



May 2022



Make space in your day for nature – it's on your doorstep here in Chislehurst, and there's so much to see!



Thanks to Ken Brown for this wonderful panorama of Rush Pond which now features on our website homepage. So near to busy roads, and yet a haven for nature.

In our monthly newsletters we aim to illustrate the amazing diversity of flora and fauna to be found on the 180 acres of common land in Chislehurst.

They also show you some of the work involved in maintaining and enhancing the area for present and future generations.

Upcoming Events on the Common



**Chislehurst Big Walk Weekend! 7th - 8th May
2022**

We are pleased to be contributing 4 walks to the exciting timetable on offer at this free event organised by the Chislehurst Society.

The Ponds on Chislehurst Common – in the morning of Saturday 7th May and the afternoon of Sunday 8th May.

Discover St. Paul's Cray Common – in the afternoon of Saturday 7th May and the morning of Sunday 8th May.

To see the full range of walks on offer in Chislehurst over the weekend, or to make a booking, please go to

- www.ticketsource.co.uk/bigwalk

We hope to see you over the weekend!

The Big Jubilee Picnic

Following the huge success of last year's event, the team at Visit Chislehurst are organising another on Saturday 4th June 2022 at the Cockpit, as part of Chislehurst's celebration of the Platinum Jubilee.

We will be there with a display and a children's activity.

Please come along and say hello!

It promises to be a fantastic day out on the Common.



**Chislehurst Rotary Club
Jubilee Summer Fair**

Saturday June 11th, 2022, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm.

Always a great community event – and we will be there!



**The Month for the Trustees, Keepers and
Volunteers**



As many of you will have noticed, a few weeks ago we had to fell two of the lime trees located on the grass bank on the Green Lane side of Prickend Pond. Both had large internal cavities at the base of the trunks caused by decay. The trees along this bank are in a very high-risk area because of their proximity to a

very busy road and footpath. It was therefore decided to carry out special tests, called Resistograph tests, to check for internal cavities in the two remaining large lime trees on the bank, pictured above. The tests showed that the shorter one is also suffering from the same problem and needs to be felled. Fortunately, the larger one seems to be in good condition. However, felling another one of these trees will leave the bank looking rather bare at its southern end and we will be looking at what options there are to replace the trees that have been felled. Large trees are not viable because of the road but smaller trees such as hawthorns may be a possibility.



Bin replacement project.

Nearly all of the bins around the Commons are open concrete bins. These bins have been a headache for a number of years. They have to be manually emptied by the keepers, which means removing the waste using litter pickers and putting it in black bags for disposal. This is an inefficient and unpleasant process which has been made worse in recent times by the number of dog waste bags that are now being deposited in the bins. When the bins get

waterlogged, this becomes even more unpleasant. In addition, the open bins encourage rats and foxes, and crows pull out the waste and leave it on the ground making it very unsightly. We have therefore decided to progressively replace all of the open bins with enclosed bins of the type that we installed at Prickend Pond as part of the recent path project. The first batch to be replaced will be the remaining ones around the pond but it is hoped to replace all the other open bins during the course of the year.



This year we are adapting our mowing schedule for the grass at the Rambler's Rest and part of the Cockpit area, as part of our strategy to restore where necessary, preserve and improve our acid grassland.

Much of the grassland on the Commons is lowland acid grassland, a valuable but increasingly rare habitat, especially in the London area. It grows on nutrient-poor soil and is characterised by fine grasses such as sheep's fescue and bent, which allow a range of flowering plants to thrive, thus attracting butterflies, bees and other pollinators. It is best maintained by grazing animals, but, as that is no longer possible on our Commons, we manage it by cutting it once a year, and removing the cut grass to deprive the soil of nutrients. However, coarse grasses are beginning to encroach in some places. These quickly become dominant and crowd out the typical acid grassland flowers.

This year, in line with research carried out in other parts of the country, the grass at the areas mentioned will be mown three times and the cut grass removed. This will not only prevent any nutrients from the cut grass returning to the soil, but as it re-grows, the coarse grass will take up more nutrients. The areas will be monitored closely to determine how to proceed next year.

