



**August 2024**



The scores have been added up, and the results are in!

Following an on-site visit by two inspectors, we have again been awarded the Green Flag, an internationally recognised benchmark for the management of green spaces. It is testament to the hard work and dedication of the whole team at Chislehurst Commons - the Keepers, Trustees and all the volunteers who

support the commons in so many ways. Our thanks to *idverde*, who sponsored us and supported our entry.

But we are not complacent. We recognise the challenges of climate change, funding, diseases that attack our trees such as ash dieback, and the issues of litter and maintenance that the Keepers deal with daily.

The commons, with their varied habitats and wildlife, are a unique feature of Chislehurst, and one we will continue to do our best to maintain and enhance for present and future generations.

Today, as for centuries past, they also provide a space where the community can gather together.

## **August Family Mornings**

It's holiday time, and this summer we are offering Family Mornings on the Commons where you can enjoy time in the open air with a nature trail, craft activities, exploration of the natural environment and much more.

Just drop in and join us!

Mondays 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> August from 10.00 – 12.30 on the common opposite the Crown.

# *Family Mornings*

## *On Chislehurst Common*

**Come and have fun exploring the local environment!**



**Free Activities**  
– hosted by  
**Chislehurst Commons**

### Drop in and join us!

between **10 am and 12.30**  
on **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> August, Monday 12<sup>th</sup> August and**  
**Monday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024**

**Where:** on the common opposite The Crown,  
School Road, Chislehurst.

#### **Nature Trail–**

What will you find on  
the way?



#### **Art and Craft**

- design and  
make



#### **Discovery Table**

- find interesting things  
to put on display.



**And meet the team from Chislehurst Library!**

**Children must be accompanied by an adult, and remain their responsibility at all times.**

## **Chislehurst Creates – Back for its Second Year**



# CHISLEHURST Creates

... a journey  
through time

**Saturday  
14th Sept  
1-5pm**

Creative Fun on the  
Commons  
(Watts Lane/School Rd)

Art and Craft Activities • Entertainment  
Tea Tent • Face Painting and more!  
For ticket information see **Chislehurst Creates**  
on social media or scan the code:  
[www.chislehurstcreates.org](http://www.chislehurstcreates.org)

Ticket info:  
  
chislehurstcreates.org

Instagram: @chislehurst\_creates Facebook: Chislehurst Creates

All proceeds go towards the upkeep  
of our beautiful commons

CHISLEHURST COMMONS  
Registered Charity No. 3038221

With huge thanks to our fabulous local sponsors

THE COCKPIT  
JAN ANGLICAN

The Chislehurst Society

jdm  
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SINCE 1890  
SHEPHERD NEAME  
BRITAIN'S OLDEST BREWER

(more sponsor details to follow)

THE LOTUS  
AT FROGPOL

Booking is now open for this exciting event!

It takes place at the Cockpit on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September.

Come along and join in the amazing variety of art and crafts on offer, or come along to watch and enjoy a coffee and a cake.

We look forward to seeing you.

All proceeds will go towards maintaining and developing our wonderful commons.

Click on this link to TicketSource <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/chiscommons> to purchase tickets in advance.

**Discover our (not so) Shady Past**









On a sunny summer's day the woodland paths across the commons are particularly inviting, offering dappled shade, tinged with leafy green.



But the shady walks we enjoy today are a relatively recent development.

Throughout most of their long history as a valuable and accessible greenspace for the local community, the commons were a heathland of heather, bracken, grass and brambles, with few trees.



The hot and weary traveller, the waggoner walking beside his heavy load, or the local resident collecting firewood, or nuts and berries, had only banks of gorse to provide shelter and shade.



Local people had the right to graze their few household animals on the common – sheep, cows, horses, poultry and pigs – and tree seedlings were eaten or trampled.



This is a painting of St. Paul's Cray Common from 1875.

In 1873, reporting on the funeral of Emperor Napoleon, the London Standard carried the following description of Chislehurst.

*“There is a motionless windmill on a hill, a cluster of cabins placidly sheltering in a ridge, a church, a rough, furze -covered Common, two taverns – that is Chislehurst.”* (furze is another name for gorse)

Gradually, as life changed, fewer grazing animals were kept, and the postcards below show how the woodlands began to develop across the 180 acres once grazing ceased altogether.



This view across the common to St. Nicholas School is postmarked 1904.



The War Memorial junction before 1920 when the War Memorial was



constructed.



Silver birch is a natural pioneer species, and quickly colonized the open land of the commons. With its white papery bark and graceful canopy, it is an attractive feature of a summer woodland walk.

Few of the trees on the common are older than 150 years, and many are much younger.

It is difficult to calculate the age of a tree without cutting it down and counting the growth rings, but, as trees grow outwards each year, their girth is some guide. However, different species have different growth rates, and growing conditions vary, so it is only a rough indication.





A few older specimens do survive on the commons. Trees were often used to mark boundaries or roadways. This oak could be 250 years old and stands at the far end of St. Paul's Cray Common, marking the boundary with, what is



now, National Trust land.



We have a better idea of the ages of trees that were planted to commemorate



events. The oak tree in the foreground near the War Memorial junction, is about 115 years old. It was planted as a young sapling in 1911 for the coronation of George V, and the lime trees in the background near the village sign were planted for Queen Victoria's Jubilees, so are about 25 years older.



There are some magnificent trees along the roads crossing the common and the working party have taken time to clear undergrowth so that the shape and spread are more visible.





A healthy woodland needs trees of different ages, so we regularly plant saplings like this hazel to ensure that the commons will continue to offer shade and inviting pathways for future generations, as they do for us today.





