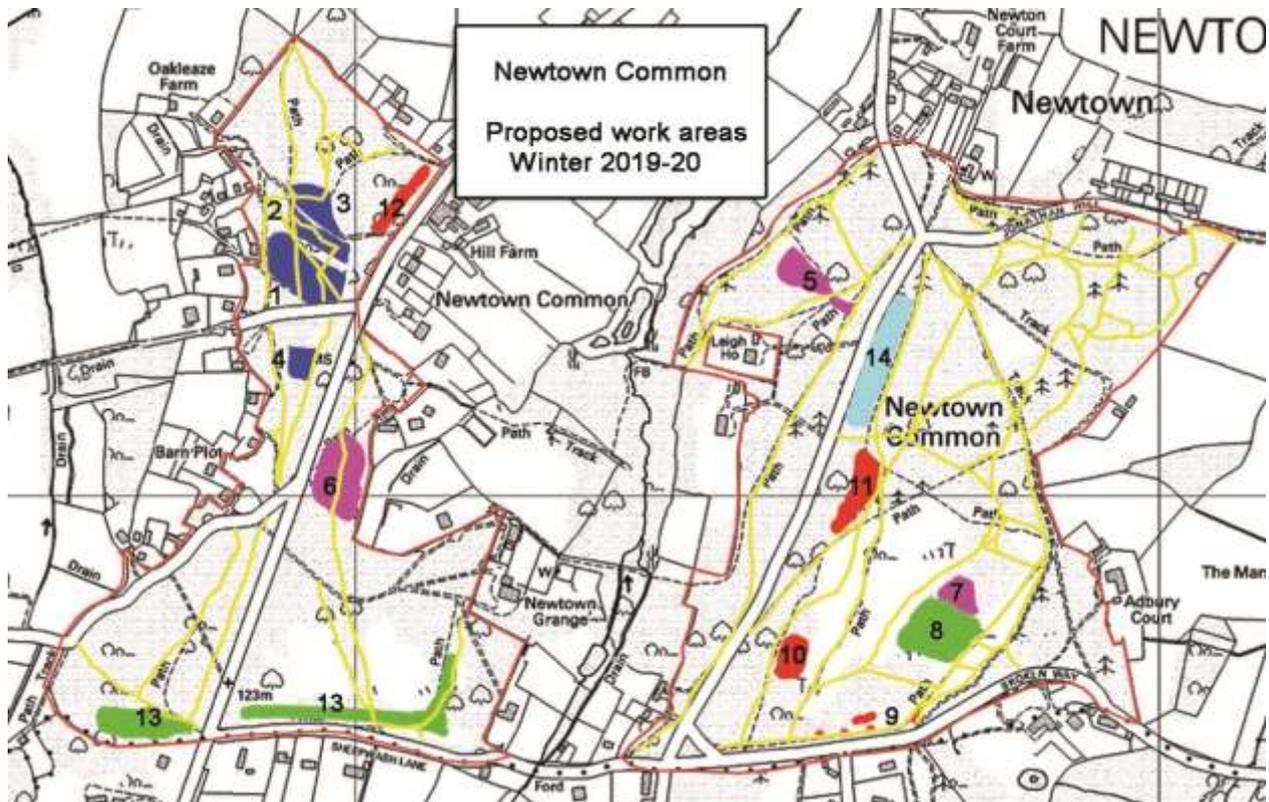
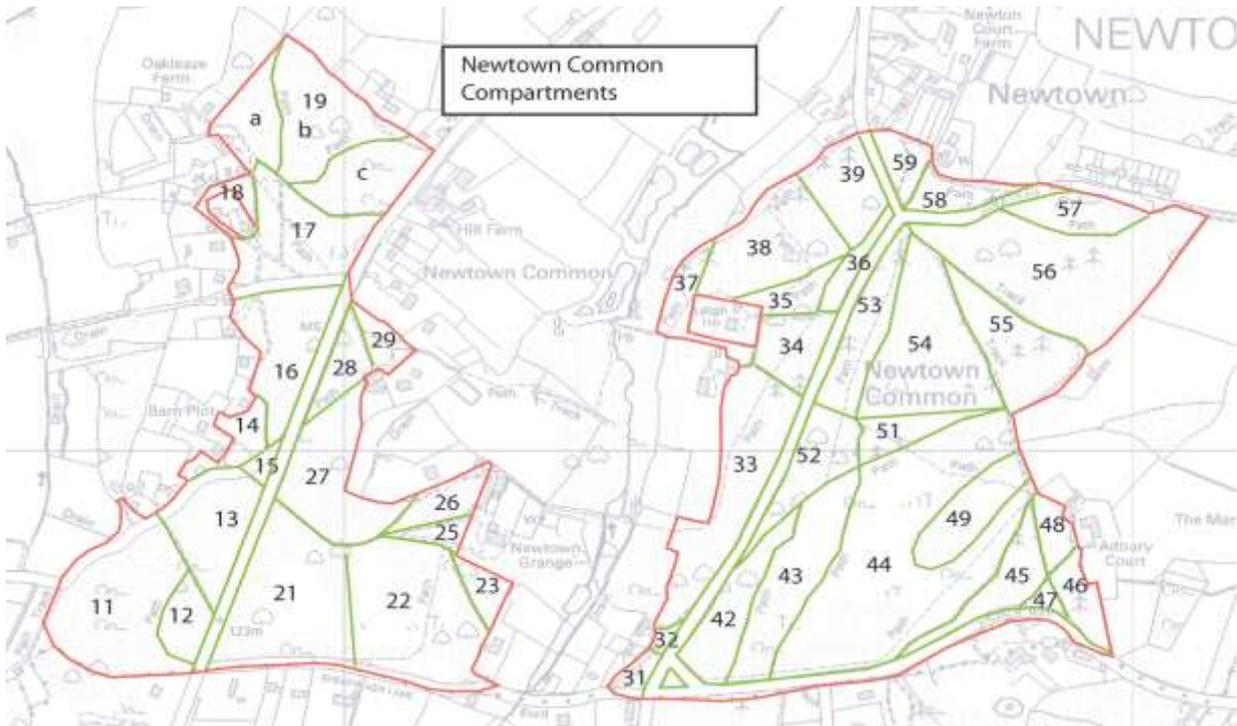


