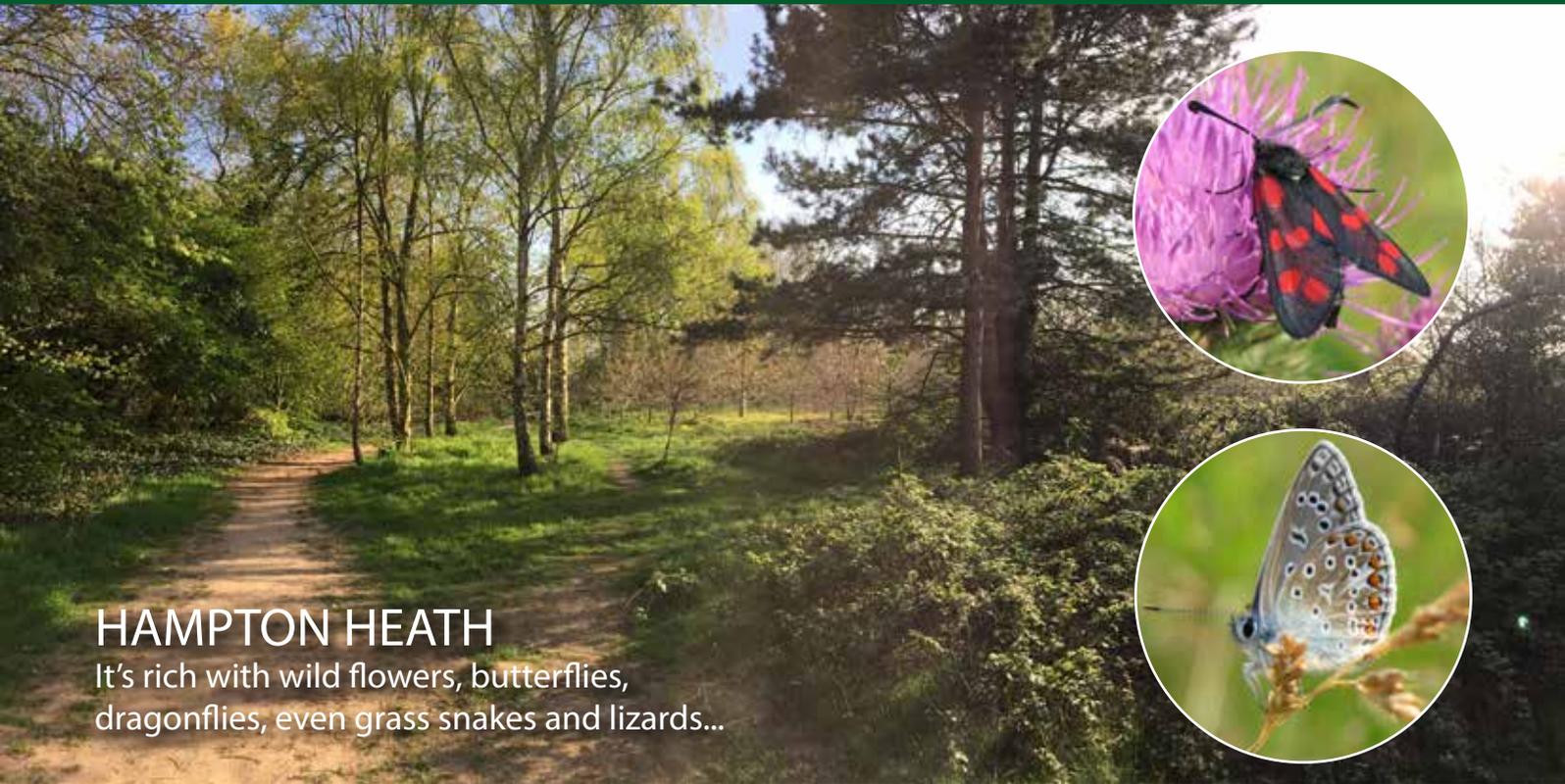


Hampton Heath Friends 2022



HAMPTON HEATH

It's rich with wild flowers, butterflies, dragonflies, even grass snakes and lizards...



