

# Land Management Report

Report for the Greenham and Crookham Common Commission

January – March 2024

- The annual gorse cutting was completed by Heathland management Services and EJM. EJM purchased a new piece of equipment which worked well to cut gorse low to the ground without mulching it. This is shown attached to an excavator below.



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- The BBOWT team had 4 sessions burning gorse on the lozenges and at Crookham Pools. In total approximately 8 hectares of gorse were cut or burned this winter.
- There is now a tractor regularly based at Estovers with the cut and collect so more in-house cutting can be done. Work was completed in Feb to cut fire breaks and areas of low scrub, gorse and bramble at Goldfinch Bottom.
- The new short circular route discussed at the Commission previously is in progress. Work was completed in the winter to clear scrub and widen the path. The team will shortly be installing several waymarker posts to mark the

route. The route markers will use a silhouette of the control tower to distinguish it from the other routes on the Common. The image was drawn by our very talented trainee Anna Peacock.



- Except for a few single trees and a few areas of ash trees all the tree safety work was completed in March.
- The Warden team this year are Martha Pearce, Patrick Gaffney and Zoe Burfitt. Zoe is returning for her 5th year. Martha was a Wildlife Trainee with our reserves team in West Berkshire from May 2023-Feb 2024. Patrick comes to us with some wardening experience from Cumbria Wildlife Trust
- New permanent ground nesting bird signage was produced on aluminium backed boards. This is more robust than the Foamex used last year.
- The wardens have planned a series of events for the season including wildlife walks, family activities and the always-popular nightjar walks.
- The wardens are also running more pop-up events this year where they are stationed at a main gate and meet people as they come on to the site.
- The annual ground nesting bird surveys are under way. Lots of woodlark and Dartford warbler activity but it's still a little early for lapwings and little ringed plover though they have been seen on site. The first nightingale was heard on 8<sup>th</sup> April.
- The Field Team have been working on fencing repairs around the common including at the Control Tower car park, Bowdown car park, Bury's Bank Road near Lower Farm, Chamberhouse Farm entrance and Old Thornford Road.
- A number of security bollards have been installed at the Chamberhouse Farm entrance and Old Thornford Road after there was a break in on the business park where they came on and off via the Common. This left several damaged gates and sections of fencing.
- Our volunteer teams had further scrub clearing session at Crookham Pools and will be carrying out repairs to access features like gates, steps, boardwalks etc. through spring and summer.

- The adder tunnel project is well under way with the reptile fencing installed and the tunnel installation in progress. We will then have a range of monitoring activities to assess use of the tunnels by adders and other wildlife.



