

## Highnam Parish Council – Environment Working Group Progress

May is, (according to the poet Robert Browning), the month when the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows, with morning hoar frost clearing by noon. Well, I'm hoping for less of the hoar frost this month and more of the thrushes singing in the garden. Sadly, the visiting swallows and house martins have been getting fewer and fewer around the parish, over the years. The Environment Working Group (EWG) are continuing to provide suitable birds habitats around the parish, so can only hope that the numbers of all our birds species will begin to build up again soon. Our two newly-acquired owl boxes are now in place, so we are keeping our fingers crossed that they will find feathery inhabitants soon. **(ADELE** Please confirm – one or two owl boxes in place?)

Have you visited the two wonderful new additions to our wooden sculpture/bench trail around the village? They were completed by the same wood carver as the previous pieces, so they form a cohesive group of wildlife-themed sculptures that the whole village can be proud of. The new bench by the large oak tree in Lassington Reach, overlooking the balancing pond, reflects not only the oak tree itself but, if you look hard enough, willows, bulrushes and a toad from the pond, with a little harvest mouse escaping from the field opposite! The large piece opposite Beech Close, overlooking the mini roundabout, is a representation of our village history, as well as the wildlife we are trying to encourage. It bears a well-known inscription from the wonderful hymn Jerusalem, written by Hubert Parry, descendant of the builders of Highnam Court and our lovely Holy Innocents Church. It also shows at one end the historic Lassington Oak, and at the other, the bells from Highnam Church which, (although sadly now silent, thought to be due to the state of the bell tower), are the heaviest ring of 3 bells in England. How many wooden hedgehogs can you count, as you sit for a rest on this brilliant new addition to our sculpture trail!



The EWG has also been busy planting wild flower plug plants, to supplement our pollinator patches and enrich them with colourful native varieties. It will take 2 or 3 seasons for some, especially the wild daffodil plugs, to reach flowering size but we are hopeful that they will make a lovely addition to our 'flower-scape' in due course.

Those of you who walk the rural pathways round our village will have noticed how we have continued building them up, to make a safe surface for walkers, buggy-pushers and mobility scooter users. There is still plenty to do and we are being supported in this again by the Gloucester Payback team, who are doing

a grand job for us. They will need to flex their muscles for the ten tons of gravel that are going to be delivered for Lassington Wood shortly.

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](mailto:cllrbillbadham@yahoo.com) **01452 247112**