



May 2023



It's Coronation weekend, the flags are out, and Chislehurst's Coronation Bear, funded by Visit Chislehurst, looks out across Prickend Pond.

While we enjoy the splendour of coaches and crowns, let's also mark the occasion by celebrating our natural environment, a life-long passion and concern for the King.

Chislehurst is fortunate that the natural environment is on its doorstep - a piece of rural countryside within our urban setting, open and free to all 24/7.

The common land in Chislehurst is as important to the community today as it has always been.

It provides:



- the lush green backdrop to our daily lives,



- a haven for wildlife,



- a place for recreation and relaxation, and a site for community events,
(The May Queen Ceremony is on Saturday 20th May, and there is a full list of this year's events on the Commons at the end of this newsletter).



- a source of beauty and wonder,



- and with its woodlands and grasslands that act as carbon sinks, it makes a contribution towards mitigating climate change.

Biodiversity Matters



However, wonderful as our Commons are, David Attenborough's "Wild Isles" series on BBC 1 highlighted the urgent need to reverse the loss of biodiversity in Britain and across the world. This means preserving and improving habitats, the places living creatures need to feed, breed and hide.

Now, more than ever, this is an important focus for the Chislehurst Commons team – Keepers, Trustees, and Volunteers who help in so many varied ways.



In recent years, holly, which was choking the woodland and preventing light reaching the ground, has been removed. We are now beginning work on making these newly opened areas more attractive to wildlife. This month, volunteers planted out saplings and transplanted foxgloves and red campion from elsewhere on the Common, to enhance the glades.



On St. Paul's Cray Common, volunteers have been working along the pathways. The aim is to encourage the growth of a greater diversity of plants, which will provide perching places for birds, cover for small mammals and attract insects.



Surveying has a vital role in helping to improve biodiversity. This woodrush was identified on a recent survey of the grassland along Prince Imperial Road.



One of our volunteers, now joined by another, has put up, maintained and monitored our bird boxes over a number of years. Records show that they are always well-used, providing nesting places for blue tits and great tits.



These eggs have already been laid this year by a great tit (the photo was taken with an endoscopic camera, an approved method which does not disturb the birds).

Look out for more information about our work to improve the biodiversity of the Commons in future newsletters.

Flowers to look out for in May

The Commons are beginning to look brighter with the flowering plants that attract pollinators.



Dandelion and herb robert



Garlic mustard



Cowslip



Common grape hyacinth



Bulbous buttercup



The 180 acres of common land in Chislehurst is well-used by the community and is free and open to all at all times, within the bye-laws.

Will you help us to maintain it and develop its biodiversity?

We are very fortunate in Chislehurst that the 180 acres of local common land are protected under an Act of Parliament.

However, the Act made no provision for funding, and we rely on the generosity of the local community to maintain the 180 acres of natural countryside within our urban setting.

We have two full-time Keepers, whose knowledge and dedication are invaluable. Everyone else who works to preserve and maintain the area does so voluntarily.

If you would like to support our work,

you can donate via our website

www.chislehurstcommons.uk

or via [PayPal Giving](#)