Newtown Common Management works – 2019-20

Report covering the period 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020

(Compartment numbers are those used in original SJM Management Plan – 1984 and are referred to in the text below)



Map included in the Parish Council's leaflet distributed to homes throughout the Parish in advance of the main management work period October-March. Work was carried out in all of the areas identified on this map.

April

Green Gym spent a day cutting scrub and undergrowth near the Horris Hill drive (Cpt17). Sue and I spent the following day burning the cut material as it had been too dry for a bonfire the previous day.

Green Gym spent a day cutting Holly to the East of the B4640 (Cpt 27).

May

Green Gym spent a day cutting mainly Holly near the Horris Hill drive.

The first of the annual Nightjar survey evenings coordinated by the Greenham Common Rangers took place on 24 May.

June

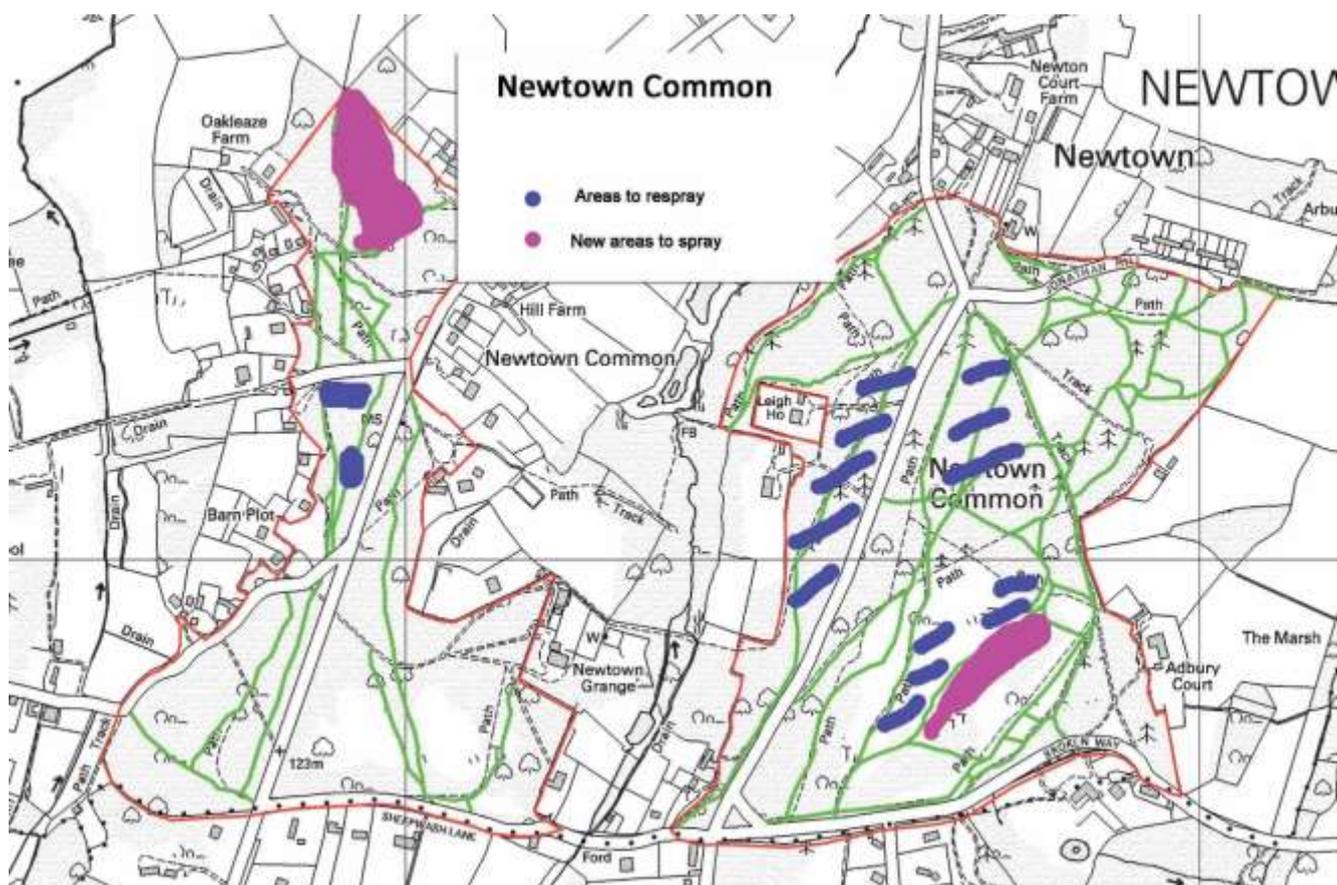
A count of the Heath Spotted Orchids in Coldlands Gully revealed 20 flowering plants (Cpt 49). A count in June 2018 had found 77 plants. The decrease may possibly be explained by the subsequent very hot summer of 2018.

2 further Nightjar surveys took place on 7 and 21 June. Birds were recorded from both the East and West (Sheepwash – (Cpt 21-22)) sections of the Common. The surveyors also recorded Woodcock from both areas. I led a well-attended Nightjar walk on 6th. Several birds were seen and heard.

