



Since our last Newsletter at the end of June, and as the lockdown has eased, we have been pleased to see so many people out and about on our wonderful 180 acres of common land. The commons have been such a valuable asset to Chislehurst through these worrying times. Now, in the height of summer, the green shade of the trees in full leaf and the flowery grasslands give us an

opportunity to pause for a moment, look around, and let the delights of the natural world fill our senses.



This row of lime trees is on a strip of common land at Royal Parade. The heady scent from the flowers fills the air. Landowners often planted avenues of lime trees. The citrus fruit we know as lime grows on a smaller, related species.



The grasslands are a beautiful sight, full of flowers like the Harebells (top) and Wild Carrot (above), and buzzing with insect life.

Chislehurst Commons Needs More Friends!

The 180 acres of common land in Chislehurst is the backdrop to our daily lives, and the reason so many of us choose to live and work here.

In our Newsletters we aim to show just how precious it is - its biodiversity, its unique habitats, its history - and the work involved in maintaining it.

Chislehurst Commons is the organisation that has responsibility for managing the local common land under an Act of Parliament.

We have two Keepers, Jonathan Harvie, our Head Keeper, and Peter Edwards, our Assistant Keeper, whose knowledge and dedication are invaluable. Everyone else involved in the administration, maintenance and development of the area does so on a voluntary basis.

The Act made no provision for funding, and we depend on donations and our wonderful Working Party to enable us to continue to preserve this precious natural resource.

Will you be a true friend of the Commons? You can donate now by cheque or via the Donate link at the end of this Newsletter.

Thank you!



We have prepared some “Out and About” guides to inform and enhance your enjoyment of the commons. They are available on our website

www.chislehurstcommons.uk

The most recent ones are “Take a Twig or Two”, containing fun ideas for families, and “Butterfly Hotspots”, which has photos of butterflies recorded on the commons recently. It includes this one of a Purple Hairstreak, and a map showing where you might see them.

[Click here for a direct link.](#)

We will be adding more guides, so keep an eye on the website.



Unfortunately, although summer brings so much to enjoy in the natural world, it can also create problems for us. You may have noticed that we recently took swift action to fence off the remaining areas of Prickend Pond.

The water level is low at the moment. It is fed only by rainwater and the run-off from the surrounding land and drains, and we have experienced lower rainfall and warmer weather in recent years. This has resulted in a deterioration in the water quality, and our regular monitoring recently found evidence of an algal bloom.

Algal blooms can take a number of different forms, but some can be quite toxic and harmful to people and, particularly, animals. If you are walking around the pond with children or pets, please take care to prevent them coming into contact with the water or mud around the pond.

We do not know how long the present situation will last but, unless the recent very dry weather breaks, it could be some time. The water quality is likely to deteriorate further as the water level in the pond continues to drop.

We have been in contact with the Environment Agency to report the outbreak of algal bloom and will continue to take advice from them.

It is tempting to bring food from home for the water birds, but overfeeding results in pollution, which further affects the water quality, the appearance of the pond, and can harm wildlife.



Meanwhile, the Overflow Pond, which had so much water in the winter, is now empty and dry. Our Volunteers have taken the opportunity to cut back the willows and other vegetation that are encroaching. Some of the wetland plants have been transplanted from there to Prickend, to encourage insects and increase the biodiversity.



But Nature has many aspects, and there is something to enjoy whenever we step into the natural world on our doorstep.

A young Grey Wagtail on the muddy margin of the pond where it finds insects to eat.



In the woodland, a female Blackcap finds shelter in the leafy branches of a tree.



The summer months are a good time to see dragonflies darting over the ponds or across the grasslands. The photo shows an Emperor Dragonfly in flight.



This Migrant Hawker Dragonfly was recorded recently for the first time on the common. The photo was taken at the Overflow Pond.

And finally



A Pigeon, often overlooked, but iridescent in the sunshine. There really is beauty all around us if we take the time to look.

Our next Newsletter will be at the beginning of September. In the meantime, we hope you continue to enjoy our beautiful commons, the

vibrant and precious centre of life in Chislehurst, now, in the past, and for the future.

[You can catch up on any missed newsletters by clicking here](#)

Thanks for the photos in this Newsletter to Don Drage, Peter Edwards, Kevin Jennings, Ross Wearn and Mary Wheeler.

Thanks also to the Editorial Team – Mary Wheeler and Christine Wearn.



Chislehurst Commons are proud to display the Green Flag Award logo.

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