

Highnam Parish Council – Environment Working Group Progress

Don't you just love this time of year? Nature all around us is bursting out of its winter sleep and, no doubt, Springwatch will once again be a semi-permanent feature on the BBC. In Highnam parish we are so lucky to have our own equivalent of Springwatch's nature reserve, right here on our doorstep. Lassington and John's Woods are such a bonus for Highnam and a fantastic resource for all our residents. If you haven't done it for a while, have a springtime stroll around our woods and look out for blossoming bluebells, wild garlic and wild daffodils. If you stand quietly and listen, the sound of birdsong will surprise you. If you're very lucky you'll even hear one of our many woodpeckers 'drumming'. A bit of a longer walk for you, but ambling as far as Highnam Woods can also be quite magical, with the possibility of hearing the beautiful song of the nightingales.

Now is also the time when the hedgerow tree blossoms are making a spectacular display. Have you heard the old country saying – 'Black before white, drought before blight'? It refers to the blossoming of the blackthorn (sloe) before the whitethorn (hawthorn). Let's hope the whitethorn makes it first this year, eh?!! We are lucky to have lots of blackthorn on the edge of Lassington Wood, with many of the sloes going to make sloe gin last autumn – a lovely winter warmer. Have you noticed how the edge of Lassington Wood against the playing field has been cut back and made much neater? That is all down to the hard work of the Payback Team who, we are told, have really enjoyed doing their penalty work around our parish.

The Environment Working Group's (EWG) final clearance work for spring, in Lassington Wood and the Butterfly Crescent, was completed over the weekend 10th to 12th February. Finishing then ensured that early nesting birds weren't disturbed by our clearance efforts, which can be quite noisy work. Over the past autumn and winter months, the entrances to Lassington Wood have been made much more open and pathways made more obvious to walkers. There's still lots more to do, to make the woods more inviting to residents, (both human and non-human), and the EWG, (together with valiant support from Wild Highnam volunteers), will pick up the tasks again next autumn. Adele at wildhighnam@gmail.co.uk can give you more information about future work plans.

Fresh signs have been ordered for the Pollinator Patches (PP) around the village, as many were damaged last season – we are hoping accidentally. We will be marking out the patches shortly and if you want to catch up on past progress, last year's annual report of the PP project can be found on the Parish council's website. Why don't you try making your own pollinator patch in your garden? It doesn't have to be big, or cost anything; you can just leave a patch of grass unmown and see what wildflowers and grasses grow.

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. cllrillbadham@yahoo.com **01452 247112**