

## **Strange people lurking on our greens**

In the last few months you may have noticed people hanging about the open spaces in Shamley Green staring intently at the ground then getting into awkward positions and taking photos. Don't worry, it's not a strange cult invading our village, it's the Wildflower team from the Shamley Green Environment Group doing a survey of our greens- the count is now well over 100 species of wild flowers and increasing every time we look closer!

With the new mowing regime we wanted a database of our existing wild flowers so we can see what changes happen as time goes on with more opportunity for them to bloom and set seed.

It's been a fascinating exercise, getting to know our local flora in more detail - none of us are experts but we're getting better at it, and learning so much! Such as the clever strategies some plants use to avoid being eaten – dandelions for instance have roots which contract to pull their tender growing tips downwards out of the reach of grazing animals (and lawnmowers), and plants like bluebells with tasty nutritious bulbs take this even further and gradually work their way deep into the soil. Others are spiny or irritant or even poisonous to discourage animals who might fancy snacking on them, although this can backfire- the poison of ragwort doesn't deter the cinnabar moth, whose stripey orange and black caterpillars are immune and chomp away merrily, absorbing the poison to become poisonous themselves so they don't get eaten but leave the ragwort in, well, rags!

Next year we are hoping to enlist the help of the Surrey Botanical Society to cast some more experienced eyes over our greens in the spring, so you might see lots more people lurking around then.

Unfortunately our plan for supplementary planting of bulbs and wild flowers has had to be postponed due to supply issues, so it will now take place on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> November. If you would like to help please contact Henrietta Griffiths on [henriettagriffiths@gmail.com](mailto:henriettagriffiths@gmail.com)

Shamley Green Parish Magazine November 2021