



Winter Newsletter - December 2020

Brighton and Hove Green Spaces Forum (BHGSF) is a volunteer organisation providing an independent voice and communication hub for volunteer groups working with Brighton & Hove's parks and open spaces.

GROUP GREEN SPACE VOLUNTEERING RE-OPENS!

CityParks Volunteering in 2020

Every now and then Google will send me a notification about what I was doing a year ago. A couple of weeks ago my phone showed me this photo to remind me about what I was doing last November.



How things have changed! CityParks cancelled all group volunteering back in March. But I am pleased to report that, as of this month we are cautiously trialling a gradual return to volunteering. To begin with, we are limiting the group size to six (that's five volunteers and one 'task leader') and maintaining our social distance (so no gathering together for group photos!)

There have been a lot of people wanting to get back out there. To get stuck into some conservation work and catch up with friends they haven't seen for a long time. So for the group I run; the CityParks Ranger Volunteers. I'm organising extra tasks to try and fit everyone in. I've added an extra day, and we're doing a morning shift and an afternoon shift. We had our first tasks this week. The groups are smaller, the tasks are shorter, but it is very, very, and another very, good to be back!

If you are one of our accredited volunteer task leaders and would also like your group to participate in the return to volunteering trial, then please contact CityParks at Cityparks.volunteers@brighton-hove.gov.uk for more details on how to get involved.

So that's one bit of good news and on another positive note I have to say 2020 was the best year ever for volunteers (up until mid-March that is!). Turnouts for volunteer tasks at the beginning of this year were incredible. And, if there are any good things that have come out of this crisis, then one of them has to be the enormous growth of interest in practical conservation. So in terms of the numbers of local people getting involved, I think 2021 is going to be a very good year.

Have a very Merry Christmas

See you out there

CityParks Ranger Neil Doyle

BRIGHTON'S TREES FACE CRISIS!



Hundreds of Ash trees are destined to get the chop in Stanmer Park as the Council struggles to contain the ravages of Ash dieback which is killing hundreds of trees in the Park and throughout the city. Estimates show that 80% of Ash trees across the UK are infected with the disease; a chronic fungus characterised by severe leaf loss where the leaves turn brown. The Council has allocated more than £3 million to deal with ash dieback over the next 5 - 10 years.

Ash aren't the only trees being ravaged by disease. The city's 17,000 historic elm trees are also under attack by the elm bark beetle; signs of early infection are a wilting and browning or yellowing of parts of the foliage anywhere on the tree. Dozens of elm trees have been felled during 2020, leaving significant gaps in the city's parks, streets and open spaces where they have been a familiar feature for many years.

Large notices boards have been erected on main routes in and out of the city urging people not to buy Elm logs this winter because diseased logs stored in sheds and gardens are responsible for spreading the infectious beetles.

The Brighton & Hove Dutch Elm Disease spotters guide, which includes details of how to identify and report DED, can be found at <http://bhgreenspaceforum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/DED-Spotters-Guide-Re-arranged-Ver-.pdf>

CARDEN PARK TREE PLANTING

An exciting opportunity has arisen to improve Carden Park for people and wildlife by planting 2,000 trees this winter with a further 6,000 by Spring 2022. We also plan to restore flower-rich chalk grassland by introducing sheep grazing and creating a flower-rich 'B-Bank' for bees, butterflies and other pollinators. This forms part of the council's response to the biodiversity and climate emergencies and supports pioneering objectives to become a carbon-neutral city by the year 2030. The woodland edge will be planted with trees and shrubs that form a lower, fruiting/flowering canopy that fringes the main planting. Covid-19 restrictions will limit community involvement this winter, but we look forward to getting more people involved with planting a larger area over the winter of 2021/22.

Plans for the Carden Park scheme can be seen at <http://bhgreenspaceforum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Carden-Hill-Planting-plan-2020-21.pdf>

CityParks Ranger Nick Lane

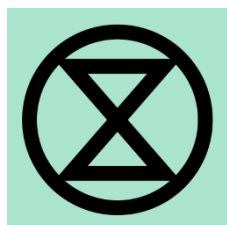
UK TREE CAMPAIGN – 'PLANT BRITAIN'

A campaign to plant 750,000 trees across the UK has been launched by BBC's Countryfile programme.

