

Highnam Parish Council – Environment Working Group Progress

“Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness” is how the romantic poet John Keats described Autumn in the early 1800s. I believe if he were alive today, with the climate changes we’re experiencing, he’d have to amend that slightly. While the berries on my holly are still abundant, because they’re still green, the blackthorn were stripped of their sloes by early September, the blackberries have already provided their feast and I never got to see any of the wild plums around the village. It’s going to be a lean Winter for our wildlife, so please consider providing supplementary feeding for our native and migrant birds and the hedgehogs that are still active. Nectar from late-flowering plants and shrubs will be appreciated by the insects that are still flying too. There’s always room for some sedums in your garden!

Members of our Environment Working Group (EWG), as well as members of the Wild Highnam Group, have started on this season’s Woodland Working parties. The first session took place on Friday 8th Sep, when an excellent start was made on clearing brambles and building brush barriers, to provide protection for the main stand of bluebells in Lassington Wood. The aim was to reduce footfall over the area, to protect the bulbs and encourage them to spread in the future. Here are the planned future dates for the Woodland Working parties – you will be very welcome at any or all of them. The usual start time is 1pm, ending at 3.30, with a break for refreshments half-way through. We don’t usually work after February, to avoid disturbing nesting birds.

Friday 6th Oct - Lassington Wood (Butterfly Crescent)

Sunday 15th Oct - Lassington Wood (bluebells)

Friday 3rd Nov - TBC but hopefully Lassington Reach hedging whips weeding and additional planting

Sunday 19th Nov - Lassington Wood (sapling area behind Butterfly Crescent)

Friday 1st Dec - Johns Wood

Friday 12 Jan - Lassington Wood (sapling area behind Butterfly Crescent)

Friday 9th Feb - Johns Wood

If you are interested in joining our Working Party volunteers, please email Adele at wildhighnam@gmail.com. The improvements that the Working Parties have made in both Woods are significant. Undergrowth has been thinned to encourage more diverse flora and pathways have been cleared and reinforced, so if you haven’t visited for a while, please do. Lassington Wood particularly is welcoming for disabled transport and baby buggies.

Highnam PC is considering adopting the tenets of the Hedgehog Highway Project, which over 140 Parish, Town and Community Councils are taking part in. Meanwhile, we can all do our bit to assist hedgehogs by creating a 5-inch gap in our fence or garden wall, allowing free access for our little creatures. They will repay you by eating your slugs and even producing litters of adorable hoglets occasionally!

If you would like to become involved in helping with any of the EWG’s work, or the Heart of Highnam village improvement group work, please contact: Councillor Bill Badham. cllrbillbadham@yahoo.com (01452) 247112