



Easter Newsletter - April 2022

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.

INTRODUCTION & KEY DATES

Welcome to our Easter Newsletter. Following the success of our members meeting last November and AGM discussions in February, we are pleased to announce two new events:

Weds 13th April (6pm) - Update / Q&A Zoom meeting with B&H CityParks Project Team.

Monday 27th June (5pm to 7.30pm) – Spring Seminar at the Friends Meeting House in Ship Street Brighton with the theme of 're-wilding'. Speakers / Q&A and refreshments.

Full details of both events will be Emailed to all Forum members.

WILDING WATERHALL – THE CITY'S LARGEST GREEN SPACE

A huge open space on the fringe of Brighton and Hove is set to be returned to nature in a major re-wilding initiative to restore what's been lost. The designated area of 90 hectares includes the former Waterfall golf course. The project initiated by Brighton and Hove City Council has the support of the South Downs National Park, local universities, Natural England, The Living Coast (UNESCO World Biosphere Region) and other leading organisations and funding bodies.



Forum members keen to learn more about this project are encouraged to attend our next meeting on Monday 27th June at 5pm when our keynote speakers will include experts from City Parks and the University of Sussex.

Speakers are:

David Larkin, CityParks Conservation Manager whose idea gave birth to this project; Paul Gorringer, Waterhall CityParks ranger; Christopher Sandom, Lecturer in Biology at the University of Sussex and Director of Wild Business involved in re-wilding in Europe, Scotland and closer to home at Knepp Wildland project, just south of Horsham.

Re-wilding of Waterhall will aim to mimic natural processes so that the existing specialist chalk grassland species are protected and restored; grazing animals will be introduced to live with minimal intervention. There will also be plenty of opportunities to involve local people with nature with guided tours and school visits, outdoor classrooms as well as lots of volunteering tasks.

Monday, 27th June 5pm to 7.30pm Friends' Meeting House, Ship Street BN1 1AF.

URBAN TREE CHALLENGE FUND 2022 - A letter from Mark Syrett

Dear Green Spaces Forum members,

Last year 11 Green Spaces Forum member groups took up the Challenge to plant over 2 consecutive planting seasons **158** large specimen trees. To 31st March **101** of these have already been planted, the remained being in plan. All these (plus any planted later this year) are eligible to be counted on the National and Local Council register for the Queens Green Canopy Jubilee year plantings.



Next year's fund has **now been launched with a deadline of May 31st**. See detail at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/urban-tree-challenge-fund>

The paperwork involved is by far the worst I have ever seen, so please accept my apologies in advance. Fortunately, using her experience from last year, Caroline Burnard of Friends of Queens Park has produced a guide to reduce the pain. Her guide can be seen at <http://bhgreenspaceforum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/UTCF-Application-and-Claim-Forms-Guidance-and-Tips.pdf>

Please be aware that there is a minimum of **24** trees per application, groups can apply directly **or team up together**. Queens Park and Stoneham Park did this last year, please contact me for further guidance on this.

This is **not a fund for Street trees** but soft planting into grass areas which have the main objective of reducing mowing and creating bulb and wild flower sites in the areas below trees/adjacent to paths. Applications are not limited to City Council land but must be made by formal groups who will have secured landowner's permission. Match funding is uniquely in the form of 'in kind Labour' (including volunteer) so no cost to groups.

Due to the success, a dedicated Council watering position has been created to ensure trees survive their first few tentative years, but any local watering by appointing neighbours as willing tree custodians is always welcome during establishment.

To register an interest, please e mail Mark.Syrett@brighton-hove.gov.uk BHCC will support you through the process. As last year an online meeting will be scheduled for all applicants. We can then walk around your green spaces and discuss the over-arching criteria applied to Strategic tree planting.

Deadline for applications is 31st May but be warned paperwork does take a couple of weeks to complete.

