

## Commons Committee Report

The Commons Committee is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the East Common, including the Play Equipment; the West Common including the New Pond and Latchmoor Pond, the Bulstrode Camp, and the various footpaths that cross the Parish.

The past 12 months have been eventful for both East and West Commons

### West Common

On the West Common, the Holly clearance works, subsidised by the Forestry Commission, have now been completed. The removal of the Holly has vastly improved the visual amenity of the West Common and it is expected that the newly cleared areas will allow for more desirable woodland species to resurface over the coming months and years. In November of 2014, the fresh Holly growth was re treated with weed killer. Also on the West Common, the Footpath that was created in 2013 enabling pedestrians and wheel chair users alike to travel from the Packhorse Road outside the Wildwood restaurant, across to the Oxford Road opposite the Bull Hotel, has been extended. The path now runs across the bus turning circle outside the Wildwood restaurant and completes a network of footpaths that today run all the way around and through the West and East Commons from opposite The Bull Hotel and terminating at the pedestrian underpass on the Oxford Road near the Apple Tree.

### Latchmoor and New Pond

At Latchmoor Pond, we have continued with the ongoing maintenance by removing the Willow slips and continuing with the removal of any new growth around the Pond's Edge. We are involved in a constant maintenance schedule of New Pond, specifically with regard to the cutting back of the bull rushes and the regular water surface treatment which needs to be carried out twice a year to control the presence of algae.

### East Common

On the East Common, during the winter and early Spring period of 2014/15, the Forestry Commission subsidised Holly clearance works, which had already been carried out on the West Common, primarily focussing on the section of the Common bordering the A40 (Oxford Road) opposite St James Church. This work will continue into 2016 until the bulk of the Holly growth has been removed.

As a result of the deterioration of the main East Common footpath which runs through the centre of the Common from the underpass on the A40 (Oxford Road) to the Packhorse Road by Hartley Court, the surface has been completely removed and re-laid. Unfortunately, the work was carried out in poor weather. Coupled with the fact that the footpath was in constant daily use by pedestrians throughout the entire period of the works, there are a few issues with water sitting in dips in the footpath. The Council will be getting the contractor back to fix any issues with the footpath in the Spring of 2015 when the weather has improved sufficiently to allow us to address these issues.

To commemorate the centenary of World War I, a new bench has been installed at the Underpass end of East Common.

Both of the Commons continue to see regular use. The Football club continues to use the West Common throughout the winter and Phil Mooney has done excellent work with keeping the area of West Common used by the footballers in good condition in and out of season. The Fun Run which was held on Sunday the 11th May 2014 attracted over 1,200 participants

All users of the Commons, whether it be the Football club or the various fitness organisations training on the common are asked to ensure that other residents and users of the common are not disturbed (as relates to the Bye Laws). We always strive to make these groups aware of good 'commons etiquette' whenever they seek permission to use the common.

The Play equipment on the East Common continues to be a very popular community attraction with parents from outside of the village travelling in to Gerrards Cross to use the excellent facilities.

The equipment had its annual safety inspection carried out in August of 2014 and no major issues were reported. All issues were rated as either 'low' or 'very low risk'.

#### Bulstrode Camp

On the Bulstrode Camp, during the winter of 2014/15, a new set of steps down were built running down the edge of the horse rail into the Valley Way entrance. The entrance from the Windsor Road where the path opens out onto the Camp has recently been resurfaced. This work will help reduce the build-up of mud in what has traditionally been a water logged spot during bad weather.

#### Best Kept Village

As I am sure most of you are aware, our Village is entering the Best Kept Village competition in 2015. We are due to be judged during June 2015. From a community perspective, we still have a lot of tidying up work to carry out during April and May. We would encourage all residents to play their part in cleaning up any areas which are under their control. Also, we would be grateful if residents could report on any issues that they might be aware of such as builders' equipment or debris being left unmanaged inside or outside of a property. This applies especially to the conservation areas around the East and the West Commons, the Camp, and the centre of the village.

#### Ann Mitchell

Finally, I would to pay a tribute to the late Ann Mitchell who passed away in 2014, a former Parish Councillor of many years standing who played a leading role in the Commons Committee and also helped with the work of the Gerrards Cross Conservation Volunteers. Even when Ann was too frail to physically attend the GXCV meetings, Ann still continued to help out by providing refreshments to the Volunteers on a Saturday morning, this work continuing until the last year of her life. She will be sorely missed.