The initiative called 'Plant Britain', comes after new government figures revealed the UK is falling far behind on its tree-planting targets, and levels needed to help tackle the climate crisis. England planted just 763 hectares of new forest from April to September of this year, official data shows, which is the equivalent of some 1.3 million trees. Around 5,000 hectares of new forest will need to be planted across England every year from 2020 to 2025 in order for the UK to meet its climate targets, according government independent climate advisers.

For more information visit the Country File Plant Britain site at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/14KG5D14vHxHGvch64YnqNc/take-part-in-plant-britain>

REBELLION TREES



Brighton Extinction Rebellion (XR) is on the lookout for residents to join with them to plant hundreds of trees across the city.

They are offering oak, beech, birch, rowan, cherry, apple, hornbeam and hawthorn whips to plant. Their advice is that rowan and birch are the best for most sites, because they grow quickly, don't get too big, and don't create too much shade. All their trees are native, locally and organically grown, so they have impeccable environmental credentials.

If you would like a tree or two in your green space you can send XR a pin or a grid reference of your proposed location and they promise to get back in touch with you to agree the plan. Contact Brighton XR Guerrilla Gardeners at xr_brightonactions@protonmail.com

GOLD AWARD FOR OUR CITY

Congratulations to the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership!

Brighton & Hove has been named the UK's capital of food sustainability, winning the first Gold Sustainable Food City award. The award recognises the city's achievements on a range of key food issues and on tackling food poverty during the Covid -19 pandemic. Vic Borrill, Food Partnership Director said: 'We have co-ordinated this bid, but the activities and achievements in it are not ours alone – they belong to the whole city and beyond. Food has never been so important. It has the power to bring people together and changes lives.'

One of the many success stories behind the award is the increase in the number of community gardens in the last five years which has tripled.

For more information about the award, visit the Food Partnership page at <https://bhfood.org.uk/goldaward/#:~:text=Brighton%20%26%20Hove%20wins%20UK's%20first,Gold%20Sustainable%20Food%20Place%20Award.>

DOWNLAND ESTATE PLAN

Help shape the future of the city's open spaces.

Brighton & Hove residents are taking part in on-line discussions about the City Council's Downland Estate Plan that will set out a vision for the future of the Downs around the city for the next 100 years. The Council owns 12,500 acres of land within the South Downs National Park which it acquired in the 19th century. The discussions have been hugely popular with local people; more consultation will take place and it's hoped tours will take place next year.

Forum members are encouraged to get their views heard. For more information on the different options for doing this, including how to have your say, visit the pages at <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/city-downland-estate-plan-0>

You can see a map of the area of the Brighton & Hove Downland Estate here <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=e3c872deb3c9464fb97b3ee10731b944>

Brighton Downs Alliance has produced a beautiful and relevant film about the Downland we own around the city. The video provides a sweeping glimpse of our ancient Down pasture: '*Brighton's rainforest in miniature*' and shares its secrets; but also describes how much of the Downland fabric is damaged and lost. See it at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3r043Xzme04&feature=youtu.be>

For more information on the Brighton Downs Alliance, see their site at https://www.facebook.com/BrightonDownsAlliance/?ref=py_c



BRIGHTON & HOVE ORGANIC GARDENING GROUP - BHOGG

BHOGG manage a number of community plots at Weald Allotments in Hove. Although not able to accept new volunteers this last year, they have been busy maintaining their plots and organising talks and courses. Their 'Welcome Winter' Newsletter is packed with seasonal gardening tips and recipes. It can be seen at <https://mailchi.mp/6c0d6ef5b4c2/welcome-winter-1654702?e=e2a58f8bce>



CPRE SUSSEX & PLANT YOUR POSTCODE

Plant your Postcode



CPRE have been working with 'Plant your Postcode' (PYP) and Hove Civic Society to help Hove Junior School plant a new hedge (see the picture). This to reduce air pollution from the nearby road.

Planting the community orchard at Sylvan Hall Estate has been postponed (again!) due to Covid but hopefully will take place in January.

