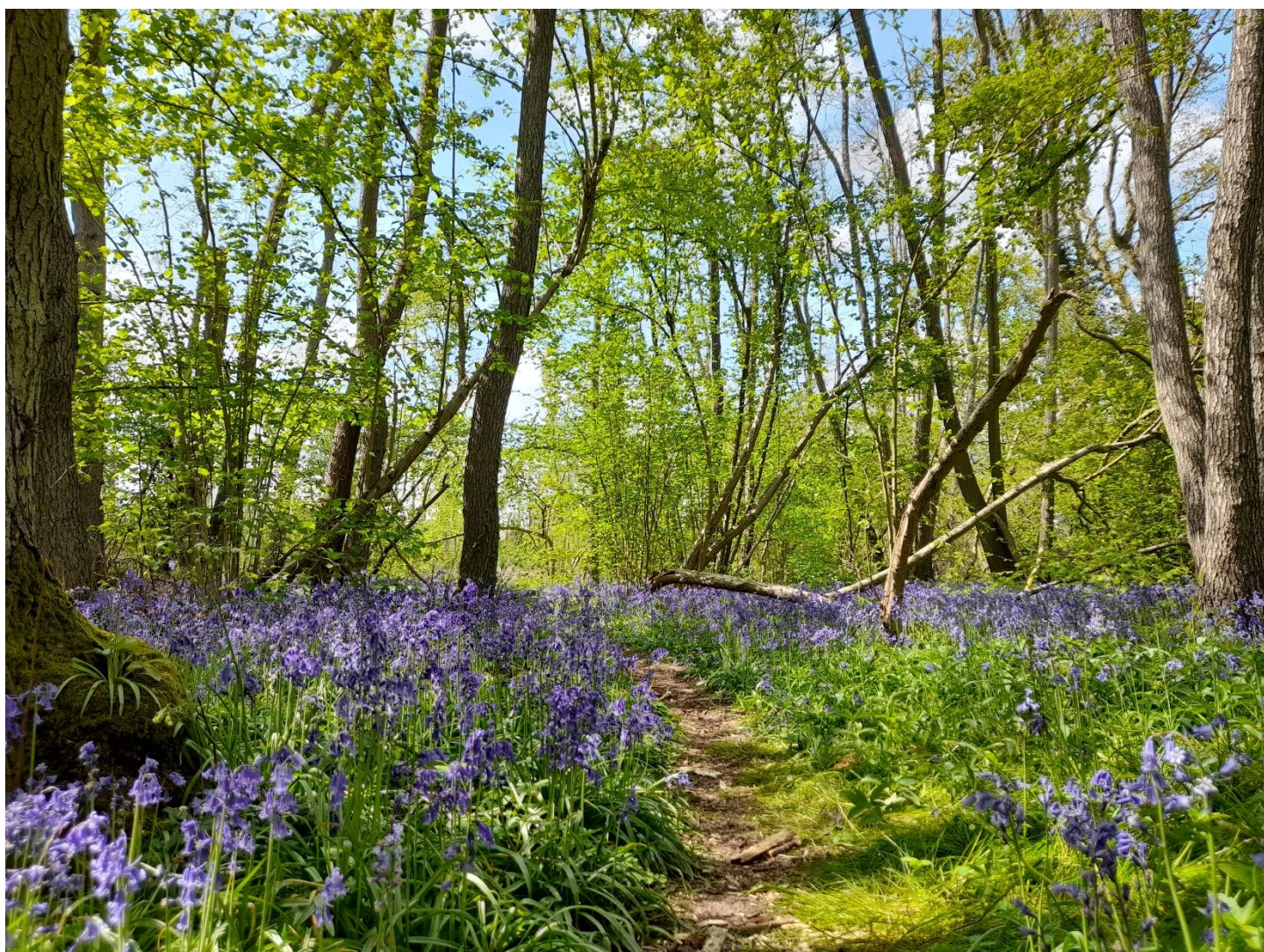


Bassetts Mead

Quarterly Report for Q1 (April - June)

