

January – February 2026 Update



What to look out for in January and February

- Hard, black ivy berries providing important food for winter thrushes, blackbirds, wood pigeons and blackcaps.
- Male and female robins still defending winter territories with their strident song.
- The first green shoots of ramsons poking through the mud below the mature trees.
- Great spotted woodpeckers drumming as the weather warms.
- Hazel catkins extending, wafting pollen into the air, seeking the male red flowers.

Who has been in the Inner Field?

The bare patches you may have noticed in the Inner Field are intended to create floral diversity in the grassland. The National Trust provided us with around 4kg of seeds collected around Smallcombe Vale, including importantly Hay (yellow) Rattle which predares on the roots of grass plants. This creates areas of bare ground to allow wild flowers to grow. As an annual, it needs to flower and set seed each year.



In the past we have dug much larger areas, turned them over, weeded them and planted up with the same sort of mix. The results have been variable. It could be:

- The seed was not vernalised (subject to prolonged cold).
- Soil chemistry was unfavourable
- Seed was not viable

We will be doing this in this one field for a number of years, as it is the one of our five fields that has the smallest natural profusion of wild flowers.

What is on the menu for the next couple of months?

1. Completing the mowing and strimming of grassland slopes before March.
2. Pollarding elder and buddleia to maximize flowering and to minimise disease.
3. At least 2 more benches will be sited by the paths.
4. The blackthorn that threatens the path near Tiny Forest 2 will be cut back.
5. Laying the hedge along the south side of the Copse.

An International Partnership for the Friends of Lyncombe Hill Fields

FLHF's many links to other organisations now include an international contact, aiming to build connections with conservation efforts in the developed and developing worlds. One of our most enthusiastic volunteers, Bharath Raman Ayyaraju from Southern India, has set up Global Green Conservation Connect (GGCC), which launched at the Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution in November 2025.



With a professional background in biotechnology, Bharath came to Britain to complete an MSc in Advanced Wildlife Conservation in Practice at Bristol UWE, working with the Friends of Henrietta Park and More Trees B&NES as well as with FLHF. Bharath has now travelled back to India where GGCC will host a two-day conservation seminar, to which FLHF's Directors will contribute an on-line presentation about our work.



Willow weep for me

Willows are so common they often pass our notice. They really come into their own in the winter and spring. Autumn leaves having fallen, their colourful stems can brighten up the drabest corner.

In the spring their catkins are a delight and provide welcome food to insect pollinators. If you sit on one of the benches with your back to the allotments, you will see a crescent shaped structure which should become more prominent in the years to come.



Photo Gallery

Please check out our [website](#) to view more photos selected by our Photo Team.

Donations to FLHF via Localgiving

If you'd like to support our work in the fields your donations are very welcome. Please do donate via Localgiving on our website friendsoflyncombehillfields.co.uk

Remember there is an option to donate via direct debit so you may give a small sum every month, for as long as you wish, rather than a single larger sum. Donations to FLHF via Localgiving from UK taxpayers also enable FLHF to benefit from Gift Aid payments.

Volunteering

Typically around 12 people join us in the Fields for two hours on Sunday mornings, with slightly smaller numbers on Wednesdays. Our sessions are from 10.00 to 12.00 on Sunday and Wednesday mornings. You can come as often or as infrequently as you wish. In doing so you will do your bit to improve the local environment and community, and improve your health. We will teach you new skills, and you will find that this is a very sociable activity. There are no fees; all it costs is your time. If you or any family or friends are interested in getting involved, please contact us at lyncombehillfields@gmail.com