

## **Green Hairstreak Project**

Easton on the Hill, adjacent to Collyweston Quarry (The Deeps) and the recreation ground.

The Green Hairstreak butterfly is quite rare in Northants and the country but the Deeps is one of the best places to see them in late April through May. They like perching on Hawthorns, Oaks and Ivy clad trees and the adults actively search for specific wildflowers to lay their eggs on in spring allowing the caterpillars to feed and subsequently pupate on. There are not many on the Deeps, and the most I've had is ten in one year, but normally only 3 or 4 are seen. These and many other invertebrates and nesting birds would disappear if the Trust allowed woody vegetation to take over, ie like the existing Hawthorn thicket. The cattle and sheep managed by the BCN trust control this on the meadow sward at the moment.

So the plan then is to open up two areas by removing some of the woody (Hawthorn mainly) vegetation and allow light and air into these pockets allowing us to plant or sow a mixture of wildflowers for the butterflies and bees. Two other protected Schedule A species are also occasionally seen at the Deeps, Dingy and Grizzled skipper. These two species would also benefit from clearings and rides. The seed mixes and plant plugs we already have contain some of these preferred wildflowers.

This winter we can hopefully extend the small clearing already linked by the paths and maybe cut through close to the Deeps fence line. This should allow windblown seed and butterflies into the area. Next winter (2025/2026) we suggest opening up a larger area transected by rides on the southern side of the wood. Probably no more than 10/15% of the whole thicket would be initially cleared to increase diversity. On going maintenance would be minimal involving a strim and rake once a year in late summer.

A Tawny Owl box is planned to be sited on one of the mature trees on the site and a few other nest boxes will be placed on the woodland edges.



Green Hairstreak at Collyweston Deeps  
8th May 2016

All works here are courtesy of the Rockingham forest vision project with a grant funded by the Lottery trust and the Northants rural community fund.