

FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT OF OVERTON BIODIVERSITY SOCIETY MARCH 2007 – MARCH 2008.

Overton Biodiversity Society has enjoyed another busy year. The society has 132 members with a committee of 14 members meeting every 6 weeks.

One of the highlights of the past year was the opening of Little Meadow – the Lottery Heritage Initiative funded community wildlife garden on Kingsclere Road. This marked the culmination of over 3 years work by OBS and volunteers from the community. The opening ceremony was carried out by Kath Doyle (our previous chair) and Alan Whitney (chair of Overton Parish Council) and was very well attended, particularly by families with young children.

During the year we also carried out a parish water vole survey and would like to thank everyone who took part, the landowners who gave access to the river bank, Dr Jon Bengé from Sparsholt College for training and advice and AWE for printing the report.

Among other events taking place over the year were a range of public talks and wildlife walks including a wildflower and tree walk led by Tony Mundell which confirmed the presence of a rare black poplar tree in the parish, a very well attended fungus foray led by Mike Waterman and a talk on dormice from Andrew Cleave. We have also been involved in a series of work parties to maintain Little Meadow and publicity events at Overton School Fête, St. Mary's Church Fête and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council's Autumn Harvest event.

OBS committee members have also represented the Society at meetings of Basingstoke Conservation Forum, North Wessex Downs AONB and Basingstoke and Deane Local Strategic Partnership Natural Environment Forum.

One of the major activities for OBS over the coming year is to complete a Biodiversity Action Plan for Overton and an event is being planned for May to encourage public participation in this. We would like to acknowledge support from Hampshire Wildlife Trust, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and Overton Parish Council in producing the Biodiversity Action Plan.

Among other events planned for 2008/09 are working with Overton Recreation Centre to improve the public access and wildlife interest of their recreation grounds, carrying out a dormouse survey and continuing with our program of public events. Once again, we would like to thank Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council for their assistance, particularly with covering the costs of our insurance cover without which we would be unable to run public events.

Finally, on behalf of everyone on the OBS Committee, I would like to thank Jim Stickland who is stepping down from the Committee. We are very grateful to him for all the hard work and enthusiasm which he has shown as an OBS Committee member over the years.

Ken MacKenzie, Chairman

March 2008