

**GLORIOUS COTSWOLDS GRASSLANDS STEERING GROUP**

**Summary:** To review the progress of Glorious Cotswolds Grasslands (GCG)

**Recommendation:** That the Executive Committee notes the report

**Report by:** Mark Connelly, Land Management Lead

**MEMBERS OF THE GROUP**

- Nick Bumford
- Rebecca Charley
- Stephen Dawson (external)
- Mark Smith (external)

**MEETINGS SINCE THE LAST EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

1. The Steering Group met on 14 June 2021 at Old Sodbury Village Hall, followed by a site visit to Dyrham Park.
2. Key points from the meeting:
  - Five sites have been spring sowed. Sorting out the forthcoming seed harvesting and sowing season due to start in July continues. To date 25 donor sites and 30 recipient sites lined up including the 20ha for the Severn Trent Water contract.
  - The equine event was sold out and feedback has been very positive and has led, so far, to three site visits including a racehorse stables.
  - GCG volunteers continue to help with botanical surveys and new volunteers are coming forward to help with harvesting and sowing.
  - Line management of GCG is passing to Simon Smith, Nature Recovery Lead, to enable Mark to set up and lead the FiPL Programme.

**OTHER ACTIVITY**

3. The two project officers, Harvey Sherwood and Anna Field, have both accepted the offer of permanent contracts of employment. Their current contracts expire in February 2022, to coincide with the original end date of the Esmee Fairbairn funded period.
4. The main focus of the summer has been seed harvesting and preparation of recipient sites for autumnal sowing. Over 1,450kg of seed has been collected from 28 donor sites, totalling approximately 73ha. Most seed has been dried, bagged and stored but final harvested seed is still being processed. Over 50 recipient sites across the Cotswolds are lined up covering 40Ha. Additional new recipients are being sourced daily. Support from the GCG Volunteers has been fantastic with 23 volunteers giving over 400 hours to the project's summer field operations to date.
5. Four training days have been held on wildflower ID, grass ID, botanical surveying and scything and guided walks for National Meadows Day and FWAG.

6. The Covid-19 Pandemic prevented the GCG schools art competition from starting in 2020. The budget for the project has been rolled together and a short-term contract let to a consultant Arts Co-ordinator, Katherine Glynne-Jones, providing delivery for the project.
7. The art competition is up and running for young artists aged 11-19, based in and around the Cotswolds, with a submission date of 22 September. We have asked for artworks that celebrate the brilliant work of the Glorious Cotswold Grasslands project and are inspired by the beautiful grassland habitat being restored across the Cotswolds. Selected artworks will be exhibited in the Walled Garden at the Museum in the Park, Stroud (dates still tbc). The work will be assessed by a panel of judges, including Jim Parkyn - character designer, model-maker and senior animator at Aardman Animations. The winners will receive a bespoke workshop with Jim creating a meadow scene using the famous model making technique seen in films such as Wallace and Gromit and Chicken Run (Jim worked on both films). The scene they create will become a permanent piece of artwork for the Cotswold National Landscape in celebration of the Glorious Cotswold Grasslands. Katherine is currently working on engagement with schools, to increase entries to the competition, as they return after the summer holidays.
8. An arts pack for primary schools is also being developed with grassland themed art activities and puzzles

#### **DECISIONS REQUIRED**

9. There are no decisions required from the Executive Committee

#### **NEXT STEPS**

10. Following the seed harvesting season, the focus will switch to preparing the recipient sites and sowing the collected seed. Over fifty recipient sites have been lined up to date.

#### **SUPPORTING PAPERS**

- There are no supporting papers

SEPTEMBER 2021