

Highnam Parish Council – Environment Working Group Progress

Here we are at the second month of 2023 and the nights are drawing out again, giving us an extra couple of minutes of daylight each day. The impact on nature and wildlife is obvious, with snowdrops and aconites flowering and early daffodils peeping through. Did you get involved with the RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch, over the weekend of 27 to 29th Jan? It was an ideal opportunity to assess how our environmental improvements have impacted both the numbers, and range of species, that we have in the parish. You may even have seen birds pairing up in your garden already. To ensure that nesting birds don't get disturbed by our Environment Working Group (EWG) clearance work in Lassington Wood will cease mid-Feb, with our final two working parties meeting there on Friday **XX** Feb and Sunday **XX** Feb, both between 1.30 and 3.30pm. Please come suitably attired for scrub clearance work and your reward will be half-time refreshments and a great sense of achievement. Adele at wildhighnam@gmail.co.uk can give you more information.

The EWG has been continuing with dead hedge installation in the woods, to keep walkers to designated paths and preserve the fragile plant growth, particularly the lovely bluebells that will be flowering shortly. The parish has also been able to obtain the services of the Pay Back team, who have been welcomed to assist the EWG with our tasks – especially the reinforcement of the path surfaces within Lassington Wood, which get particularly muddy during the Winter.

Once the wood and butterfly crescent clearance work completes for the Winter season, the EWG will be concentrating on tackling the other tasks on our plans, a copy of which can be found on the Parish website. We are currently assessing the most appropriate information boards for keeping parishioners and visitors involved with the EWG work, and its impact on our village environment. We are planning to develop our pollinator patches, supplementing the flora with varied native species where appropriate. When our chosen sculptor can take breath, he is planning to undertake a lovely new sculpture for us, which will reflect both our village wildlife and our heritage. Lassington Reach will also benefit from a sculpted bench, which should make an ideal resting place for anyone walking round the new estate.

We also need to mention two of our young parishioners, who are helping us as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Volunteering/Community Service elements. Martha has recently started litter picking around the village and Ollie is an enthusiastic helper with our Wild Highnam working parties. Well done both of you.

If you would like to become involved with helping with any of the EWG's work, or the Heart of Highnam village improvements group, please contact Councillor Bill Badham. cllrbillbadham@yahoo.com **01452 247112**