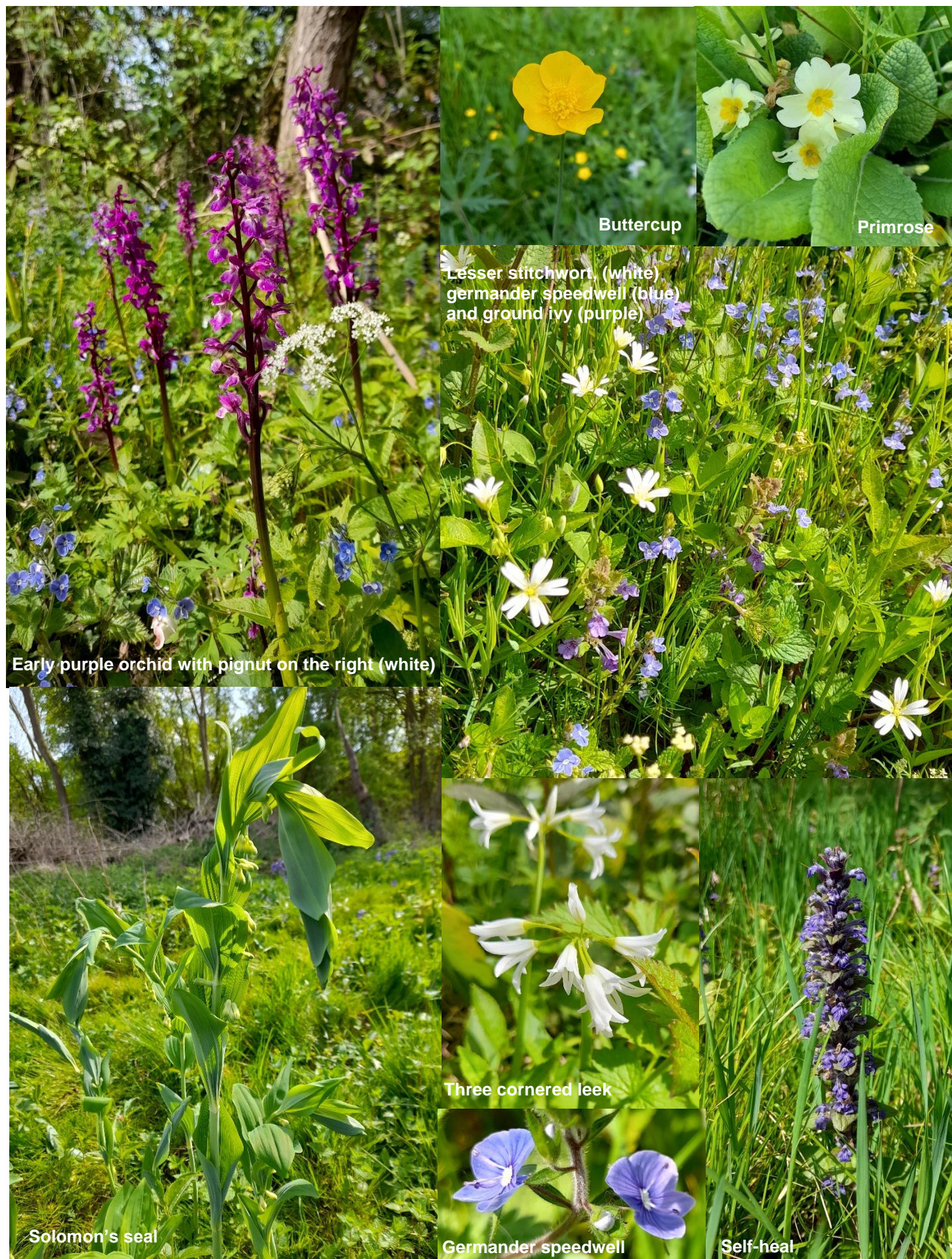
To be delivered by Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
on behalf of Hook Parish Council



Prepared by Ciara Askin
June 2022



Once again, the bluebell display this year was marvellous in Holt Copse and the larger reserve produced a fabulous variety of wildflowers for everyone to enjoy.





The reappearance of Bassetts Mead's various impressive and unusual orchids was a reassuring sign that things are going well! In the woods, 200 rare early purple orchids grew in abundance and the nine headed common spotted orchid (pictured left) grows bigger and better every year in Otter's Acre.

I was away for most of April, but Ian took over site patrols in my absence and led a volunteer task with Tom to finish thinning the oak saplings as part of the woodland pasture management in Rede's Meadow. They also replaced the broken gate post that the cows destroyed over the winter in the Water Meadow.

In May we had two solid volunteer days repairing the old fence along the river path. Good progress was made and we have managed to reuse most of the wire. Several new strainer posts were needed along with many new intermediates, which a record is being kept of. One section nearest the the railway line needed to be moved slightly because the original line had a significant bend in it, which only causes weakness in the fence. We have made the bend into a corner instead, with a proper straining post for strength and support. This will ensure the greater longevity of that section, but meant we needed to use fresh stock mesh wire since the section is now slightly longer. Another small section had the old stock mesh wire removed because it was very broken and patchy, and parts of it were the wrong way up. We reused a length of good condition stock mesh that was removed from the ditchline in the water meadow last year rather than brand new wire.

June saw a massive growth in vegetation, which was a cause for concern since the sit on mower still hasn't arrived from the

supplier. In order to keep the river path accessible and start to fulfil our promised paths management, we borrowed a RTV mounted flail from another team and used it, with some difficulty due to breakages, its size and large pivot point on the hitch, to mow the paths. It was adequate as a temporary emergency measure, but the smaller, more nimble sit on mower will be easier to transport and will enable us to do the job properly and without wasting time fixing things.



The Water Meadow's annual buttercup display!

Acknowledgements

This report has been produced by HIWWT staff, at the request of Hook Parish Council, to outline the required works and rationale for managing Bassetts Mead for the period 2019 – 2022. The works has been funded through a Service Level Agreement between HIWWT and HPC.



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