

# Stockland Parish Council

## Environmental Stewardship Higher Level Scheme (HLS)

### Horner Hill

The existing open area was wall-to-wall bracken when work began in 1999 to decrease its dominance. By 2003, bracken cover had been dramatically reduced and there were early signs that heather could become established, and by 2010 the restoration of dry heathland was starting to look a reality. At the outset of the HLS agreement, the question was how best to manage the heathland which had been regained. Fencing and grazing was the option preferred by Natural England but after discussion about the logistics and practicality of using grazing livestock, negotiation has led to a preference for a regime of burning.

Opportunities were seen also to improve access, including the clearance of a "ridge route" along the crest of the hill from which wide views are possible and to open up the land around and behind the ruined cottages through removal of cherry laurel that was growing through the masonry. Each of these has now been done, and an interpretation panel is under consideration.

The funding for most of this work has been provided by Natural England under the HLS agreement and consists of two main parts:

**Capital works** - including scrub removal, protection and survey of the old cottages, provision of bat, bird and small mammal boxes, provision of two benches, bracken and scrub control and management; under the HLS agreement a total of £ 16,910 was made available over the first three years of the agreement and an additional amount of £ 1,500 has been made available for cutting firebreaks and further maintenance work close to the cottages:

	£
Scrub control/management	1,242
Bracken control	173
Bat/bird boxes (10)	280
Small mammal boxes (10)	100
Special project: Scrub clearance & stabilisation of archaeological feature	15,000
[Special project: Fencing & heathland habitat enhancement] *	1,500
Bench	115
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 18,410</b>

\* Funding allocated but awaiting implementation

**Annual Payments** of £ 1,618 per year for 10 years (2009 - 2019), for general maintenance of scrub and woodland, restoration of grassland, restoration of heathland, control of invasive plant species and bracken control etc.



Dodder (*Cuscuta epithymum*)

