planting and May 08 (there after continued by ForShep and the landowner)
- A celebration event will be arranged for mid summer 2008.

## 7. BUDGET

- Breakdown of anticipated costs by budget line;
- Contributions (financial and in-kind) from partner organisations.
- External match funding

Item	Items costs	Request to Partnership
Wildflowers (sourced from British Flora, Norfolk)	£512.84	£500 (pot plants @ £46.50/24 plugs @ £47.84/100)
Pond restoration (by JW Maintenance)	£475	£475
River bank stabilisation (to cover posts and wire)	£100	
Tree works (by JW Maintenance)	£900	
Gates purchase and installation	£600	
Bird and bat boxes	£250	£250
Meadow management	£300 (annually)	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£3137.84</b>	<b>£1225</b>

Request to the Biodiversity Partnership is for   £1225  
 SCDC are to contribute                               £1000  
 ForShep are to contribute                           £ 300  
 Landowner to pay                                       £ 612.84

## 8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION ARRANGEMENTS

- Description of arrangements for capturing lessons learned;
  - Arrangements for internal/external reviews, where appropriate (e.g., for larger projects);
  - Identification of indicators and a description of the data gathering strategy that will be used to assess progress (for larger projects only).
- Photographic records will be taken to clearly demonstrate the before and after situation.
  - Species counts and relative abundance assessments will be undertaken with a short report sent to the Partnership in August 2008 (copied to the Biological Records Centre)