Kind Regards,

Mark Syrett | Projects Officer | Cityparks | Brighton & Hove City Council
07821 635920 Mark.Syrett@brighton-hove.gov.uk

BRIGHTON & HOVE WILDLIFE FORUM



Due to its rich and varied geological, natural and cultural histories, Brighton and Hove is home to a suite of internationally rare and important habitats and species. As a result, the region finished top in the UK in the 2021 City Nature Challenge; an international 'Bioblitz' in which cities across the globe compete in an attempt to record as many different species as possible over a 4 day period.

The best thing about the **City Nature Challenge** is that anyone can join in. The data is recorded using the i Naturalist app and you simply take a picture of whatever you find, whether you know exactly what it is or not! The app offers possible ID options based upon the photo, and naturalists will go through the records to check the ID afterwards. The 2022 **City Nature Challenge is coming up soon, 29th April-2nd May 2022. Visit <https://thelivingcoast.org.uk/project/city-nature-challenge> to join in.**

Since last August, BHWF has been working with BHCC and The Living Coast Biosphere partners on a **Wilder Verges** pilot study. It will look to replicate the successes of other local authorities in implementing Plantlife's roadside management for wildflowers programme, bringing vibrant colours and rich biodiversity back into the heart of the city. We have surveyed some of the city's best candidate verges and the council is looking to trial a more targeted mowing regime of these throughout 2022. We hope this will encourage a greater richness and diversity of wildflowers and the species they support.

Brighton and Hove has a large community of wildflower enthusiasts, boasting some of the county's finest botanists and naturalists, and organisations such as the **Wild Flower Conservation Society-Brighton and Beyond**. It is hoped that the project will mobilise and build on this hub of knowledge and passion, creating a greater understanding of the huge value of wildflower rich grasslands in the wider community.

From an ecological perspective, we are hoping to compliment the stunning success of the city's **B-bank project**, which continues to build chalk banks and scrapes in green spaces across the city. These mini-chalk grassland oases were found to be home to over 700 species of animal and plant in a recent survey by professional ecologist Graeme Lyons, hosting a larger proportion of species with conservation status than the average nature reserve he surveys (read the report here: <https://thelivingcoast.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Brighton-B-Banks-survey-2020-final.pdf>).

We have also been supporting the **Save Our Starlings** campaign. Brighton's Starlings are in serious decline and Brighton's iconic murmuration could be gone by 2026. This is largely due to climate change, a lack of nesting opportunities and pesticides destroying the invertebrate life in our soils which they rely upon for food. BHWF is working with artists Louise McCurdy and Steve Geliot in their efforts to spread the message that our Starlings need our help and to find ways to improve the situation.

Word is getting out, a petition calling for the end of pesticide use on the Brighton Downs is now at over 150,000 signatures and climbing: <https://www.change.org/p/brighton-and-hove-city-council-save-our-starlings>

Louise made 100 nest boxes as part of their recent 'Undercurrents' exhibition which told the story of our Starlings and their main predator the Peregrine Falcon. These boxes have been distributed around the city and put up in public places. Save Our Starlings are now making T shirts to fund further boxes and wider efforts to help Starlings in the city.

You can purchase one of these t-shirts at <https://saveourstarlings.teemill.com/>

To find out more about BHWF visit www.bhwf.org.uk. To join BHWF or sign up to our e-newsletter email btnhovewildlife@gmail.com



TWIN ELMS RE-UNITED

This mysterious image in Preston Park's Coronation Garden is the former twin elm which had to be felled in 2019 after it became infected with Dutch Elm disease. It's twin is still standing just a few metres from where this elm has now been re-positioned while artist, Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva continues to work on restoring the magnificent hollowed 400 year old trunk.

Elpida is an experienced sculptor, specialising in gilding and has worked with elm trees previously. She intends to create a striking sculpture which will be displayed later this year.

To help create this community sculpture, the project is being crowdfunded. Please click the following link to donate..

<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/elpida-hadzi-vasileva-brighton-gilded-tree>



LIVING SEAS – SUSSEX KELP RESTORATION PROJECT

Sussex Kelp Restoration Project is looking for citizen scientists to get involved in a new restoration scheme for Sussex Kelp. It's a year since trawling was banned from over 300km² along the Sussex coast to help restore the Kelp habitats and wildlife that once thrived in these parts. Already there are signs of significant recovery of the Kelp and the myriad sea creatures on the seabed. The Universities of Brighton and Sussex are collecting research, some of which has been highlighted in a stunning Kelp Science film by Big Wave.



