

Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory Trust

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Restharrow Scrape project 2020

Following on from the information I gave last year here is an update on what has been achieved this year:

- Acknowledge Heritage Lottery funding on site, online and in all activities. Signage is in place at the Reserve.
- Purchase the 12.5 acre wildlife site which is currently held on lease. Achieved 24 May 2019
- Recruit an assistant warden. Becky Downey in post on 1 January 2020
- Recruit new volunteers to manage the hide and engage visitors. A few people recruited and DBS checked
- Install a second wildlife hide and carry out repair and conservation work to the site. Groundworks completed between 19 September and 15 October 2019. Fully accessible Vida Madell hide designed and erected 19 November 2019. Paths completed February 2020. Parking Bays completed March 2020. The conservation team refurbished the old Graham Crick hide while the site was closed to visitors during the major works.
- Redesign procedures for monitoring, recording, and analysing wildlife. Steffan has designed some new ways to monitor the breeding birds on the Restharrow Scrape Reserve and has updated several other recording methods more generally.
- Conduct audit of staff and volunteer skills and training needs, and produce a training plan.
We have held some volunteer training events and are in the process of offering more training opportunities to staff and volunteers
- Commence outreach work with local schools/youth/other community groups. Becky has already made contact with both Primary and Secondary schools. She has produced some learning and engagement materials for a variety of audiences.
- Engage with Mencap and other users to identify needs that can be met through the project.
Bo Beolens and Russell Miles helped us design the new hide to be as fully accessible as possible.
- Install interpretation boards; audio posts, and publicise reopening of the site. The interpretation boards are in place on the reserve and at the field centre. The audio post is ready to be installed with thanks to Martin and Sara Sutherland for their input on this.

We planned the re-opening for 3rd April 2020.

The management group consisting of the officers of the trust together with Bill Martin and Roger Jones has met monthly to ensure all the work is on track across all the work streams. This will continue at a slower pace throughout the rest of the 3 year project period now that all the major infrastructure work is complete.

Many people were involved with the intensive level of work completed during 2019 and the early part of 2020.

Covid-19 meant that some of the work is not as complete as we would have hoped however we have looked at the plans and decided that all will still be completed during the original time-frame. Becky Downey has produced some virtual engagement and learning materials during this period.

We were very fortunate to be gifted a legacy by the late Vida Madell who was a member of the Bird Observatory for many years. She had a great interest in wildlife, conservation and research (she was a member of the ringing group). This meant we could achieve our dream of a fully-accessible hide which would not have been possible in the original budget.

The total cost of the three-year Restharrow Scrape Development Project was planned to be £323,600. By the end of 2018 we had secured £101,823 for the project through fundraising and grants. During 2019 this increased to £263,632 including the first two tranches of money from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. At the end of 2019 the amount to be provided from our Trust reserves was £59,968 (the Trustees had provisionally allocated up to £90,000) and in fact at the time of writing is just over £41,000.

So:

We are well on the way to meeting the outcomes we agreed with the National Lottery Heritage Fund:

- Heritage will be in better condition – heritage in this case is the Restharrow Scrape Reserve
- Heritage will be better interpreted and explained
- Heritage will be identified/recorded
- People will have developed skills – this includes volunteers and staff
- People will have learnt about heritage – this will include all those engaged by our outreach work
- People will have volunteered time
- Our organisation will be more resilient – through greater engagement with more people visiting, being involved in our outreach work and volunteering.

Thank you to the many people who have helped in the funding, planning, management and execution of this project so far.

You can still join in through adopting a plot or donating money or materials (e.g. we are looking for no longer needed field guides to place in the hides), volunteering for any of the physical work, supporting the outreach work through contacts or volunteering etc etc etc.

We are always keen to hear of any other ideas of how you would like to help.

Sally Hunter July 2020