



Autumn Newsletter – November 2024

Thank You

From the CityParks Rangers

The pictures below have all been taken in the past two weeks and that's only some of the workdays that I have been involved with. These photos are just a snapshot and an example of just some of the incredible work going on out there, all done by volunteers, all working hard to improve our parks and open spaces.



The main purpose of this article is, on behalf of the CityParks Ranger team, to say Thank you.

Thank you for taking an interest, getting involved and doing all those extra jobs that simply wouldn't get done without the help of volunteers. It all adds up. Its great working on the volunteer days, we got a load of jobs done and we always manage to have a laugh, and (this is strictly between you and me!) I often enjoy working with the volunteers more than with my own CityParks colleagues (Please don't tell them I said that!)

It's likely that, if your group has been going for a while, you may not see your Ranger as much as you used to, and that is mainly down to the overwhelming interest in volunteering in Brighton & Hove. I've been working here for over twenty years, when I first started there were a few active 'Friends' groups, but since then there has been a lot more interest in conservation, more people wanting to get involved and there are now so many groups, that it would not be physically possible for us to turn up, as we used to, with a van full of tools and supervise all of the many volunteer work days and gardening tasks happening across the city. Obviously, we can't turn down the offer of volunteer help! Yet all these groups need supervising. So back in 2016 we asked if groups were willing nominate representatives to

lead practical workdays, and that if they attended one of our courses in 'Leading Practical Conservation Tasks' (and had a nominated first aider present) then we could grant them permission to work in our parks, without a member of CityParks staff present.

And whilst we maintain close contact with all our Friends groups, our leadership programme has given many of our groups an autonomy that would otherwise not been possible, so Thank you, to all the leaders who are turning up to the work sessions, with all the tools, the gloves, the risk assessments, sign in sheets, liaising with CityParks about the work that needs doing (and what to do with all that 'green waste' afterwards), directing the task and then packing it all away again at the end. That is a big responsibility, and to the First aiders and all the helpers for all our 'Friends of' and community groups. Thank you.

So that's the 'Friends' groups. Then there's all the other people who volunteer directly with the Rangers every week, the Wildflower Guardians, the Path Wardens, the groups at Stanmer and Waterhall, the CityParks Ranger Volunteers (13 years, still going strong). Thanks to you

Then there's the 'lookers', or 'Urban Shepherds'. Over the years, we have trained around four hundred volunteer shepherds, and you are out there in all weathers, rain or shine, checking the sites and the welfare of the animals and reporting back to us. Back in 2009 the grazing scheme was set up partly as a cost cutting measure (grazing with sheep is much cheaper than cutting and clearing vast areas of downland with machinery) with the added benefit that grazing is good for a wide variety of wildlife, and sheep can reach those parts of a hillside that a tractor just can't get to. If it were not for the volunteer lookers the grazing scheme would not be possible, and with the agricultural grant system changing (for the better!) in the near future, who knows, there may be scope to extend this program even further...? Thank you

Then there's all the people who volunteer with the CityParks Rangers regularly via our partner organisations, groups and charities, the South Downs National Park, Brighton College, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Green Gym, Brighton Conservation Volunteers

And there's all the local businesses who volunteer with the Rangers, Metlife, Avison Young, Amex, Legal and General, Southern Water, EDF, Vodafone, Rickshaw, MPB, Equiniti, EducationCubed, Rampion Wind and Responsible Travel have all worked with us recently

I may have missed some, but you get the idea. There is a lot of fantastic volunteering happening in the city and there's so much more good work to be done! So, If you do want to get involved, volunteering with the Rangers or you'd like to organise a day out with your work colleagues working in one of our parks or Nature reserves, please email cityparks.volunteers@brighton-hove.gov.uk

And if you are volunteering in your local open space, your work is very much appreciated and on behalf of the Ranger team and CityParks, again Thank you very much. Keep up the good work and we'll see you out there.

Park Ranger Neil

Gill Wales – Regency Square Gardening Group

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Gill Wales. Gill was very well known and respected across the Brighton & Hove green space volunteer community. She was the leading force behind the Regency Square Community Gardening Group, regularly sharing her experiences with articles in our Forum Newsletters. She presented on the challenges of gardening in Regency Square at our 2023 Spring Seminar. Her loss will be felt right across our green space volunteer community.

Our thoughts are with Gill's family, friends and fellow volunteers.



Photograph of Regency Square in bloom by Gill Wales. From her final (and favourite) slide of her 2023 Spring Seminar presentation.

Brighton and Hove Wildlife Forum (BHWF)

BHWF members are drawn from across our city, and include representatives from local wildlife groups, Friends Groups, and local experts in their field; volunteers from conservation organisations; naturalists, students, artists and a number of professional environmental consultants. Anyone can join BHWF. What we all have in common is an enthusiasm for wildlife and the same concerns for its future.