See this link if you want to find out what's involved in kelp recording.

<https://sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/what-we-do/living-seas/kelp/kelp-recording-scheme>

SPECIAL TREES OF STANMER PARK

The Brighton & Hove Green Spaces Forum has worked with Vivienne Barton and Brighton & Hove City Parks to produce a new leaflet on the Special Trees of Stanmer Park. This can be seen at the following link <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/libraries-leisure-and-arts/parks-and-green-spaces/special-trees-stanmer-park#map-of-special-trees-of-stanmer-park>



MEMBER GROUP UPDATES

Many thanks to the groups that sent in the following updates. Members have fed back that they love to hear what other groups have been up to. To find the contact details for all our member groups, visit <http://bhgreenspaceforum.org.uk/friends-of-groups/>

FRIENDS OF ST ANN'S WELL GARDENS



The Police Property Act Fund awarded £2,400 of funding to The [Friends of St Ann's Well Gardens Hove](#). PCSO Sophie Hughes presenting the cheque to Pippa Smith (Chair) said *'It has been wonderful to work with partners such as The Friends, not only creating a fantastic, inclusive space for people to enjoy, but also thinking of ways to combat anti-social behaviour in the area.'*

Kate Kirkham, Project Manager for the Friends said: "We have a multi-faceted approach to anti-social behaviour which is of course common to public spaces across the city. We have raised considerable sums to support the council's investment in re-establishing our Sensory Garden. It is a space that appeals to all the senses through sensitive design and planting, and accessible to our diverse communities, particularly the more vulnerable groups and individuals of all ages who need a quieter space away from the bustle of the park."

CPRE SUSSEX

CPRE (Campaign for the Protection of Rural England) Sussex has been working flat out with Brighton and Hove City Council's Arboriculture team to plant 102 trees as part of the [Forgotten Places project](#). Planting events have taken place on the Bristol Estate, in Bevendean, Woodingdean and Portslade to increase biodiversity and improve air quality. At the Bristol Estate we were hosted by [BELTA](#) and joined by Trees for Cities to support [The Queen's Green Canopy Project](#).



Juliet Smith, The Queen's Deputy Lord Lieutenant, opened the day and [Connick Tree Care](#) staff supported the planting of a beautiful hawthorn and a hornbeam – two of 12 trees being planted on the estate. Other trees include stone pine, elm, Callery pear and a stunning Gleditsia. Bevendean was the location for an ambitious tree planting session with corporate sponsors Metlife.

They put their best digging foot forward, not only funding 18 trees but also sending six staff to plant 12 trees in one day, supported by Mark Gappa from BHCC. Redwoods, birch and aspens were planted as part of a majestic planting scheme for 25 trees devised by Penny Hudd.

The sun shone when Jenni Cresswell and Ben Galley ran a community session to plant six beautiful stone pine in Woodingdean. We received invaluable support from Woodingdean Wilderness Group during the project and local residents are now the proud custodians of 46 trees including Callery pears, crepe myrtle and alders.

At Portslade, a mini community training event to plant two final trees out of 19 in the area took place in the sunshine at the end of March.



FRIENDS OF HOVE PARK



At last a first glimpse of spring, the Snowdrops have come and gone the Daffodils and Crocus bulbs have added a great splash of colour to the park.

On the miniature railway loop by the pathway to Legal and General is a glorious show of deep purple crocus bulbs. Each year Soiree Rotary provide the bulbs and the FOHP along with the gardeners plant them. They are provided by the RHS and money goes towards eliminating Polio from the world, hence the term Purple4Polio.

Through sponsorship from Moda Living and Waitrose, we have raised enough for four trees Birch (*Betula Ermanii*) to be planted and staked to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and very fine they look too.