For more info on Plant Your Postcode, see their site at <https://plantyourpostcode.org/>



The countryside charity
Sussex



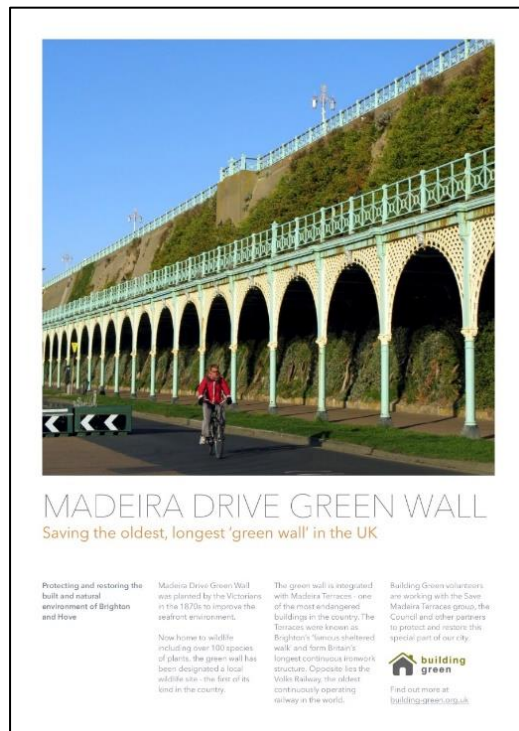
BUILDING GREEN

Protecting the oldest, longest 'green wall' in the UK - Building Green needs advice and input.

Building Green have been working with the Council, Portslade Green Gym and others for several years to bring Madeira Drive Green Wall the recognition it deserves. Now designated a Local Wildlife Site - the first of its kind in the UK - the green wall is home to over 100 species of flowering plant and is the oldest and longest green wall in the country, if not Europe.

Planted in 1872, the green wall originally covered over a mile of Brighton East Cliff below Kemp Town. Parts of the site have been lost and damaged over the years, but extensive stretches remain. Building Green have been leading its restoration - particularly at the Duke's Mound end of Madeira Drive - and have a vision to protect, enhance and restore the green wall to its former extent.

The green wall pre-dates Madeira Terrace - the Grade II* structure which is the focus of work to restore and regenerate the East Brighton seafront. Building Green represent the Natural Environment on a stakeholder panel that was established by the Council to advise on this work, which is on track to begin with the restoration of 30 arches of the Terrace this autumn.



Building Green welcomes volunteers, who can get in touch through our website at <https://building-green.org.uk/maddy-2/> We also welcome input from Green Spaces Forum members on the restoration plans for Madeira Terrace - particularly in terms of the environmental components of the seafront and wider built and natural heritage.

www.building-green.org.uk

James Farrell

THANK YOU TO ALL THOSE MEMBER GROUPS WHO SENT IN THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES ABOUT WHAT THEY HAVE ACHIEVED AND OVERCOME OVER THE LAST VERY DIFFICULT YEAR. WE HAVE NOT EDITED THESE ARTICLES AS THEY GIVE GREAT INSIGHT INTO VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTION, COMMITMENT AND VALUE. THANK YOU AGAIN 😊

PALMEIRA & ADELAIDE GARDEN FUND

2020 – a most unusual year

As some of you know the Palmeira and Adelaide Garden Fund started life in 2019 holding table sales and other events in our gardens with the primary aim of raising money for the gardens. Of course, in 2020 we have not been allowed to hold any events and so we have used that time to think about our future and really, what should the PAG Fund be about? The idea that strong communities and green spaces help to promote better mental health, took hold during the pandemic.

From the first event, we have been about engaging the community and then we started to make links with small businesses, who love our table sales and so these are now our aims:

1. To create a healthier environment by developing planting and boosting biodiversity.
2. To engage volunteers to enjoy ‘green exercise’, thereby reducing anxiety levels and helping to keep the gardens tidy.
3. To promote a sense of pride
4. To help boost the local economy

These are ambitious aims but our own experience of 2019 tells us that they are achievable.

So, have we achieved anything in 2020?