The two commons of Chislehurst, Chislehurst Common and St. Paul's Cray Common, are managed by a Board of Trustees, established under an Act of Parliament.

The Act protects the 180 acres but provides no funding, and the



generosity of local people and the time given by volunteers are vital.

The knowledge and dedication of the two full-time Keepers are invaluable. Everyone else who works to preserve and maintain the area does so voluntarily.

If you would like to support the work of maintaining and enhancing the commons.

**you can donate via our website**

**[www.chislehurstcommons.uk](http://www.chislehurstcommons.uk)**

**or via PayPal Giving**

**Thank you!**

## **Woodland Wildlife**

The woodlands are home to a variety of wildlife, from the invertebrates that help to recycle the leaf litter and fallen branches, to birds and mammals such as squirrels and wood mice – all part of the biodiversity of the 180 acres.



A juvenile green woodpecker on the trunk of a tree on St. Paul's Cray Common.





A speckled wood butterfly in the sunshine along a woodland path.

## Woodland Flora



The woodlands also provide a habitat for a variety of plants like this honeysuckle.





This is enchanter's nightshade, in flower now along woodland paths.

## **And Finally – a Heron Displays its Wings**



No herons have been recorded on our monthly bird counts at the ponds since August 2023, but this one appeared at Prickend Pond on Sunday, possibly attracted by the lower water levels.

**The beautiful commons of Chislehurst have been an amenity for the local community for centuries, providing shelter and shade, and glorious summer views of the natural world for us to enjoy as we go about our daily lives.**



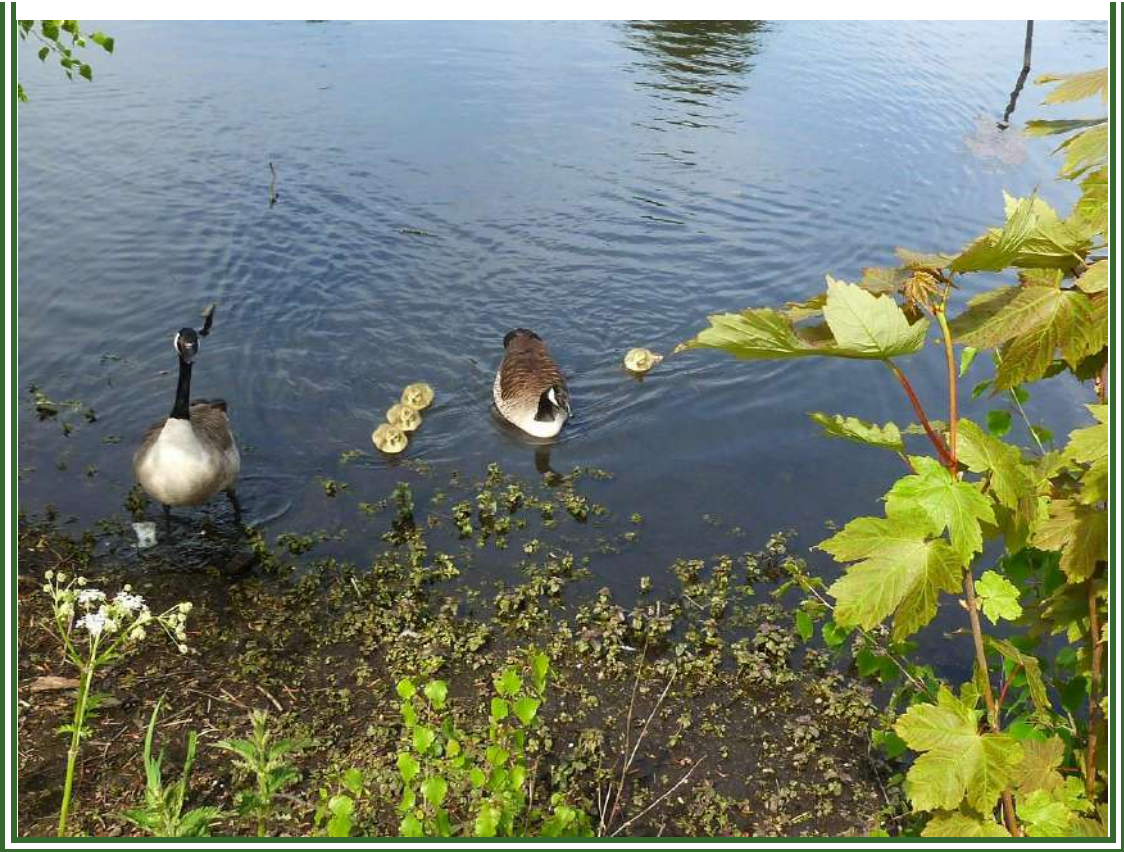
**The team at Chislehurst Commons will continue to do their best to preserve and enhance them for both current and future generations.**

**Get your bird seed at Champion Wines.**

**We are grateful to Champion Wines for stocking packets of seed on our behalf. This food is healthier for the birds than bread or products made from flour.**

**All proceeds go to Chislehurst Commons.**

**When the birds stop eating, please stop feeding!  
Food left on the ground or floating on the water will  
attract rats!**



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## Animal Rescue Advice Organisations

**Thanks for this month's photos to – Peter Edwards, Kevin Jennings, Ross Wearn, Charlie Wheeler, Mary Wheeler and Peter Woodward.**

**Thanks also to the Editorial Team – Christine Wearn, Ross Wearn and Mary Wheeler.**



**Chislehurst Commons are proud to display the Green Flag Award logo.**

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