

Climate and Ecological Emergency Report, April 2022.

1. Trees.

- The Landmark Tree planted in November to commemorate the purchase of the field and the Queen's Platinum Jubilee has sadly become a victim of what appears to be arson. The supporting stake and the wood chip mulch surrounding the tree was ignited during the night of 16th/17th April. A full report has been made to Devon and Cornwall Police.
- A monthly rota has been agreed so that Cllrs Willey and Fletcher, with the help of two residents, will be able to adequately manage the brambles and other aggressive species on the A388 tree planting. The aim of the management regime is only to control those species that might overwhelm or impede the growth of the trees in these first few years. We do not intend to eliminate the many species of wild flowers that have spontaneously appeared in the two years since the bramble thicket was cleared. We have there a good example of how native wildflowers can recover given a sympathetic mowing regime.

2. Wildflowers.

It cannot be stressed too much how vital it is to nurture wildflower habitats. These are a vital resource for the pollinators that are essential for the production of our fruit and vegetables. These all have to be pollinated. It is a mistake to think that this is all done by honey bees. Numerous studies have found that "wild" bees are much more effective pollinators than honey bees. They are also more numerous. Honey bees are only really interested in nectar and try to avoid pollen if possible. The opposite is true of wild bees such as mason bees. They collect pollen to take back to their nest as a food source for their developing larvae. Fruit and vegetables flower for relatively short periods at different times throughout the season. There will therefore be gaps in the availability of pollen for wild pollinators. This is why it is so important that wild flowers are available in sufficient quantities throughout the year to act as a food source for the pollinators when cultivated crops are not in flower.

Hatt roundabout has had a 5m sight line cut north to south across the middle, as well as a 1m cut round the circumference. Cuckoo flowers are now in bloom along with a profusion of dandelions which are much appreciated by pollinators as an early food source. Some meadow cranesbill seedlings have been planted too. Ox-eye daisies and knapweed will soon be in flower too.

Cllr Malcolm Fletcher.