- Held garden clean and clear ups on the first Sunday of every month 10-12.30
- Taken part in the Keep Britain Tidy initiative
- Cleared hundreds of bags of leaves and formed a sizeable compost heap
- Formed a Community Interest Company, (CIC), The Palmeira and Adelaide Garden Group. (Companies House registration pending).
- Put forward a planting plan to the Council
- Issued 3 newsletters, sponsored by local businesses

With these foundations in place, we have loads of work to do and we’re really looking forward to 2021! In particular, we need to develop our social media presence, which it’s fair to say is not our strongest suit; however we were really fortunate that a couple new to our area have joined us and run an IT business so we hope for great things!

Also in 2021, we will be planning our events and reaching out to local businesses and social funders. In the meantime, please support:

The Hove monthly markets Christmas event at: St Augustine's Arts & Events Centre, Junction of Florence Road and Stanford Avenue, Brighton, Sussex, BN1 6EA on Saturday 12th December 12-4pm. We will be there with a raffle, which includes prizes such as lunch at The Grand for two, a beautiful screen print by local artist, Anne Mendelow and jewellery from Lizzie Ann Moore – see at <https://www.visitbrighton.com/whats-on/hove-local-monthly-markets-christmas-event-p1849381>

Follow us on Twitter: @PAGFund or email: contactus@pagfund.org.

Best wishes to all in the Green Spaces Community for Christmas and beyond.

STANFORD & CLEVELAND COMMUNITY GARDEN

Community gardening at a time of lockdown

Like everyone else, when the UK went in to lockdown on the 23rd March, the community gardeners at Stanford and Cleveland Community Garden had to quickly change all their plans for this year and adapt to the 'new normal'. So while a few of us had to self-isolate, a small core was able to plan a rota to work at the garden individually. This was well coordinated and helped to ensure that the garden continued to thrive.

In the early days, we saw a big increase in footfall, particularly during the week, as people took their daily walks in the neighbourhood. Quite surprisingly, many local people did not know that the garden was there and their response was very positive. Many families returned regularly and it has been rewarding to see young children so obviously taking an interest in watching things grow. We decided early on to concentrate on vegetables, with a view to contributing some produce to a food bank in collaboration with Brighton and Hove Food Partnership which we have successfully achieved.

Traditionally the garden has held an annual plant sale to raise money for ongoing running costs. This year we had also committed to participate in the Macmillan Coastal Garden Trail. As this was cancelled, we decided to adapt our sale to accommodate social distancing etc and donate the proceeds to Macmillan. The response from the community was fantastic and the money raised on the day, together with ongoing sales of plants that we put out at the garden on subsequent weekends raised over £1,200. On July 25th, the day that the trail would have gone ahead, we held a final plant sale. Instead of our garden opening for the garden trail, a video of the garden has been made by a local resident which can be seen on the Macmillan website. www.macmillangardentrail.co.uk

With competitions not being able to be live this year we nevertheless entered South and South East in Bloom on line accompanied by downloaded photos showcasing our achievements. Via desktop judging we were awarded Gold for the 'Our Community' category and Outstanding for the 'Community Garden' award. We were also shortlisted for a Cultivation Street award and it was encouraging to receive an RHS Certificate of Recognition to acknowledge our ongoing contribution to the local community.

At the end of the first lockdown, we were very pleased to come together again as a group, albeit while still maintaining social distancing. We missed the informal contact, sharing of tasks, ideas and camaraderie. In October, the garden was filmed by Higgidy Pies to help promote their 'Win a Veg Garden for Your Community'. In November, when we once again went into lockdown, we resumed our rota of working individually and have slowly been doing all the autumn tasks, weather permitting.



So while it has been community gardening with a difference, we are very pleased to have continued to provide a green oasis which at the same time has been so productive. A woman with 2 young children said of the garden recently 'We love coming here', a simple sentiment echoed many times over the past few months especially. This type of comment confirms that the garden is a valuable asset to the community and one worth all the effort.