The Management Committee met on site to look at past and potential future work in the area to the West of the B4640.

July

On the 12th, Heathland Management Services (HMS) sprayed c3hectares of Bracken in the areas shown on the map below, at a cost of £1,368 (paid from the parish Council's Higher Level Stewardship funds).



A count of the Broad-leaved Helleborines (orchids) on the verges of the C45 was made the same day – 32 plants were found on the East verge, 8 on the West verge.

I spent 2 days spraying scrub regrowth on the eastern Common and near Horris Hill (using 15 litres of dilute Glyphosate).

Green Gym spent a day cutting Holly to the East of the B4640.

August

Green Gym spent a day cutting Holly to the East of the B4640.
The Hampshire Fungus Group held a foray on the Common on 4th.

September

I spent 2 days spraying scrub regrowth on the eastern Common (using 16 litres of dilute Glyphosate) (Ctps 42-43-44)

October

HMS spent 2 days using a flail mulcher to reduce several areas of large scrub on both eastern and western parts of the Common. (See photos at the end of this document.)
Sparsholt College students spent 1 day to begin work in an area to the north of the Horris Hill drive (Cpt 19b-c).
I spent 2 days clearing some of the arisings from the HMS flailing work (Cpt 52) in preparation for a Green Gym task on 28th when they completed the work in one section and burnt much of the flailed material.
Sue and I pulled 200 Pine seedlings from the area between the C45 and Horse Path (Cpt 42).
I spent 2 days felling Holly to the East of the B4640 (Cpt 27).

