

South Gloucestershire Council's
Weed Control Programme 2012 – 2017
for
Hawkesbury Inglestone Assley and Hareley Commons

Introduction and Location

The Commons contain 113 hectares (317 acres) of land in the Parish of Hawkesbury. Hawkesbury, Inglestone, Hareley & Assley Commons are situated between the villages of Wickwar, Hawkesbury Upton and Hillesley, with Hawkesbury and Inglestone Commons lying in the administrative district of South Gloucestershire, and Hareley and Assley Commons lying in the administrative area of Stroud District Council.

The main part of the commons lie directly adjacent to the north and east sides of Lower Woods and are traversed by minor roads from Hawkesbury Upton in the east, Wickwar in the west and Horton in the south. The central Ordnance Survey grid reference for the site is ST 755 880. The commons are mapped at 1:25,000 on OS Explorer Sheet 167 and at 1:50,000 on OS Landranger Sheet 172.

This weed control programme has been created for the next five years and will be subject to review for the next five years depending on the effectiveness of control.

Requirements

Under the Weeds Act 1959 we are required to take all reasonable steps to control the following injurious weeds that are present on the common. The injurious weeds are Spear Thistle, Creeping or Field Thistle, Broad Leaved and Curled Dock and Common Ragwort which may include some or all of the following.

Part of Inglestone Common is also SSSI and any weed control programme drawn up for this area would need to be acceptable to Natural England.

Responsibility

While South Gloucestershire Council are the current managers of the Common and have been carrying out weed control and scrub control in previous years the Rural Payments Agency have stated that the control of weeds on the common is *also* the responsibility of those persons who include the common land as part of their single payment scheme.

This is further backed by copies of letters and e-mails contained within Appendix 1

1. RPA (*pending delivery*)
2. DEFRA (*pending delivery*)
3. CLA (*pending delivery*)

Methods and Time of Operation for Weed Control

Hawkesbury and Inglestone

Due to the nature of the site at Hawkesbury and Inglestone we shall adopt different methods of control over the whole area. These different methods will include.

1. Topping using a rear mounted and or side mounted topper: This will take place over the majority of the site where the land is level enough to accommodate a tractor and topper.
1. Side arm flail on difficult access areas: This will be used primarily on the road verges where the undulation of the land will prevent the use of the topper and also in other areas next to streams and ponds that would be unsuitable for topping.
2. Strimmer: Strimming will be used for weed control in areas where small areas of ant hills will restrict the use of a side arm flail and where access to control weeds with spot spraying would not be practical.
3. Spot spraying: Chemical spot spraying will be carried out in areas where machines will not be able to gain access, particularly in areas containing ant hills.
4. Hand Pulling / Digging: Hand pulling or digging will take place in particularly sensitive areas such as around ponds or where the best method of controlling these weeds is by this method ie Ragwort

A marked up plan, see enclosed Appendix 2, shows the different types of operations for specific areas. (*If printing please print at size A3*) While the largest areas shown require topping and herbicide application to thistle, areas identified for ragwort and dock control will be carried out by site inspection and or with the assistance of local knowledge

For specific weeds the chosen methods of control can be seen on the table below. This table also indicates the time of year when the control will take place.

Weed Type	Control Method(s)	Date of Control
Spear Thistle	digging, spot spraying	May
	all methods of topping and strimming	early June
Creeping or Field Thistle	spot spraying	May
	all methods of topping	early June
Broad Leaved and Curled Dock	Herbicide Control	April / May
Common Ragwort	Pulling and burning collected material	July / August

Where the above control methods have failed to be effective there may be a requirement to re-visit some of these areas again later in the season of the same year.

Additional information has been included on weed control in Appendix 3. Guidance note on the methods that can be used to control harmful weeds. This document also indicates the active ingredients of herbicides when used to control weeds.

Assley and Hareley

Weed control on Assley and Hareley Common is carried out by the Assley and Hareley Commons Committee. This Committee have delegated power from Stroud District Council to carry out weed control and have a constitution in place. Over the last fifteen years, this Committee have carried out regular weed control of topping and pulling weeds over the entire site. They have also retained records of when these operations have taken place. For the purpose of this document no further information is required.

Inspections

April: Inspections will take place to identify and confirm areas requiring herbicide control of dock and thistle before treatment.

Mid June: Confirmation inspection of all topped areas and identification of common ragwort growing on site

August: Inspection of all areas and re- visit if required

Acceptance Sign Off

For Natural England

SignPrint.....Date.....

For Rural Payments Agency

SignPrint.....Date.....

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