We meet every two months and run regular wildlife walks and talks for our members and the community. Please get in contact should you need any advice or wish to be on our mailing list to be kept up to date on biodiversity matters across the city and our events.

Our e-mail address is btnhovewildlife@gmail.com Our website is <https://www.bhwf.org.uk/>

James Newmarch



The following articles have been submitted by BHWF members:

Brighton and Hove Climate and Nature Charter

I am sharing a first draft of the [Brighton and Hove Climate and Biodiversity Charter](#) in order to sound out the level of interest in the Open Spaces and wildlife groups. My hope is that they will eventually adopt this or a future amended version of the charter.

In 2018, Brighton and Hove Council declared a climate and biodiversity emergency. They, along with Bristol, were one of the first to do so and very quickly, councils across the UK followed by declaring similar climate emergencies. A year later, Parliament also declared a climate change emergency.

Since then momentum has stalled. The last government backtracked on climate policies and while the present government demonstrates a more serious and progressive agenda, we are no longer on track to meet its 2030 emissions reductions targets and the UK has been highlighted as having some of the lowest biodiversity in Europe and the Western world.

The draft Charter is primarily addressed to our elected representatives - MPs as well as councillors. It seeks to re-inject a sense of urgency given that time is short and we are beginning to witness the effects of climate breakdown and biodiversity loss everywhere. It seeks to give a sense of vision, direction and structure to all the work that we do - 'we' being not just wildlife groups and elected representatives but a growing coalition of civil society groups, local businesses and public bodies who might not initially see these issues as particularly relevant to the work they do.

Clearly, this is ambitious, but given the scale and urgency of these twin challenges it cannot be otherwise.

My sense is that if enough of us get behind this charter or a future amended version of the charter, and build outwards by recruiting others, then our elected representatives will have to take this seriously and start engaging and working with civil society organisations as *equal partners*.

You can see [the website here](#) but it may be easier to see the [Google doc](#) which also allows you to make comments



Logs brought into city kill precious elms

We are calling for everyone to take simple steps to protect Brighton & Hove’s historic elms after suspected log pile infections caused dozens of trees to be felled. Logs and timber containing elm can carry the fungus and elm bark beetles that spread deadly elm disease. Always check logs are not elm before purchasing them. If you are concerned about your log pile, email elmdisease@brighton-hove.gov.uk and arrange for it to be inspected. If elm logs are found they will be replaced by other non-elm species by the City Council Arboriculture team.

[Find out more about how you can help stop the spread of elm disease](#)

The guide to spotting elm disease can be seen at <https://bhgreenspaceforum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/DED-Spotters-Guide-Re-arranged-Ver-.pdf>

Glyphosate - Update

Last January, when it was announced that our City Council was returning to the use of Glyphosate herbicide, there was a strong reaction from those of us who care about nature and understand some of the negative impacts of pesticides (herbicides are a class of pesticide). So now the “reset year” is coming to a close I thought it would be useful to give a quick update of where things are at.

The contract did not seem to go according to plan, with the persistent wet weather creating problems for application of the product. The Council are taking stock of how it went in terms of the effectiveness of the “controlled droplet” method, and presumably other factors such as the powerful community response. Community opt-out schemes were sought, and despite the valiant efforts of many weeding groups, organized logistical support from the Council was not forthcoming. In fact a number of people doing community weeding got Glyphosate on their hands because there was no signage telling them their street had just been treated. This is incredibly worrying because the formulation used for the controlled droplet method is actually far more concentrated than the diluted product which is used in traditional spraying. The ‘advantage’ of controlled droplet is there is no drifting spray, and you use a smaller quantity of Glyphosate, however this is somewhat offset by the high strength of the formulation. This was never made clear.

Pesticide Action Network have done a brilliant job coordinating a letter signed by nearly 60 community groups so far who all oppose the use of Glyphosate. This will be formally handed in to the council in the coming days. If you haven’t signed yet please get in touch with PAN on this address:

pesticidefreebh@gmail.com

I am also coordinating a community report to compliment PAN’s brilliant efforts, so if you have a particular experience which might be included please do drop me a line here:

stevegiot1@gmail.com



Hanover Action – an alternative approach to loving our streets



Hanover Action launched a ‘Celebrate our Street Plants’ campaign in September. Working with a local artist we designed an A to Z of Brighton Street Plants poster. Each letter of the alphabet features a street plant found locally and describes the benefit it has to our ecosystem. Daily social media posts released one letter at a time, with information about plant benefits to pollinators - as year-round food sources for our birds - and how our urban space is more colourful and interesting. We want people to see the positive impact of street plants, instead of wanting to get rid of them, accepting that nature is messy and that most are unproblematic and given the climate and nature crisis we need them more than ever.

