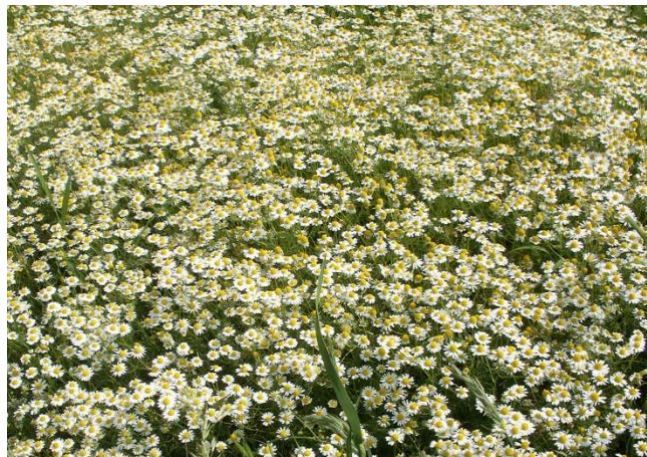


## This message from FSW member, Tony Flecchia, perfectly represents the views of the FSW Committee on the Crematorium Proposal

For many years under previous farm management the field concerned was used exclusively for silage production and was by far the finest flower meadow in the region and far better than our reserve meadows in that respect. Just look at these two photos of Daisies and Buttercups in that field to see that. As such, that field was a huge insect reservoir right alongside the south of our reserve and a considerable benefit to us all. The change of farm management from John Marden to brother David brought policy differences including the conversion of that long established meadow to winter wheat production with virtually no wildlife value. In addition, a harsher verge cutting regime alongside Old Farleigh Road, which had long supported some of our less common butterflies such the (not so) Common Blue, Small Copper and Brown Argus, was reducing their numbers. That's why we most commonly saw these in the nearby David's Crook meadow until more recently.



As a result we've suffered a very large decline in insects in the reserve since the first half of the decade, far greater than the general decline trend and not helped by the Council changing the path cutting policy to give much wider footpaths, reducing those flowers too, especially in some of the most important to insect areas. Most of the reductions have been of considerable numbers in each species, but two red beetle species have effectively been wiped out with no sightings in three years after them being so common as little as six years ago that their presence could be guaranteed in large numbers in the favoured spots. They are the common Cardinal Beetle (*Pyrochroa serraticornis*) and the rarer Black Headed Cardinal Beetle (*P. coccinea*).

Crematoria, including the one planned, have gardens of remembrance in which ashes are scattered when they are commonly not wanted to be kept, it's where mine will be going shortly. These gardens are of grass, flowers and shrubs, so returning that field to being of important value to us in supporting insects, effectively re-extending the reserve area.

The second important benefit to us of the crematorium is seen in the two plan diagrams of the layout which illustrate three large Swales, two of them right alongside Farleigh Border and southern East Gorse. These are sunken reservoir areas to store the winter excesses of water that this zone suffers from and which makes both these two reserve paths a notorious swamp then. The swales will turn into three pools on those occasions, of considerable benefit to wildlife as well as keeping the adjacent paths in much better condition. See Andy Hart's photo showing the runoff from the field in Broom Path last year.



I understand the objections to the crematorium since there will be a natural desire among all of us to retain a field rather than have a partially built up area and I have particular sympathies with those living nearby. Indeed in a superficial sense I'd prefer to see a field than a building as I regularly drive past there. But such planning issues really need every possible aspect considered as well as one's natural self-interest, and with that done I've shown there are some really worthwhile local gains with this planning proposal.

**Tony Flecchia**