

Studland Common Nature Reserve

(Site of Importance for Nature Conservation)



Higher Level Stewardship Agreement (Update Report – August 2014)

In October 2012 we published the first Report, which was widely circulated throughout the parish to explain the ten-year **Scrub Management and Grassland Restoration Project**, which Natural England are funding until 2022.

Capital funding has been provided to re-fence much of the Common, which is divided into two grazing compartments: the Meadow and the Common. The earlier report is available on the Parish Council website milfordonsea.org.uk.



Walkers, dogs and cattle - living in harmony

In the first two years, the following works have been undertaken in accordance with the HLS agreement prescriptions:

- All fences, gates and interpretation boards have installed.
- A disabled access track from Pless Road (Gate 18) to the Meadow constructed.

- New water supply and trough installed to supply both grazing compartments.
- Cattle grazing signs fitted to all access gates to tell users whether there are cattle grazing in either of the two compartments.
- Grazing of cattle re-introduced on both the Meadow and Common compartments for the first time in fifty + years.
- Half an hectare scrub reduction undertaken.
- Mechanical bracken flail and collection undertaken to help weaken its re-growth
- Ragwort pull and dog-fouling collected, before:
- Meadow hay-cut undertaken, providing 29 hay-bales for winter fodder for cattle – scalloped edges created to provide specific areas for invertebrates to breed and lay their eggs for the following year.
- Wildlife & flora surveys commenced to monitor management aspirations.
- Moth trap monitoring event undertaken by Pete Durnell (HCC) and MCV volunteers with 80+ different species identified.
- Flora survey undertaken by leading expert Martin Rand Vice-county Recorder – Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland, supported by MCV.
- Cross-compliance rules – monitoring report undertaken by the New Forest Land Advice Service – successfully achieved.



Pete Durnell and Moth survey volunteers on Studland Common

The autumn/winter work for 2014/15 is as follows:

- Removal of a further nine trees and ten saplings to be undertaken in the 2013 scrub clearance area to comply with Natural England requirements.
- Second 2014 Bracken flail & collect to reduce re-growth.
- September 2014 – hay-cut of Meadow.
- Autumn/winter 2014/15 second block reduction of .3ha scrub.
- Autumn/winter main tractor-flail & collect on the Common. We have been rotationally flailing this part of the Common for the past ten or so years. One side of the main grassland will be cut, leaving the other side to be cut in 2015. The rotational cutting programme ensures that we have good growth of target species: Dyer's Greenweed, Burnet Rose, Thyme and Harebell etc.
- June/July 2015 - Meadow hay-cut, which will again leave good scalloped margins for invertebrate havens.
- Grazing cattle will be placed onto the Common and Meadow in the spring.



Volunteers helping the cattle to graze Studland Common!

*Or, Martin Rand - Vice-County Recorder - Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland
searching for four extremely small species of clover with MCV volunteers*

Studland Community Orchard

The Orchard project does not form part of the HLS scheme and the work is being sponsored by public subscription, but has been included here for information to the community. We have had several sponsorship gifts from residents and a substantial grant has been made by the Milford Conservation Volunteers (MCV) to the project.

The MCV have been clearing, burning and flailing the scrub from the central parts of the Orchard, which makes it look a lot larger. Hedges have been retained all around the site to give the trees some protection. Cattle grazing the Meadow area will have free access into the Orchard – but will be kept away from the trees (and fruit) by substantial wooden fencing guards. The area will not be ‘manicured’ and hopefully, by the time it has been restocked with trees, it will look much like a traditional orchard.



Studland Orchard gradually being opened up ready for planting in the autumn

Butterflies have been prolific in the Orchard and have already included: Marbled White, Small Skipper, Essex Skipper, Gatekeeper, Speckled Wood and Meadow Brown, as well as the more usual Large and Small Whites, Small Blue, Comma, Red Admiral and Peacock.

The programme is to plant a few fruit trees each season to supplement the existing apple and cherry trees already in the Orchard.