Preparations are well under way for our Annual Easter Egg Trail and Bonnet Parade on Good Friday and this year we are very fortunate to be sponsored for our chocolate eggs by Moda Living, fingers crossed for good weather.

We have planted more Plugs in our wildflower mound and plans are in hand to plant sections of wildflowers along the grass banks on the Goldstone Crescent side.

We are currently in negotiations with Moda Living from the Sackville Road development for help with funds to refurbish our very dilapidated Basketball court and to help the Tennis clubs build their own Clubhouse. Although it is early days plans appear to be going fairly well, all we can say is 'watch this space'.

We are holding a Tennis a Thon & Fete along with Friends of Brighton & Hove Hospitals on Sunday 17th July in Hove Park.

Alan Moon – Chair
Friends of Hove Park

STANFORD & CLEVELAND COMMUNITY GARDEN – SPRING 2022

It is so good to be back to full gardening strength and to work together restriction free. We had a year of mixed fortunes last summer and the autumn found us harvesting an abundance of some produce but a disappointing crop of others. Although we know it is the way of all gardening to have fluctuating successes, it is rewarding when all the hard work pays off and hard not to feel frustrated by blighted tomatoes!

In late autumn we added a lot of homemade compost to the beds to help provide nutrients, bulk and aid water retention. We pruned our willow arch and fruit bushes and potted up bulbs which are currently looking very cheering.



We were able to again participate in some community events following the lessening of lockdown restrictions. We marked Remembrance Sunday by placing poppies made from recycled bottles around the garden and participated in the local church Christmas fair and craft sale.

We also had a Christmas tree in the garden and invited people to write messages to hang on it. Lights on both the tree and willow arch added to the festive feel, as did our participation in the Fiveways Advent Windows Trail.

Our hard work continued to be recognised. We won a Gold in the South and Southeast in Bloom 'Our Community' category, 'It's Your Neighbourhood' – Outstanding, plus an RHS Certificate of Distinction. We also won a Highly Commended in Southern Water Environmental Challenge and Judges Choice in Cultivation Street's 'Gro Your Best'.



With a mild Winter and early Spring, we have been planning our year ahead and have planted chitted potatoes, planted seeds and divided perennials to sell at this year's Spring plant sale in early May, which is a major fund-raising source. We will be participating in the MacMillan Coastal Garden Trail again this year.

But it is not all hard work as we reward ourselves by meeting socially, often in the local park, to share a picnic and most recently we visited Penbury House to see the wonderful display of snowdrops and hellebores. We continue to be a very committed group of volunteers who would always welcome newcomers to join in with what continues to be a source of pleasure for community and volunteers alike.



BENFIELD WILDLIFE & CONSERVATION GROUP



From January 2022 the sheep arrived to start the conservation grazing. The main flock will be with throughout early Spring. The sheep do a marvellous job enabling the chalk grassland species of flora and fauna to thrive.

Last year, once restrictions were lifted, we worked during late spring and summer. This entailed digging up Hawthorne, Dogwood and Privet on a section of the hill. This has definitely improved the habitat for our rare chalk grassland. We are going to continue this in the summer. Brush cutting is very good for bramble and tidying the edges of the reserve, but if you brush cut Hawthorne or other scrub you are in effect coppicing it and it just comes back even stronger.

In 2021 we were able to undertake our annual flower and glow worm walks in June. We saw many chalk grassland indicator species such as the pyramidal orchids, lady's bedstraw, eye bright, fairy flax, thyme and birds foot trefoil and many more. The glow worms, unfortunately, were down in number last year.

We started our scrub bashing in earnest in October 2021 and have been fortunate to recruit two new volunteers this year. I would like to thank all our volunteers and members for their continued support.

We are always grateful for new members & volunteers as we are a small group and totally funded by membership subscription and the occasional grant which we have to apply for. If you fancy joining our group or want more information please email us on: benfieldhillnr@gmail.com

*Sally Hubbard
Interim Chair
Benfield Wildlife and Conservation Group*

FRIENDS OF BLAKERS PARK



The Friends of Blakers Park have planted 31 new trees in the park since 2019. When we conceived the idea in 2018 we hoped to plant 50 new trees in five years, so we are very pleased to have got this far already, especially considering we were unable to plant last year due to Covid restrictions.