November

Green Gym worked on 2 days – burning the Holly which I'd cut to the East of the B4640; and clearing the southern area of flailed scrub near the Horse Path (Cpt 43) where I also spent 2 days chain-sawing additional trees which had either been too big for the flail or which had been damaged by it.
Sparsholt students spent a further 4 days working in the area to the north of the Horris Hill drive.
There was a very poorly attended Village Work party on 17th intended to clear scrub between the C45 and the Green Path (Cpt 53).
A meeting was held with HCC to discuss tree safety and management issues.

December

Sparsholt students spent 1 day felling in the area to the South of the Horris Hill drive (Cpt 16).
Sue & I spent 2 days burning material cut by Green Gym near Horris Hill at their task in May when it had been too dry to have a bonfire.
Green Gym spent 2 days cutting scrub in and around the edges of the open area to the West of the C45 near the bus-stop (Cpts 35-36-38).
I cut up and removed a fallen tree from the western wayleave (Cpt 12) in advance of HMS spending 2 days cut-and-collect flailing this and other areas on the Common.

January

Sue and I spent time on 13 days pulling 7,880 Pine seedlings from the Eastern and Sheepwash areas of the Common.
Green Gym spent a further day cutting and burning scrub in and around the edges of the open area to the West of the C45 near the bus-stop.
A much better attended Village Work party took place on 19th with a considerable amount of scrub cut and burned in the area between the C45 and the Green Path. Sue & I spent to following morning cutting and burning more scrub in the same area (Cpt 53).

February

Sue and I spent time on 5 days pulling 1,260 Pine seedlings from the Eastern Common and on 3 days pulling 3,200 Holly seedlings on the East side of the C45 (Cpt 52).
After trying but failing to contact the besom-maker, Brad Nash, Green Gym spent a day cutting the Birch on the Eastern Common (Cpt 44) which it had been intended that he would cut and remove. 10 days after it had been cut I had a call from Brad asking if there was any Birch for him to cut – he subsequently came and removed all that Green Gym had cut (luckily it had been too dry and windy to have a bonfire on the day it was cut!).
Green Gym spent a further day cutting scrub (largely Alder Buckthorn) below Bab's bench and in Coldlands Gully (Cpt 44-49). It was too dry to burn and was left as piles for subsequent disposal.
I spent a day chain-sawing Holly to the East of the B4640 for Green Gym to burn in March.
Sparsholt students spent 2 days felling to the South of the Horris Hill drive (Cpt 16).

A site meeting was held with Natural England, Defra and Rural Payments Agency staff for them to see the heathland restoration and management work paid for through the HLS scheme which they fund. Storms Ciara and Denis caused some damage to trees (fallen limbs etc) in various parts of the Common.

March

Sparsholt students spent 2 days felling and stump grinding to the South of the Horris Hill drive to finish their winter programme on the Common. Sue & I spent a day burning up the brash from this work.

Green Gym spent a day burning up the Holly which I'd felled to the East of the B4640 in February. They spent a further 2 days starting cutting holly on the East side of the footpath in the same section of the Common before all their work ceased due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

Sue & I pulled a further 100 Pine seedlings from the Eastern Common – making a total for the year of c9,600.

In summary:

I worked on Newtown Common on 71 days during the year.

There were 14 Green Gym days (c210 half-days), 5 contractor days (Mowing & Bracken spraying),

10 Sparsholt Student days (c70 days) and 2 Village work-parties (c20 half-days).

Simon Melville

18 April 2020



South end of Horse Path – before flailing



...after flailing to improve access for walkers



West edge of Eastern wayleave near Adbury Holt – flailing gorse – before and after



Path at Northern end of Wayleave – sides flailed to improve access for walkers



Creating 'windows' through scrub between wayleave and open heath beside Adbury Holt lane



Flailing beside Horse Path – before

and after



Flailing mature scrub beside Horse Path – machine reverses into scrub pushing it over and cutting stems



Several 'passes' are required by the machine – subsequent brush mostly later cleared by Green Gym



Flailing Northern end of wayleave West of B4640 – new area not previously mown.



As above.



Green Gym volunteers clearing and burning brash after flailing work



Sparsholt forestry students under instruction and working in Cpts 17 and 19c.



August on the Eastern Common looking northwards down to Coldlands Gully across previous Pine woodland.