How it all started

In 2020, Covid hit us all. During lockdown, many of us found comfort in rediscovering local, forgotten green spaces. The regenerating grassland and scrub around David Lloyd in Hampton, may have been rough and ready, but it was an increasingly welcome opportunity to reconnect with nature.

By the summer of 2021, a social media appeal by Art Gelling, a local resident and Landscape Architect, brought together around 20 residents for a highly productive community litter-pick – removing over 20 bags of litter in a couple of hours. But we were barely scratching the surface. We needed a serious, sustained effort, and in December 2021, “Hampton Heath Friends” was constituted to clean up and conserve the habitats, and promote access and awareness of our lost, local, heathland heritage with the help of a local charity, Habitats & Heritage, who supplied tools and litter bags.

Since January 2022, our community has grown to over 85 people by engaging with visitors to the site and inviting local residents to join us by displaying posters created by our volunteers.



Litter clearing

Hampton heathland had accumulated 2 decades of rubbish and debris. We have removed something like 230 or 240 sacks of rubbish, plus fly-tipped rubble, tyres and debris, collected around 3000 golf balls, which we gave back to the golf club. Here's just a fraction of the litter we have cleared from Hampton Heath so far. Visitors and dog walkers to the Heath have really noticed the difference our work has made.

We've also written to Sainsburys to encourage them to deal with the litter which regularly blows across from their garage forecourt – especially the ubiquitous blue gloves.



Out of the Ashes - August 2022

After the Bank Holiday fire on the Heath, a group of us collected and removed 16 bags of cans, congealed plastic, glass bottles and fly-tipped pet waste, two burnt out push-scooters, a charred bicycle, some tubing – and the ironing board in a couple of hours on Sunday morning. We harnessed the destructive power of a fire to “deep clean” 1.5Ha of grassland and scrub... a habitat “reboot”.



The fire uncovered a huge amount of rubbish



After 2 hour clean up operation



Grassland after the fire



Grassland starting to recover



A stunning lizard appeared from among the ashes while we were clearing litter.



Fungi starting to grow

Biodiversity

By the end of 2022 we had recorded 369 different species living on the Heath – including several IUCN red-listed (threatened or rare).



Biodiversity

We aim to expand the range of native wildflower species and enhance the habitats on site, through management and careful reintroduction using only locally and sustainably collected sources.



Biodiversity

Expanding the range of wildflowers will help a wider range of butterflies, bees and other pollinators and invertebrates to re-establish.









We have started the management of what could develop into some very special grassland habitat.

We have rehabilitated a tired, litter-strewn, forgotten area and given it new life, and a new identity.

We have opened out paths to make them more accessible and safer to use.



We have begun the process of reintroducing plants that "should" be present – using local seed and cuttings.



We have glimpsed the power of the changing climate to take out even the most robust British trees.

We have worked with local ecologists and are working with others in the area to develop outline management and habitat plans.



**Hampton
Heath
Friends**

Local History

We have researched local history, maps, aerial photographs from the area's origins as part of Hounslow Heath, through enclosure into fields in the 1800s, to use as a golf course in the early 20th century, and wartime allotments.



Please see link below, for reference.

<https://www.crouchrarebooks.com/maps/rocques-fine-separately-issued-map-of-middlesex-1>

Community Spirit

Hampton Heath Friends has created opportunities for people to share common interests and form new friendships which contributes to the well-being of the community. David Lloyd has kindly provided free refreshments for our volunteers at their club, which has been great for team building after a few hours hard work.

Just by being seen to care, we have increased awareness and raised expectations for what is possible locally, and provided opportunities for those who wish to make a difference.



For more, or to receive our weekly email newsletter please contact

hamptonheathfriends@outlook.com

or visit www.hamptonheath.org

