

Ham Green Conservation Group Report

Ham Green Conservation Group has had an excellent year, with a consistently good number of members at each work party and, we have recently welcomed two new members.

During the Autumn and Winter, we have continued with coppicing the old hazel and maintaining both the bridleway and footpath for the public to use safely. Our policy of burning the resulting brush, helps to reduce the amount left lying around the Common, especially as ivy is very slow to break down. There have been many fallen trees in the strong winds this winter, usually old ivy-laden hawthorn, but these have now all been cleared.

This Spring, we planted a replacement hedgerow on the Stockers Down side of the bridleway. The trees were donated by the Woodland Trust and, are a variety of local hedgerow species including hazel, dogwood, hawthorn, silver birch, blackthorn and rowan. We will be keeping the weeds down around the new plants, to help them get established over the coming months.

In October, we worked with the Parish Council to repair several sections of the bridleway surface, laying and consolidating 40 tonnes of scalpings! A great day's work but, unfortunately this amount was only enough to repair about half of the bridleway and, we hope to try and repair the remainder later this year.

With the money raised by our Sponsored Walk, plus a generous donation from the Village Fete, all of our tools have been overhauled and new safety equipment purchased. Also, we have purchased a second-hand power scythe/mower to help with our mowing regime, replacing the use of trimmers on large open areas. Sadly it got a puncture on its first outing this year!

The results of our flower surveys show that the biodiversity has been maintained and the number of species remains fairly constant, although the dominance of some species has changed. We will continue to record the abundance of each species in key areas, and also to monitor the effect of our mowing regime on the flowers.

Hogweed is still far too prolific and very dominant, so we collect the seeds to take away and dispose of, usually by burning. If you can help with this task as you walk the Common, please take any collected seeds away with you but, be careful with the sap as it can burn your skin.

Our next Sponsored Walk is on Saturday May 9th so, if you could sponsor us, via the Village Shop, we would be very grateful. Finally, we would like to thank all those who have sponsored or donated to us in the past, and also the Parish Council for looking after us – without all of your help, we would probably be unable to continue the good work that we do at Ham Green Common.

Thank you.

Anne Gledhill – Group Leader

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