

Proposed basic FOLK work party programme for October 2023 to March 2024

Status report 26/03/2024 – work completed shown by ~~striketrough~~ font; purple font shows notes or additional work undertaken

Note that, according to Natural England rules, scrub clearance and grass cutting should be curtailed between 1st March and 15th July (and tree removal between 1st March and 31st August). These restrictions do not apply to footpath maintenance or restoration work which can be done with caution.

References below to 'Old Areas' relate to those shown in the Broad Habitats figure on page 36 of the 2003 Management Plan. References to 'QGIS Grids' and 'QGIS Gorse Areas' relate to the mapping model created from the 2018 drone survey data.

The priority for work items identified below are indicated in green font. Notes, e.g. on progress, are shown in red font.

Work carried over from previous periods

- Old Area 3: clear up and burn brash from fallen tree High
- Tidy up around the re-built Cotswold stone wall and memorial wall areas, and place stone debris into old quarry holes to create habitats High
- Annual cutting as required on:
 - Brownstone Quarry (including mowing grass and further tree/scrub removal) Medium

Routine work

- Gorse cutting and chemical treatment
 - ~~In low density area at the East end of the Common (local to QGIS Gorse Area 52 and above)~~ High
 - ~~West half of Old Area 25, above and to East of Pond~~ High
 - ~~Continue in Area 18/QGIS Gorse Area 29 fly orchid area (treat a proportion)~~ Medium
 - ~~On Old Area 22 ledge/QGIS Gorse Area 25 (remove blocks and widen path)~~ Medium
 - Clear gorse regrowth in fire breaks in Old Area 28; consider cutting back edges by approximately 2m to move fire breaks sideways Medium
 - Clear gorse regrowth in Old Area 3 (combine with grass brushcutting) Medium
- As required by the Wardens: clear growth, demolish the old Cotswold stone wall, move new and old stone in preparation for reconstruction High

New work suggestions

- Clear/cut back scrub (particularly hawthorn and bramble and cotoneaster), following the guidance in the end notes, from:
 - ~~The lower levels of the Common starting from the West end and working towards Windass~~ High
 - ~~Areas at the top of Sandy Lane and alongside Five Ways~~ High
 - ~~Alongside (NE of) the Gallops~~ High
 - Area 16 Medium
- ~~Complete the haloing around the veteran ash trees~~ High

Additional Work

- ~~Burning gorse cut by contractors~~
- ~~Brushcutting sidings~~

Prepared by Geoff Holt (with support/advice)

16th November 2023

26th March 2024 (final status report)

End Notes:

- Remove and treat scrub (e.g. bramble, hawthorn, gorse) where it is blocking/restricting access or encroaching onto and shading grassland
- Manage small/medium patches of scrub by rotational cutting a proportion at a time
- Manage larger areas of scrub, particularly mixed scrub, by pushing back edges to recover from encroachment and to re-expose grassland (the removal of very large blocks of gorse are being addressed separately)
- Where appropriate, the edges of scrub (e.g. of bramble rather than mixed scrub) can be pushed slightly further back than the grass line to encourage expansion of grassland, but not pushed back too far which could encourage colonisation by coarse species
- Remove and treat small/medium hawthorn
- Generally retain larger hawthorn except where thinning is appropriate
- The spreading lower branches of larger hawthorn (and other trees such as coppiced hazel) can be removed to improve light penetration to grassland below
- Removal of scrub, or other growth, in generally shaded areas is low priority