



Prickend Pond is a central feature of life here in Chislehurst, providing an opportunity to enjoy the beauty and tranquillity of nature within our urban setting. It has lifted the spirits during these difficult times.

We would like to thank you all for your interest and support and will continue to bring you news and views while life remains restricted.

The pond supports a variety of water birds, insect life and plants, and beneath its waters, another hidden world of living creatures. Microscopic plankton and larger invertebrates, like freshwater shrimps, provide a food source for many larger vertebrates further up the food chain – fish, amphibians, birds and mammals. However, it is a fragile environment, threatened by the effects of climate change, pollution and over-population by waterfowl and fish, and needs careful management. We are working to try and improve its ability to withstand these challenges, and also to increase the biodiversity of the area.

Chislehurst Commons has responsibility for managing the 180 acres of local common land under an Act of Parliament. However, we have no guaranteed funding, and depend on donations and our wonderful Working Party Volunteers to enable us to continue to maintain and develop this precious natural resource.



Nature relies on a delicate balance.

Fluctuating water levels, as seen this year with heavy winter rain and a warm spring, are a major challenge, but the geese also present difficulties. They are always hungry, eat almost any new planting, and their waste adds to the pond's nutrient levels which leads to the excessive growth of algae. The fish, mainly carp, also reduce biodiversity by hindering the growth of submerged oxygenating plants.



Prickend Pond was created by historical excavations for gravel, and the island was added in 1930 as a refuge for water birds. It seems to have a base of building rubble topped with earth. Three of the original willows became diseased and recently had to be felled, although the trunks remain in the water as valuable perches for waterfowl. In 2019, attempts were made to plant a mix of marginal plants around the island to improve its appearance and biodiversity. Access to the site is difficult, and, as you can see, involved wading out. Unfortunately, the exceptional winter rain raised water levels and, so far, the plants do not seem to have survived. Plans are in place to plant more trees.



However, despite all the threats, our beautiful pond continues to attract an amazing variety of wildlife.

You can see more photos of pond life, including an update on the progress of the Egyptian Goslings, by clicking on the link at the end of this Newsletter.



This photo shows one of the hoverflies found around the pond. As an adult it's an important pollinator, but it began life as a "rat-tailed maggot" in the pond, feeding on decaying vegetation.



One of the glorious sights of summer – a common darter dragonfly, another insect that relies on the pond to breed. The adults are formidable aerial predators feeding mainly on small flies.



Continuing the breeding theme, a common frog seen under torchlight by the volunteers who were out surveying amphibians across the Common early in the breeding season.



Reeds and marginal plants support many insects, which in turn attract birds and bats. Grey wagtails are often seen bobbing about at the water's edge where they feed on insects and snails.

And finally



Head Keeper, Jonathan Harvie, and Assistant Keeper, Peter Edwards, working on the island. What would Chislehurst be like without their expertise and dedication to keeping it so clean and green?

[You can see more photos of pond life, including an update on the progress of the Egyptian Goslings, by clicking on this link.](#)

Thanks for this week's photos to Don Drage, Peter Edwards, Kevin Jennings and Mary Wheeler.

During this difficult time, we will do our best to continue our work of maintaining the Commons and developing their biodiversity, so that they continue to be a valuable asset for us all.

If you know someone who would like to receive this Newsletter, please ask them to email us at contactus@chislehurstcommons.uk. Please note. Due to data protection laws we cannot accept their email address from you.



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