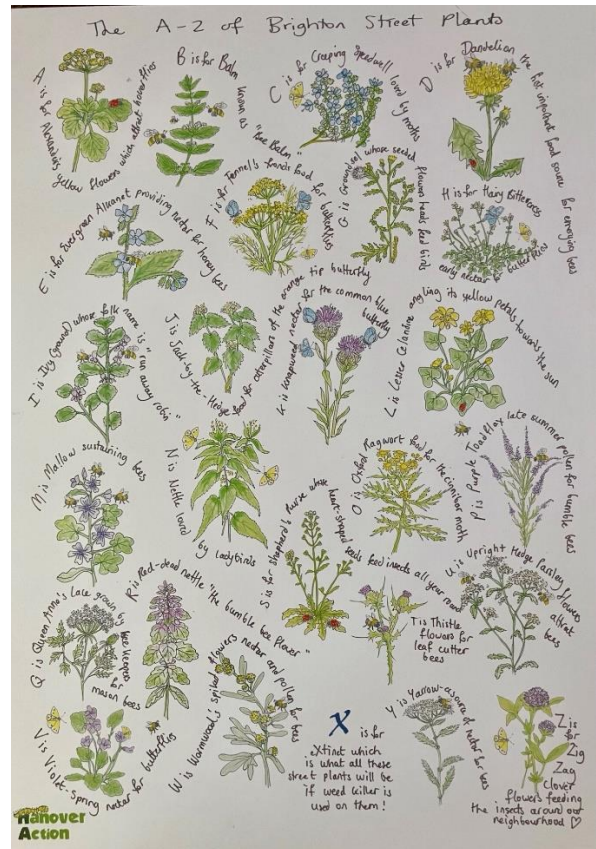
The letter X for extinction was shared last as an important message to not use weedkillers anywhere, given the terrible impact they have on nature. We also produced a window sign for people to show support for the campaign, and joined in asking our Council to cease pesticide use.

We have had a fantastic resident response to our campaign – with many telling us how it has led them to see street plants differently, and even seeing if they can find them and learn more about them.

The campaign continues, with events planned in the coming months. Hanover Action are happy to come along to any other group to talk about the campaign, and/or to provide posters and window signs. These can also be requested from <https://hanover-action.org.uk/street-plants/>

Karen James

Hanover Action



Fiveways Community Pesticide-Free Weeding Group

PESTICIDE-FREE FIVEWAYS COMMUNITY GROUP
 We are a new community group working to keep our neighbourhood clean, tidy and environmentally friendly.
WE NEED VOLUNTEERS! CAN YOU JOIN US?

We meet regularly on **Sundays at 10.30am** for an hour or two. Come as often as you like and stay as long as you like.

If you are unable to join in, please consider committing to keeping the pavement and road gutter outside your home swept and weed-free. It will really help. Thank you!

FOR MORE INFO DROP US A LINE ON PESTICIDEFREEFIVEWAYS@GMAIL.COM

Brighton & Hove Council have returned to spraying our pavements, verges and other urban public spaces with the toxic weedkiller, glyphosate. If you are keen to create a healthier,

pesticide-free neighbourhood, we welcome you to join us. Together, we are working to keep our community tidy and ‘weed-free’ and hope to be able to opt-out of the Council’s spraying regime, protecting the health of residents, wildlife and pets.

Our main activity is hand-weeding, mostly on Sunday mornings. It’s a great way to meet neighbours and make a positive impact. Volunteers can attend as often as they are able and can stay as long as they like, we usually don’t do more than an hour or so and people of all abilities are welcome.

Launched in May, the group continues to grow with plans to include other activities that benefit local wildlife and mental health. We also occasionally meet up at the pub for a social and to discuss new ideas.

If you are interested in helping to protect our green spaces or simply want to connect with like-minded people, we'd love for you to join us. Drop us a line on

pesticidefreefiveways@gmail.com if you would like to know more.

Together, we can create a cleaner, healthier neighbourhood for all!



'Take the Bus for a Walk'

We've all heard of taking the dog for a walk, but a bus? This autumn and winter, and indeed at any other time of the year, why not jump on a bus and head into the beautiful countryside on the edge of or even beyond the city boundary? The scenery on our doorsteps is stunning, and the opportunities to enjoy nature and wildlife boundless.