We plan to plant the last batch, for which we already have the funding pledged, in winter 2023 which means we will have planted 50 trees in just four years!

There has been tremendous response from local residents not only as sponsors but also as planters and in forming a volunteer watering rota to make sure our young trees survive. Fiveways residents have been amazing. Also, the Cleveland Arms, opposite the park, generously allowed us to use their outside tap and we have been able to pay our small share of their water bill.

Brighton and Hove CityParks have given vital support, helping with storage and planting and we're particularly grateful to our rangers and arboricultural team.

Trees we have planted include sweetgums, cherries, oaks, rowans, juneberries, pear, apple, disease resistant elms, hawthorn, maple, dogwood, witch hazel, magnolia and a ginko.

We are thrilled that we have been able to plant this many varieties, all as standards rather than saplings, making them much hardier from the beginning. It has been a delight to be able to work with the community in our lovely park to achieve such great results during these difficult times.

Best wishes

Sally Cranfield
Chair

REGENCY SQUARE AREA SOCIETY – GARDENING GROUP

We planted £1,000 of new perennials in October. All of them in the 34m border at the southern end of Regency Square's upper garden.

The money was raised by the Regency Square Area Society, the plants chosen to suit the garden conditions: merciless exposure to sea winds and sun, quick-drying shallow soil (the garden is on top of an underground car park). The new plants include ornamental grasses, plus Achillea, Artemisia, Echinacea, Nepeta, Perovskia, rosemary and Salvia: mostly blues, yellows and purple.

Preparation took weeks and meant creating a planting plan, finding suppliers, clearing the bed of weeds, digging out and saving around 200 daffodil bulbs, and spreading half a tonne of compost. The garden has no water, and nowhere secure to store compost and plant deliveries, so the logistics took a bit of working out. At one point, because of very low turnout post-lockdown, the whole thing seemed ridiculously over-ambitious.

So it was a huge relief to have help with weeding and planting from Neil's Nomads (aka CityParks Ranger Volunteers). On planting day, Nomads and RSAS volunteers joined forces to get everything in the ground in a single session. Help came from other quarters, too. Friends of Hove Lagoon shared valuable tips and information from their experience of creating two new flower beds – a much bigger project than ours! BHCC traffic control centre organised temporary access to a water supply.

At the time of writing, the re-planted daffs are in bloom, the new plants are beginning to put on spring growth, turnout to sessions is much improved and we're thinking about this year's restoration plans.

Gill Wales
RSAS gardening group leader
rsasgardening@gmail.com



RACEHILL COMMUNITY ORCHARD – FURLONGS AHEAD!



The Racehill Community Orchard is managed by Brighton Permaculture Trust's community orchards team. Tree planting season in early 2022 was our busiest ever: 138 new fruit and nut trees across Brighton & Hove, Peacehaven and Adur & Worthing. This includes 5 smaller community orchards with 50 trees and 88 more trees added to existing orchards in designated communities within Coldean, Bevendean, Moulsecoomb and Peacehaven. We've even taken on new sites at Southwick and Shoreham.

As part of this season's planting we expanded our lease at Racehill Community Orchard taking on a new annexe of land. Through hard work by Kirsty Sloman, Neil's Nomads (aka CityParks Ranger Volunteers) and our regular volunteers, this area was cleared of scrub and brambles and planted with 25 beautiful trees. And we have more plans for even more trees at Racehill, Bevendean and Worthing in the coming season.

Our planting has been made possible through funders including local business sponsors Infinity Foods and Coir products Ltd, and the Urban Tree Challenge Fund run by the Forestry Commission and delivered by us in partnership with Trees for Cities.

Further funding including BHCC Communities Fund, Postcode Local Trust and Heritage Lottery Funding have allowed essential after care for trees by our expert tree workers plus engaging and training local people to help them learn how to look after their new community orchards ensuring the trees thrive as a legacy for the future.