<https://www.facebook.com/StanfordAvenueCommunityGarden/>

WOODINGDEAN WILDERNESS NEWS



From our small beginnings in 2019 we have, as a group, planted 50 assorted trees, coppiced ash trees, took off old tree guards, weeded around saplings pruned out dead wood, litter picked and then cleared the remains of a car that ended up in our Wilderness – several trees were damaged and one oak was lost.

Having put together an exciting programme for 2020, like many other groups our activities had to be put on hold due to Covid 19. However, this did not dampen our spirits and work continued but limited to things that could be done as part of daily exercise as individuals. Members still litter picked, pruned, tidied and in the heat of the summer watered some of the flagging saplings planted last November.

We have engaged with the community over this difficult period using our Facebook page. There have been quizzes and lots of pictures of the changing seasons, book lists and other items of interest. In September we held our first Annual General Meeting and adopted our Constitution, this of course had to be held using Zoom – a new concept for many of us, but we overcame the difficulties with a successful meeting. We are hoping to put together a Zoom Presentation on the History of the site that we care for.

We have worked very closely with our BHCC Ranger Paul Gorringer and have now agreed to do soft maintenance work in the Old Woodland that has been sadly neglected, the bee bank near the woodland burial side and the meadow east of the Memorial Park as well as managing our existing Wilderness area.

It is our aim to bring the whole community together to create a biodiverse and sustainable public green space that promotes wellbeing and quality of life in the Woodingdean area.



A successful funding bid in the Autumn has meant that we can start our bat project and two of our members have recently put up some bat boxes in the Old Woodland. We are very excited about this project and look forward to surveying the bats in the Spring.

Another surveying project for next year will be bees and butterflies, 15 different species of butterflies were seen in just one afternoon in July of this year.

More funding applications are being submitted to do tree planting and woodland flower planting for next year.

A full and exciting programme of workdays and other events has been put together for when we can start to meet again hopefully in 2021.

It made us realise that all the hard work and enthusiasm has paid off when one of our members who is over 90 years said of our site "It has been a joy and a blessing to be able to look out at the Woodingdean Wilderness, watching the changing of the seasons and the wonderful colours and the ever changing views of the sea, it makes you appreciate what you should be thankful for".

To find out more mail woodingdeanwilderness@outlook.com or go to Woodingdean Wilderness Group on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/479812122755043/>

INGRAM CRESCENT COMMUNITY GARDEN

The Ingram Crescent Community Garden team of volunteers have recently fitted wheelchair-accessible raised beds or "pods" within the Ingram Crescent Rose Garden thanks to a grant from the council. The Secretary of the estates' Residents' Association (ICRA), Kim Foster, told us more...

A small group of volunteers took over the care of the 120'x 60' Rose Garden in late 2016. The first 6 months or so were spent clearing the wildly overgrown beds to allow the existing plants to begin to thrive again. Currently, there is a core group of 4 gardeners, 3 of whom live on the estate, and we welcome anyone who'd like to join us.

We wanted to provide fully accessible gardening - for both wheelchair users and for those who find it difficult to bend - and these drive-in beds meet the needs of both. We are thrilled with our TERRAform Pods – see at <https://terraform.fr/english-version/>, very thankful to BHCC for the funding and to the construction team for turning our wish into reality.



Lockdown 2020:

Due to the amazing Spring weather, and the size of the garden, we were gardening almost every day during Lockdown, which provided both our exercise and afforded the garden loads of extra attention! Running several ad-hoc ‘gardening workshops’ brought in new visitors and even some new volunteers! Estate residents used the garden much more than in previous years, taking advantage of our benches, stopping for a chat and enjoying the space. We were also ‘discovered’ by locals exploring their neighborhood, and we became a focal point for so many people. We grow vegetables as well as flowers, and thanks to the increase of visitors, we made twice as much in donations for produce this year than last - all donations go back into the garden by way of plants, compost etc.

Plans for 2021:

We are looking forward to being able to construct our bird feeding station, a plan made possible by another BHCC grant and which has been on ‘lockdown-hold’. We’re keenly looking forward to seeing the growth of our newly created wildflower meadow at the West entrance to the garden. We’re also planning to organise a community tree-planting event (when covid-appropriate), and then...perhaps a Summer Garden Party to celebrate the ‘elimination’ of Covid 19.

