



The Henley Wildlife Group



Report for the Annual Town Meeting 5 April 2018

Mill Meadows

We look forward to another good flowering of the Snakeshead Fritillaries on the Meadows in early April. Last year we counted 551 flowering spikes. As in previous years, these should be followed by a colourful Spring display of Marsh Marigolds, Ragged Robin, Buttercups and other wild flowers.

Our management of the wildlife areas continues to focus on controlling non-native invasive plants, e.g. Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed, and managing habitat diversity by reducing some species that would otherwise become too dominant and crowd out more attractive ones. We have been cutting back the reeds and pond sedges around the ponds to reduce their dominance; also brambles and nettles in other places. We also pick up a lot of litter.

Valley Road Chalk Bank

The chalk bank is a natural area that largely looks after itself but we have been cutting back brambles in the area adjoining the Gainsborough estate, the south-east corner of the site, with the aim of restoring grassland. We also pick up litter and keep the paths open.

Gillotts Field

The Town Council are now managing Gillotts Field in accordance with a new management plan written by a professional nature conservation consultant. In time, we hope to see significant improvements for wildlife such as the wild flowers like the Pyramidal and Bee Orchids that have been seen there in recent years; also the Hound's-tongue, Musk Mallow and Fox and Cubs, an attractive orange hawkweed, that are found in the Field.

Other Points

The Group thanks the Town Council for all their support throughout the year. We are particularly grateful to them for recruiting Marcus Militello, the new Conservation Parks Warden. Marcus is already proving a great help.

HWG and Henley in Transition arranged for the Town Council to leave parts of the Greys Road embankment unmown again last year and we were rewarded with another display of wildflowers including a few Pyramidal Orchids.

The annual toad rescue on the Henley to Marlow Road outside the Henley Business School has more or less come to an end for the season. Dedicated volunteers ferry them across the road in buckets to their breeding ponds to prevent them being squashed by passing traffic.

We would be pleased to welcome people to our work parties. We usually work on Mill Meadows on the first Wednesday of the month, meeting in the River & Rowing Museum car park, but there are occasional sessions on the Chalk Bank and Gillotts Field. All sessions run from 9.30 a.m. to 12.30, with a break for tea or coffee and cake at around 11 a.m.

For further information, please visit our web-site <http://www.henleywildlifegroup.co.uk/> , or contact Sally Rankin on 01491 578633 or s.rankin@btinternet.com.