If you are interested in helping support a local community orchard or planting one yourself, please contact us at orchards@brightonpermaculture.org.uk



FRIENDS OF CRAVEN WOOD

The group continues to meet monthly, and numbers of volunteers have been rising steadily, enabling us to keep on top of all the burgeoning growth of Spring!

Regrettably, we have had to cut down two large diseased elm trees, and burnt the bark on site, while another one came down of its own accord, thanks to Storm Eunice. But on the plus side, we have planted a further dozen or so whips of native trees which will one day replace the carbon lost from the elms.

We have also been helping Craven Vale Community Association plant trees on their Estate, as part of the council's Urban Tree Challenge Fund, organised for us by Mark Syrett. We have planted ten trees in the past week, six walnuts, two hickory bittersnuts and two medlars. The Estate has now planted some 80 fruit and nut trees in the past ten years, and around 100 miscellaneous whips. They will soon be running out of available grassland! The photo shows Mark and volunteers with one of the bittersnuts. All we need to do now is keep them watered!



Alan Cooke
Friends of Craven Wood

THREE CORNERED COPSE

The last 6 months have been a busy time in the Copse, which has become a popular spot for dog walkers and those seeking some green space. Whilst it is great to see so many people enjoying the tranquillity of the Copse, it has increased the human footprint with increased wear and tear on wooden steps and some benches.

In addition we had a couple of council contractor incidents that badly damaged the hedges on Dyke Road Avenue and King George VI. After making a lot of noise we managed to hold the Council to account and get the hedge replanted, however we can't reinstate the ecological damage to the 4 year old hedge that was just becoming established. We are now chasing the Ash Dieback Team to get the damaged hedge on King George VI replaced. They drove their vehicles through the hedge rather than use the access gate!

The Ash Dieback contractors are currently in the Copse so we are waiting until they have finished before planning any workdays. Whilst we realise this work is necessary for the long term future of the Copse, it does feel a very different place at the moment and a much tougher environment for the wildlife, as a lot of ground cover was lost in accessing the various felling zones. At the moment it all looks quite brutal, so we will be engaging the Parks team to understand how much wood will be removed and how we can repurpose what is left.

FRIENDS OF PALMEIRA & ADELAIDE - COVID 19 MEMORIAL BED

The original idea for the bed came from Chrissie whose property overlooked a part of Adelaide Gardens which she found lacking in colour and interest in the winter. She donated a substantial amount to FOPA and a variety of her friends added to the pot.

The original cost of the bed has been dealt with by the Council and the fund will provide for additional planting when we can see how things progress and the plants establish themselves. It might be that we can expand the size of the bed or add another.

Jack and Geoff (gardener and superior) from the Council were approached by FOPA and permission was granted by their superior (Sarah) to have a bed made. The original planting plan was made by Matt (Jack's predecessor) and modified by the Council sourcing team.

All this started over a year ago and there have been various hold-ups but all has now been planted. Amongst the plants are Hebes, Verbenas, and Grasses, and a number of different smaller plants which will in time develop into taller plants.

The bed has a temporary fence around it to protect the plantings from dogs, but the hope is that a fence similar to the one surrounding the birdbath in Palmeira will replace it.

Jack our CityParks gardener putting finishing touches to the new bed.



MAXIMISE THE EXPOSURE OF YOUR EVENTS AND NEWS ITEMS!

It is now easy for any green space group to upload details of Events they are holding or News items they have onto the Forum's events calendar and news board at <http://bhgreenspaceforum.org.uk> . Events are displayed on the website home page.

To add Events, click on 'Submit your event' and complete the form presented, you can also upload an image or poster associated with the event (must be a photo or 'jpg' type image). To add News items just click on 'Submit your news'..

To use these facilities you will need to register on the website, but only once. Then it's just a case of logging in after clicking the submit event or news buttons.. If you are not registered already, the site will prompt you on what steps to take..



Please do EMail the Forum at bhgsforum@gmail.com with any questions.