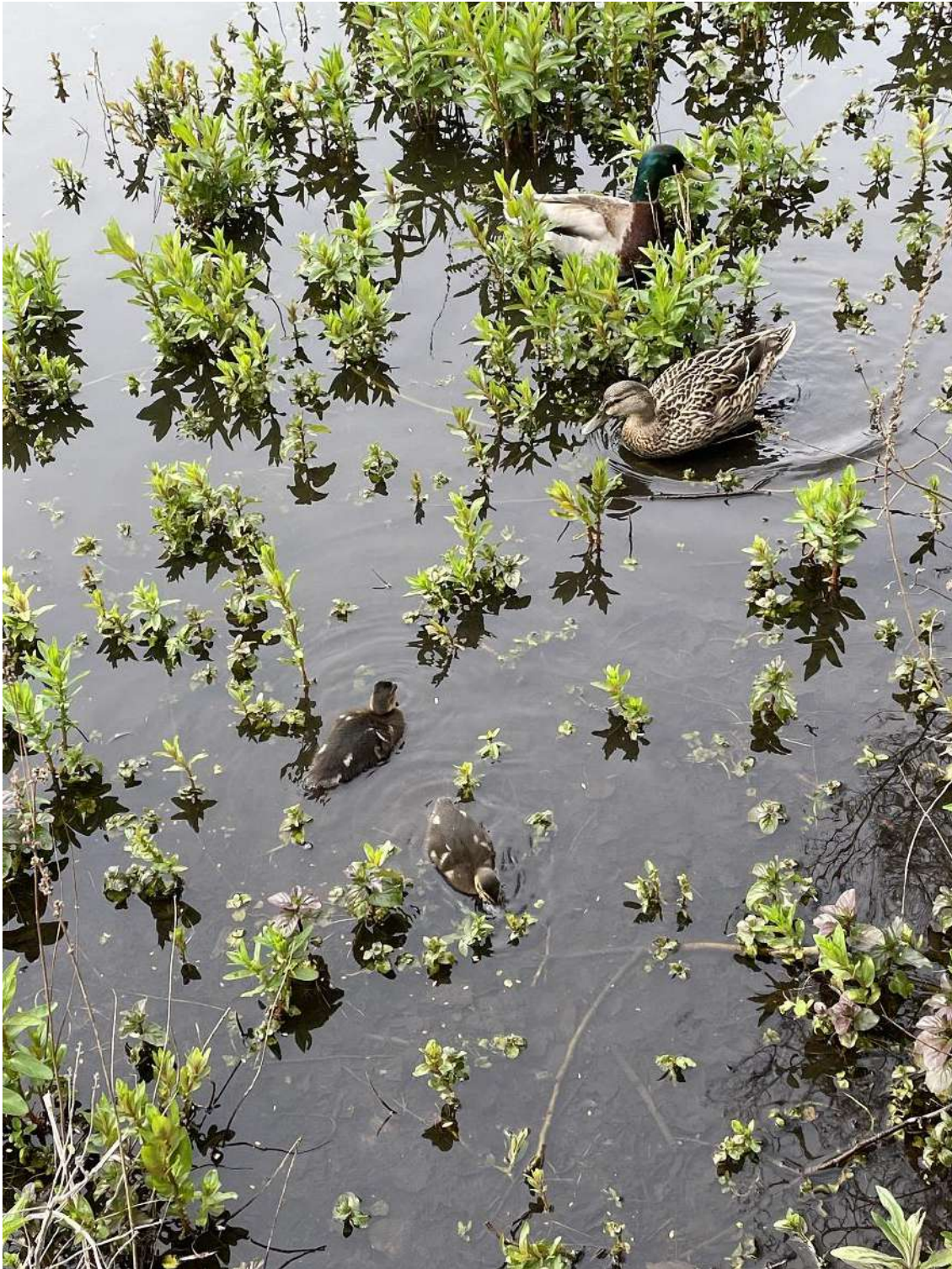
Thank you!

New Life at the Ponds

There is always something to see at the ponds, but this is a particularly good time to visit, with scenes like the ones pictured below.



The Egyptian goslings, first seen in February, are flourishing, but the parents are still watchful.



There are two surviving mallard ducklings, seen here dabbling among the water mint at Prickend Pond.



Coot babies scramble to take food from their parent's beak.



The first family of Canada geese appeared at the beginning of May.



Get your bird seed at Champion Wines!

We are grateful to Champion Wines for stocking packets of seed on our behalf. This food is healthier for the birds than bread or products made from flour.

All proceeds go to Chislehurst Commons.

And Finally.....

..... a kingcup, otherwise known as a marsh marigold, a fitting end to this month's newsletter.

Three cheers for the King, and three cheers for the environment!



In Chislehurst, we have the natural environment, with all its rich diversity, at the centre of our daily life.

We will continue to do our best to maintain and enhance it for present and future generations.

You can now Support Us when You Shop Online

We are now registered with [easyfundraising](#) which means you can support us when you shop online.

Over 7,000 retailers and services will donate to us when you connect to their websites via [easyfundraising](#) to shop with them – at no extra cost to you, and you earn all your normal loyalty benefits!

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You can also support us by using the easyfundraising app available below

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Thanks for this month's photos to – Don Drage, Peter Edwards, Kevin Jennings, John Stiles, Ross Wearn and Mary Wheeler.

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

Timetable of Events on the Commons in 2023

We will be offering walks on the Commons throughout the year which will be advertised, as usual, via email. Click [here](#) to download a listing of upcoming events.

**Crowning of the May Queen on Centre Common Saturday 20th
May 3 - 4 pm.**

This year is a special one for the Chislehurst May Queen Society. It is 100 years since the Society was formed to continue the tradition of crowning the May Queen. The colourful ceremony is one of the highlights of the year in Chislehurst.

Rotary Summer Fair on Centre Common Saturday 10th June 10 - 4 pm.

This is always a great event, in a long tradition of fairs on the Common, and we will be there with a display – please come along and visit us.

The Big Picnic at the Cockpit

Saturday 24th June 11 - 4 pm.

This is now an annual community event organized by Visit Chislehurst. Bring a picnic and join in the fun and games.

Chislehurst Creates at the Cockpit Saturday 23rd September 1-5 pm.

The Big Draw was a popular and much-loved community event that brought art to Chislehurst, over many years.

Chislehurst Creates will be a similar event, with activities to sample and entertainment.

We hope to see you there.



Chislehurst Christmas Market in Chislehurst High Street Date TBA

Organised by Visit Chislehurst. The Market offers an opportunity to shop locally for Christmas presents.



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

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