

Ham Green Conservation Group

Annual Report – April 2017

The Group has had a very good year, with each work day being attended by around 9-12 people. During the year we welcomed two new members, one from the Village and one from Teg Down.

During the Spring and Summer, our work has mainly been the regular mowing and tidying of the bridleway & footpath margins, and also selectively mowing the cleared areas where we are encouraging the growth of wild flowers.

During the Autumn and Winter, our work has included general clearance of selected areas and maintaining the bridleway and footpath for safe use by the public. There have been few 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.

Notably, in April last year a very large branch fell from a Yew tree at the Woodman Lane end of the footpath. We were able to safely cut up & clear this branch, but it was quite a challenge and needed some careful planning! Also, in January this year we planted a new hedge along the edge of the newly-cleared Glade Area, using hedging whips supplied free by the Woodland Trust. Most recently, we have coppiced a few Hazel stools and made a bench seat with some of the cuttings.

Our flower surveys show that the biodiversity has been maintained and has even improved in some areas. In particular, the Butterfly Area (near the footbridge onto Stockers Down) has produced a lovely patch of assorted wild flowers. We will continue to record the abundance of each species in key areas, and also to monitor the effectiveness of our mowing regime in improving the growth of wild flowers.

The large Glade Area which we created last year, part way along the footpath on the village side, has produced some lovely clumps of Thistle and provided lots of seed for the finches. It also produced the most amazing Burdock plant – almost 2m tall!

Hogweed is much less evident in the mowed areas but, is still prolific 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.

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 are regularly overhauled and some new hand tools have been purchased. Also, we were very fortunate to be gifted an almost new chainsaw, which has proved very useful.

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 very much.

Terry Dunn – Group Leader

25.4.2017

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