

Chilterns Commons Project

Chilterns
Commons
Project



LOTTERY FUNDED

2014 Annual Report

If 2013 was the year of information, 2014 has been the year of achievement. The Chilterns Commons Project continued to grow from strength to strength with even more people involved in even more activities. The communities around commons remain an intrinsic part of their survival and much of the Project's focus has been on local people.



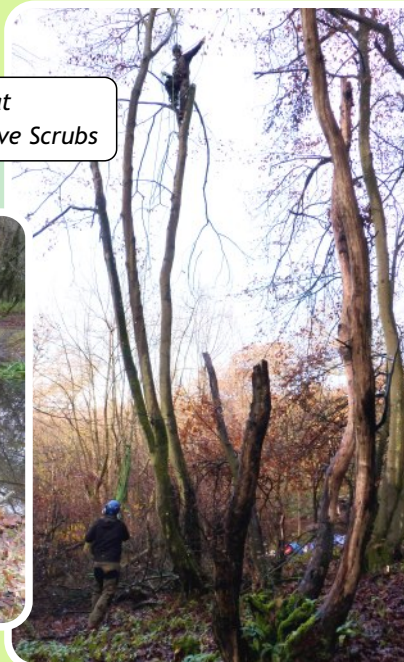
Imagine... exhibition. Photo: Colin Drake

Some facts and figures:

£388,660 of our total budget of £534,534 has now been spent.

13 commons have benefited from capital work, ranging from specialist tree surgery, to scrub clearance and pond restoration.

Tree work at
Maidensgrove Scrubs



Pond restoration
Ibstone common



more facts and figures:



Improving access at Watlington Chalk Pits. Photo: Robert Barber

8 more commons now have new interpretation boards - Berkhamsted, Cadmore End, Coleshill, Ley Hill, Naphill, Pitstone, Roughdown and Sheethanger

A further £15,850 has been allocated for spending in the next couple of months on practical work.



New interpretation board at Marlow Common. Photo: Chiltern Society

54 grants worth over £71,000 have funded a popular play trail on Nettlebed common, a witches broom making workshop on Cholesbury common, tools, surveys and more.

There were 19 training workshops in 2014, bringing the total to 41.

The project funded
 botanical surveys at Five Knolls on Dunstable Downs
 pond surveys at Ibstone and Cadmore End commons
 a geological survey on Marlow Common.



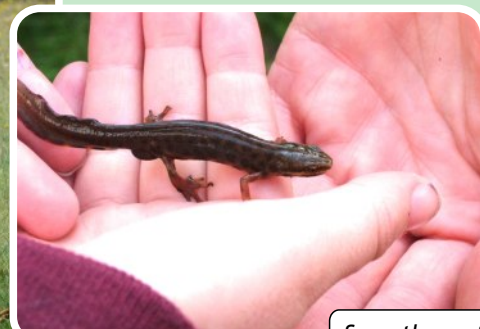
Witches broom making workshop at Cholesbury. Photo: Isobel Clark



Nettlebed Common play trail



Learning photographic composition. Photo: Hayley Watkins



Smooth newt

more facts and figures:

■ Pupils in Year 4 (8-9 year olds) at Chorleywood Primary School worked with visual artist James Aldridge to explore and document Chorleywood Common. See the [News](#) page for details.



Chorleywood Primary School
Year 4 pupils. Photo: James Aldridge



Budding artist at work

■ “Our *Imagine...* competition attracted entries inspired by commons from Hitchin to Sonning Common which were exhibited during the autumn. “The exhibition was wonderful, such a range of talent to take you on a journey across the Chiltern commons.” If you missed it, take a few minutes to look at the [online gallery](#).”



Imagine... exhibition. Totterhoe mini quilt by Laura Wagstaff

■ A new handbook “Surveying Wildlife in the Chilterns” was published, giving lots of advice and local contacts. It’s available as a [free download](#).



■ We’ve also produced a series of new self-guided walking routes linking Chilterns commons. These circular routes vary in length from 8 to 18 miles. The walks are on commons near Berkhamsted, near Great Missenden, between Chesham and Chipperfield, between Ewelme and Ibstone, and near Nettlebed. If you recently made a resolution to get fit, why not [download a walk](#) and explore the commons and countryside near you.

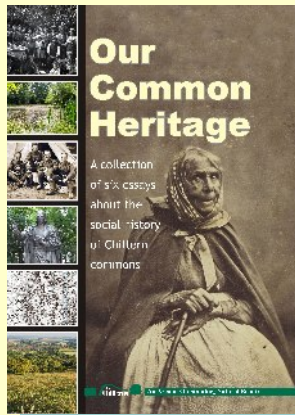


Forthcoming activities:

All good things must come to an end, but before it does, we have ...

Saturday 24 January - Our Common Heritage

Commons have a rich history and volunteers have researched aspects of the fascinating social history of Chiltern commons during the Project. In concluding our history project, some of the new research will be presented at this one-day conference - full details are [online](#). A few places still remain, but book soon to avoid disappointment!



Wednesday 11 March -

Identifying trees in winter

The final training workshop in our programme will teach you what to look for when you're trying to identify trees in winter when they are without those handy leaves! Details will be circulated nearer the date.

See [website](#) for resources from previous training courses.

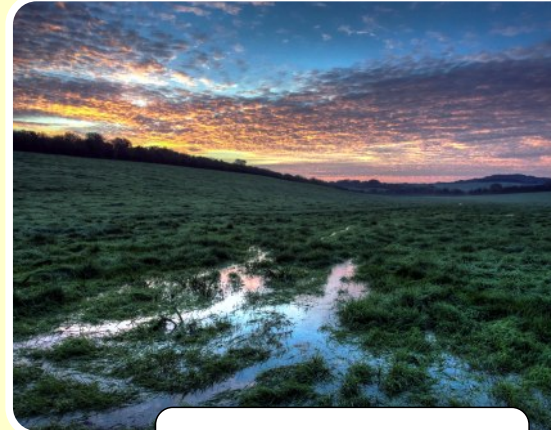


Photo: John Morris

Thursday 23 April - Local Spaces : Open Minds

Having looked back at the past, this one-day conference will look to the future. We will investigate the role of green spaces in the 21st century and identify approaches for their long-term stewardship.

Details will be circulated nearer the date.



Sunrise over Cow Common, Ewelme. Photo: Clive Ormonde

Sunday 21 June - The big picnic

Let's finish the project with a bang(er)! Organise a picnic on your common to celebrate the success of this project. Put the date in your parish/community diary and start planning. Ideas, support with advertising and some funding will be available from the Project soon.

Loose ends...

...Alongside these events, the last scheduled practical work will be completed. Rachel will be in touch with those who own or manage commons which have benefited from capital work to dot i's and cross t's on the Heritage Lottery Fund's legal paperwork.

And finally...

...it goes without saying that the success of this Project would not have been possible without the continuing and active support of our many partners and volunteers - **thank you**.



For more information about the Commons Project, please contact Rachel Sanderson on 01844 355525 or rsanderson@chilternsaonb.org

The Chilterns Conservation Board would like to thank our project partners including the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Chiltern Society for making the Commons Project possible.



an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

www.chilternsaonb.org/commons