

Threats to our Grasslands

Gloucestershire has lost 80% of its wildflower-rich limestone grassland in the last 30 years. It is therefore essential that we protect places such as the Commons in order to prevent any further decline.



Adonis Blue, male



Bee Orchid

Rodborough Common Conservation Programme organisations and partners:

- **Stroud District Council:**
www.stroud.gov.uk
- **Stroud Valleys Project:**
www.stroudvalleysproject.org
- **National Trust:**
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/minchinhampton-and-rodborough-commons
- **Natural England:**
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england
- **Rodborough Commoners**

Caring for the Commons 'til the Cows Come Home

Other Ways You Can Help:

Interested in volunteering? Enjoy working with the public? Maybe you would like to become a volunteer with the **National Trust**. Details are available at:
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/volunteer

Stroud Valleys Project also offer opportunities for volunteers to get involved with wildlife conservation. Find out more at:
www.stroudvalleysproject.org



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How we can all help take care of Rodborough and Minchinhampton Commons

Marking Day, 13th May ©Deborah Roberts



Rodborough and Minchinhampton Commons

are of international importance for their limestone grassland and the rare and diverse species that can be found here.

Many enjoy these special Commons. However, recent surveys have suggested that recreation is having a negative effect on these unique sites and we need to ensure that increasing numbers of visitors don't cause harm to this precious environment. There are some simple actions we can take to protect them.

How we can all help to protect the Commons:

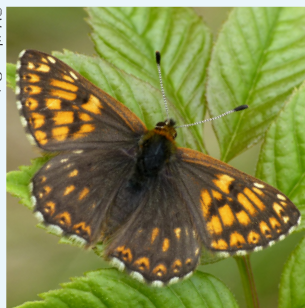
- When walking with a dog, please always pick up after them, both on the path and in the long grass.
- Please keep dogs under control so they don't disturb cattle and wildlife.
- Help reduce the pressure on the Commons: try to vary your walking routine and explore different routes and other green spaces.
- Drive more slowly. Take particular care when cattle are grazing between May and October.
- Use car parks provided.

Why are the Commons special?

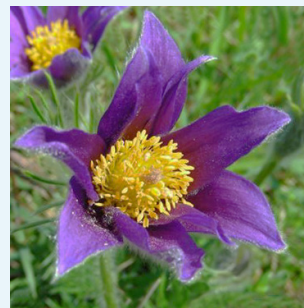
The Commons lie within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and both are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Rodborough Common has a particularly rich flora and fauna and has been given additional European protection as a Special Area of Conservation.

More than a hundred species of grasses and wildflowers have been recorded, including rare orchids and over thirty species of butterfly, including one of largest populations of the rare Duke of Burgundy butterfly in the Country.

©Matthew Oates



Duke of Burgundy, male



Pasque Flower

©Richard Evans

Cows and cars

Grazing is essential to maintaining this precious grassland so it's essential we take care of the cattle. To avoid collisions -

- Drive slower. Be cow aware. Enjoy the views.
- We know the speed limit is 40 mph but slower is better.
- Be patient. Cows have little road sense, so don't expect them to move with urgency as you approach.

Please do not disturb

Skylarks nest in long grass. Keep dogs on a lead to protect birds and other wildlife.

©Deborah Roberts



Early Purple and Green-winged orchids on the Commons

The problem with poo

It damages plants and is harmful to cows:

- **Wildflower habitats.** Dog poo adds nutrients which is damaging to wild flowers and encourages the growth of coarse grasses.
- **What about cowpats?** Cattle eat plants rather than meat so cowpats don't have the same detrimental effect on grassland.
- **It's not just the poo on the path.** We need to pick up when it's in the long grass too.
- **Neosporosis.** This is an infectious disease caused by cattle coming into contact with dog faeces. It is harmful to animals and can cause cows to abort.
- **In the bag.** Carry a good supply of bags. Take them home or use the bins provided. Failing to pick up will land you a fine or prosecution.