For more information, visit/join the Ingram Crescent Community Garden page on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1943130679291536> or email icra.committee@gmail.com

BEDFORD SQUARE GARDEN PROJECT

I know we’ve been a member since last year – but we’ve just ratified our constitution and our membership is growing - we are now carrying out regular weekly weeding and litter-pick sessions around the gardens.

In August, we were the first community group in Brighton to receive the ‘mega bin’ from CityClean – an Armorgard strong box that contains various tools and kit to clean up, litterpickers, bin bags, graffiti cleaning tools, and so on...

We’ve had a few plant donations with a new Hydrangea being planted most recently, and a plan in place to plant hundreds of spring bulbs over the next week or so.

We also have also met with Sarah Carlisle (CityParks Area Manager - alongside Cllr Tom Druitt) and we are forging strong relationship links with the Norfolk Square Garden Project.

Obviously Covid has hampered progress, but we’re making the most of the new community spirit that has arisen as a result.

Cheers

Pete – Chair

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/bedfordsquarebrighton/>
regencyfobs@gmail.com

FRIENDS OF CRAVEN WOOD

News from Friends of Craven Wood

We have not been able to meet since February, but one or two of us have kept a watch on our Wood throughout lockdown, working independently.

As a result, we have slowly munched our way across our whole site, tackling the bramble which had been allowed to flourish over the past couple of years. In many places it had grown to around five foot high and was swamping many of our recently planted trees and assisting convolvulus to strangle many others!

Between March and August, all the bramble was cut back to ground level, revealing many small saplings which had managed to survive. Since then, a weekly re-visit has trimmed back the bramble which had flourished again since March!



Nothing much else has been achieved so far this year, but the space has been opened up once more for local residents and others to enjoy.

The photo shows part of a copse of new native trees which were planted some seven years ago, now freed from the bramble once more.

Alan Cooke

Secretary, Friends of Craven Wood, <https://focw.weebly.com/>

REGENCY SQUARE GARDENING GROUP

My best bit of news is that the Norfolk Square Gardens Group arranged for several city centre volunteer groups to receive some Hebes donated by Plumpton Agricultural College.

Plumpton has been propagating Hebes from their collection and delivered a selection of hardy varieties to Norfolk Square on October 25. Volunteers from (I think) four other nearby groups benefited from the gift, including our group (Regency, Russell & Clarence Squares).

The Plumpton staff were very helpful in recommending varieties for the specific conditions in each garden. We're really grateful to Rohays of the Norfolk Square group and Alex Waterfield of Plumpton College for organising this.

I'd also add that the Norfolk Square Gardens Group and the Bedford Square Gardens Project have been very helpful in sharing information with us (Regency Square) about their respective gardens. It is so useful to be able to compare notes with other, similar groups.

Gill Wales

Regency Square Gardening Group rsasgardening@gmail.com

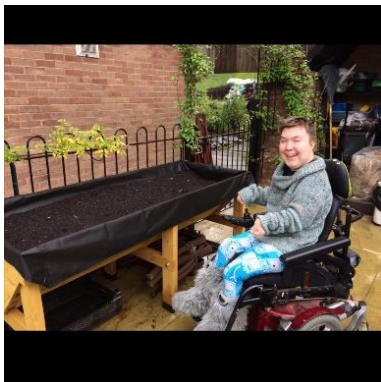
NURTURE THROUGH NATURE

Nurture Through Nature works with volunteers to grow veg on allotment plots to donate to local food banks. Because we are small, flexible, adaptable and outdoors, we have been able to stay open to volunteers and continue growing and donating crops all through the lockdowns. So not only have we continued to provide fresh produce to food banks but we've offered a vital and rare opportunity for people to get outdoors, exercise and socialise. We are looking forward to another great year of veg and volunteers in 2021.



<http://nurturethroughnature.org/>

ALBION COMMUNITY GARDENS



The country's first lock down began just as all gardeners were beginning to plant and plan for the summer just ahead. With our garden closed and limited access to plants and materials a very small group maintain the formal garden on a make down and mend basis. It is surprising how a garden, with careful propagation, can supply itself with new clothes for the summer months. The garden was splendid by the time lock down eased and was an oasis for socialising throughout the summer. Covid has taught us all of the importance of our green spaces but more importantly of the contact with our neighbours.

