

# The Kingfisher

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Newsletter of the Friends of Paxton Pits NR



The Friends of Paxton Pits Nature Reserve is a charity registered in England and Wales (No. 1125221)

## *Phoenix at Paxton Pits!*

**Like the mythical bird, the *Hayden Hide* has risen from the ashes. Just eight months after the much-loved wooden structure was burnt to the ground in an arson attack, a gleaming new metal hide has filled the void – and to judge by the many compliments received from visitors, it is more comfortable and affords better views than its predecessor.**

State of the art hides, particularly vandal proof models (hopefully), do not come cheap, either in terms of cost or effort. The final cost will be about £23,000, with just over half of this being funded by The Friends. We are enormously indebted to Huntingdonshire District Council for funding the remainder in what everyone appreciates are very difficult times for local authorities. The Council's support is surely a measure of just how much Paxton Pits Nature Reserve is valued across the community.

The effort has come from The Friends and HDC working in close partnership. David Cobham, leading for The Friends, and Senior Ranger Jim Stevenson, researched and costed the various alternatives for replacing the hide. After much debate, The Friends Trustees and the Rangers settled

on a customised metal container with a variety of viewing windows, benches and arm rests to suit all sizes. But the picture window is undoubtedly the 'big hit'.

Yet again, volunteers and Rangers worked seamlessly together, and with our three contractors, to get the best result. A welcome addition has been a screening hedge planted by the children of the Wildlife Trust Watch group from the Environmental Education Centre. Just a few finishing touches are yet to be completed, including putting back the refurbished dedication plaque which was all that survived the fire.

**The 'bottom line' to this story is that the Reserve's supporters have stood up to the mindless actions of the few. Our valued hide has been promptly replaced with something better, showing to all that we care about Paxton Pits Nature Reserve for its wildlife and for the opportunity it gives us to enjoy it. The Friends, empowered by its membership, is proud to have played a key role in this. Thank you for your support.**

**Ray Matthews**  
Editor



The new *Hayden Hide* in action on the Open Day on 12 April, marking The Friends' first 20 years.  
Photo: Ray Matthews