WILL YOU BE A TRUE FRIEND OF THE COMMONS?

The 180 acres of local common land are protected by an Act of Parliament.

Chislehurst Commons has responsibility under the Act for the management and maintenance of the area, so that it can

continue to be enjoyed by the community. It is open to all at all times.

The Act, however, made no provision for funding, and we rely on our wonderful volunteers and the generosity of local people to enable us to continue our work.

We have two Keepers whose knowledge, skills and dedication are invaluable. Everyone else who works to maintain and develop our beautiful Commons does so on a voluntary basis.

You can donate via our website at
www.chislehurstcommons.uk **or via** [PayPal Giving](#).

We Need a New Truck!



A big “Thank you!” to everyone who has already responded to our appeal to help us to fund a new truck.

Our truck is a feature of life in Chislehurst and an essential tool for Jonathan and Peter to carry out their duties on the Commons. It needs to be available every day.

Unfortunately, our current 15 year old truck is proving to be unreliable, costly to repair, and suffering corrosion, and so the economic solution is to replace it. The cost of replacement will be £32,000 after excellent discounts from Toyota, and we are seeking to raise £10,000 towards this cost.

Your support in achieving this sum would be greatly appreciated. Without funding, our essential work for the Commons and the community could be severely impacted.

You can donate via our website at
www.chislehurstcommons.uk or via [PayPal Giving](#).

Thank you!

Springtime at the Ponds



A family of coots at Rush Pond. Both parents take part in caring for the chicks and can often be seen feeding them with aquatic plants, or snails and larvae

brought up from the bottom of the pond.



There are at least two families of mallard ducklings at Rush Pond at the

moment. They are never still and can be heard calling for their mother when they venture too far.





Our resident pair of Egyptian geese and their seven surviving goslings are thriving. Their brood was eight, but one was predated whilst they were very small. Sadly, one of the youngsters (the one on the right, above) is showing signs of a condition known as “angel wing” on both flanks.

Angel wing is a condition that affects mostly waterfowl. The exact causes of angel wing have yet to be determined, although the prevailing theory relates to a diet that causes too-rapid growth. Human-fed bread is one of the probable causes, but other theories include; improper incubation, high protein, high energy diet, calcium, vitamin D, vitamin E, or manganese deficiency, insufficient exercise or heredity.

Bird Watch



The blackcap is known as the “Northern Nightingale” because of its melodious song. They migrate to the UK in spring from colder parts of Europe, but are increasingly staying here all year round.



The song thrush is a familiar bird of woodlands, gardens and scrub. It has a beautiful, loud song with repetitive phrases.

Although their diet includes fruit and worms, they are particularly known for eating snails which they break into by smashing them on a stone.

This one appears to have an early brood of chicks to feed.

May Flowers

The Commons are bright with spring flowers, in the woods, on the grassland and by the ponds. Here is a selection, but there are many more to find.



Marsh marigolds, with water mint in the background.



Bluebells, gradually becoming more established in our woodland.



Lesser celandine, edging pathways through St. Paul's Cray Common and

shining from grassland and verges.



Wood anemones. They appear in the dappled shade of woodlands before the trees come into full leaf.



Hawthorn, also known as May blossom, with its heady scent, is a welcome sign that summer is round the corner.

And Finally a Summer Snowflake!



As its name suggests, this plant, found in damp areas, flowers later in the year than snowdrops, although April is not quite summer.

Our Commons offer us all the opportunity to connect with the natural world. We will continue to do our best to maintain and preserve them for present and future generations.

[Click here to access a map of the Commons](#)



We are registered with Amazon Smile.

Visit smile.amazon.co.uk instead of the normal Amazon website and select Chislehurst Commons, and, for everything you buy, Amazon will donate 0.5% to help maintain the Commons. This is another excellent opportunity to support the greenspace on your doorstep.

**Show your support for Chislehurst's commonland
while you shop!**

THANK YOU!

Thanks for this month's photos to Peter Edwards, Kevin Jennings, Alan Porter, Ross Wearn and Mary Wheeler.

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



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

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