

## **Ham Green Conservation Group**

Ham Green Conservation Group has had an excellent year, with each work day being attended by 8-10 people. During the year we welcomed two new members, but also lost Anne & Eddie Gledhill who moved to Shropshire. We would like to thank Anne & Eddie for their years of support and leadership and we will miss them.

During the Autumn and Winter, we have continued with clearance of selected areas 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 fewer fallen trees in the strong winds this winter, a good sign that our policy for the selective clearance of old, ivy laden trees is working.

Probably our most significant task this year has been the progressive clearance of a large glade part way along the footpath, on the side facing the village. We will now be able to carry out regular mowing of this and other selectively cleared areas, to encourage the growth of wild flowers.

The results of our flower surveys show that the biodiversity has been maintained and that 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 much less evident in the mowed areas but, is still far too prolific and dominant in other places, so we will continue to collect the seeds and dispose of them, 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.

In October 2014, we worked with the Parish Council to repair several sections of the bridleway surface, by laying and consolidating 40 tonnes of scalpings! However, the wet weather has shown that we need to repair the remaining sections of the bridleway and, we hope to try and carry out this work later in the year.

Our funds remain satisfactory, thanks to the money raised by our Sponsored Walk plus a generous donation from the Village Fete, for which we are very grateful. All of our tools have been overhauled and some new hand tools purchased. But, our large chainsaw is getting very difficult to start and this year we plan to purchase a new one. We also plan to increase the number of trained first-aiders in the group, for added safety.

Finally, we would like to thank all those who have sponsored or donated to us during the year, and also the Parish Council for supporting us so well – without all of your help, we would probably not be able to continue the good work that we do at Ham Green Common.

Thank you all.  
Terry Dunn – Group Leader