Maybe in spite of or maybe because of Covid, we had a surge of interest in our new allotment spaces adjacent to the main garden and this year's new plots were snapped up in just a few hours. The number of gardeners and volunteers has more than doubled and the garden hosts a popular compost club.

We have also been fortunate to gain funds from the council for new seating so that small groups can maintain social distancing and we saw many tearful reunions of relatives and residents from nearby Brookmead extra care home when meeting restrictions eased.

Further funding supplied us with 6 disabled access veg trugs. The photo attached shows the joy when our newest gardener was shown her new garden. Five further raised beds are ready to go to neighbours who have no garden of their own. They will be positioned outside their flats and they will begin planting in the months ahead.

It has been a strange year. No large garden events. No spending on new plants. No visiting other gardens. No summer evening gatherings. But a reminder that gardens are essential for our health, a unifying focus for our communities, and a reminder that we need our neighbours.

Peter Spence - Albion Community Gardens
<https://www.facebook.com/albioncommunitygarden/>

FRIENDS OF WOODBOURNE MEADOW

During the last 3 years we have planted over 1000 trees on our Woodbourne Meadow site. The majority have been berry, fruit and nut bearing small tree species such as Dogwood,

Hawthorn, Hazel, Blackthorn and Elder to both provide food for wild birds and mammals but also add to the species diversity on the site. A couple of species have also been added to act as larval host plants for butterflies, notably Alder Buckthorn and Blackthorn for respectively Brimstone and Brown Hairstreak. Most of the plantings has been within and alongside the perimeter of the existing woodland to extend the edges alongside sunny glades and south-facing sun-traps favoured by butterflies. A small number of larger forest trees such as Beech have been planted as individuals within the wood.

Further extensive planting has involved the creation of a new hedge line at the northern boundary to link with the existing hedge on the opposite side of the road. This creates a corridor for wildlife to move between sites, provide nesting opportunities for hedgerow birds and shelter for the grazing livestock in the adjoining pasture. A small copse has been planted alongside the South Downs National Park sign to act as a frame and screen. A further area of Gorse bushes have been introduced to link in with the adjoining area and wider downland and also to create an important patch of thorny scrub for the occasional breeding Common Whitethroat on site and an important nectar source for insects.

The majority of trees have been obtained as small whips from the 'I Dig Trees' initiative from 'The Conservation Volunteers' organisation. Other tree species that are not available in the species mixes provided by I Dig Trees, such as Gorse and Alder Buckthorn have been bought by the group from 'Special Branch' the local tree nursery in Stanmer Park using funds provided from a grant from Brighton City Council via Con. Councillor Lee Wares who is very supportive and appreciative of our group's work.

Our group is generally small, with an average turnout of 6-8 members. Frustratingly we have had a number of enquiries from potential new members just before the Covid lockdowns began, preventing the group from undertaking any activities and hence including any newbies to the fold!

Philip Thompson pipophrys@ntlworld.com

OVINGDEAN RESIDENTS & PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Many thanks to 'I Dig Trees' for sending us a very healthy batch of native saplings. Volunteers gathered to work, socially distancing, along Greenways Ovingdean, to clear and plant a section of hedge which will connect woodland and allotments to village gardens and our Nature Reserve.

Our Farmer grubbed up some scrub and the old barbed wire fence and we cleared a trench of brambles, mallow and nettles, tin cans and bottles. Our little nursery school children helped too.

Farmer Ben also provided a substantial amount of mulch. We've established a very good relationship with him and he's now keen to plant a copse on a section of farmland so I kept back oak, beech and silver birch saplings for this purpose.

All are heeled-in in my garden and, when council permission/estate permission etc. etc. is granted, we will endeavour to plant up in February.

Bernadette Skinner

Ovingdean Residents and Preservation Society

<http://www.ovingdean.co.uk/>



The Brighton & Hove Green Spaces Forum can be contacted at bhgsforum@gmail.com