Prompted by the threat of the loss of council support for the 77, 78 and 79 services to Devil's Dyke, Stanmer Park and Ditchling Beacon, due to the need to save money, some of us have been looking at ways to encourage the use of these services. All run throughout the autumn and winter at weekends and the 78 to Stanmer Park also during the week - see timetable - <https://passenger-line-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/brightonhove/BH/79-timetable-20240922-87268de6.pdf>

It is also easy to go further afield using other services to and from Brighton and Hove. Metrobus services 270, 271, 272 and 273 link Churchill Square and the London Road corridor with Mid-Sussex and beyond, providing access to the Downs and South Downs Way between Pyecombe and Hassocks, and even Ashdown Forest (270) and Wakehurst Place (272). Details at - <https://www.metrobus.co.uk/services>

Stagecoach's recently extended 17 service travels out to Horsham, again via the Downs at Newtimber - <https://www.stagecoachbus.com/> .

And not only do Brighton and Hove Buses services 28 and 29 link our city beyond Lewes with the High Weald National Landscape, but the 11, 12 and 13 Coaster services run along the coast to Seven Sisters and Beachy Head, a route held by many as one of the finest in the UK - <https://www.buses.co.uk/services>

Mix and match, take one route out, and another back. And well-behaved dogs are welcome on all our bus routes..



James Newmarch

BHWF

Brighton & Hove Green Spaces Forum (BHGSF)

The BHGSF is a volunteer organisation providing an independent voice and communication hub for volunteer groups working with Brighton & Hove's parks, open and urban green spaces. We run events, hold seminars, facilitate contact between groups and other stakeholders, produce Newsletters and assist groups with queries.

The Forum has around 90 member groups which can be seen on our website at <https://bhgreenspaceforum.org.uk/>

The website provides full contact details and an overview of all our member groups. The interactive map facility enables group locations to be easily identified (please check your group is on it). The site also includes an Events calendar, News items and a Resources page. These can be self-served by any members wanting to share details of their own events and news (see article at the end of this Newsletter for more detail).

Our Email address is bhgsforum@gmail.com

Cliff Munn



BRIGHTON & HOVE
GREEN SPACES FORUM

Here follow some updates from the BHGSF:

BHGSF 2024 Autumn Seminar

The BHGSF Autumn Seminar took place on 11th September at the Friends Meeting House in Brighton. The theme was '**Wildflowers, Wildlife & Food Growing in our local green spaces**'. The guest speakers were Professor Dave Goulson from Sussex University, Lindy Brooke-Tweed from the Wildflower Conservation Society, Ruth Urbanowicz from the B&H Organic Gardening Group and Leah Salm from Greenwich University. We were delighted with the turnout and feedback has been excellent.



Links to the slides used by our Autumn Seminar presenters can be found below:

<https://bhgreenspaceforum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/BHGSF-2024-Autumn-Seminar-Attendees-Agenda-WFCS.pdf>

<https://bhgreenspaceforum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/BHGSF-2024-Autumn-Seminar-Slides-Dave-Goulson-Wildlife-Gardening.pdf>

<https://bhgreenspaceforum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/BHGSF-2024-Autumn-Seminar-Slides-Ruth-Urbanowicz-BHOGG.pdf>

<https://bhgreenspaceforum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/BHGSF-2024-Autumn-Seminar-Slides-Leah-Salm-Bite-Sized-Biodiversity.pdf>

South & South East in Bloom – Congratulations our winners!

A huge well done to all the Brighton & Hove volunteer groups who entered into this year's RHS South & South East in Bloom (S&SEIB) competitions:

- Rottingdean in Bloom – won Gold in the 'Parishes in Bloom' category.
- Kipling Garden Rottingdean won Silver in the 'Walled Garden' category.
- Kipling Garden Rottingdean won Silver Gilt in the 'Environmental Challenge' category.
- St Wulfran's Church Ovingdean won Silver Gilt in the 'Churchyard' category.

Local winners of S&SEIB 'Its Your Neighbourhood' (IYN) awards:

- Lansdowne Area Residents Association - Lansdowne Street - Establishing
- Lansdowne Area Residents Association - Lansdowne Place - Advancing
- Friends of Palmeira & Adelaide – Thriving
- Friends of Brunswick Square & Terrace – Thriving
- Friends of Preston Park - Thriving
- Woodingdean Community Association – Thriving
- Norfolk Square Gardening Group – Outstanding
- Friends of St Ann's Well Gardens – Outstanding
- Friends of Waterloo Street Community Garden – Outstanding
- Stanford & Cleveland Community Garden - Outstanding

Congratulations to you all!

More information about South & South East in Bloom can be seen on their website at <https://www.sseib.com/>



Green Flag Awards 2024



Green Flags have been flying in seven Brighton & Hove parks this summer as the council celebrated having some of the finest parks in the country. Easthill Park, Hove Park, Kipling Gardens, Preston Park, St Ann's Well Gardens, Stoneham Park and Stanmer Park have were all awarded prestigious Green Flags for excellence.

The national awards, handed out by environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy, are given to parks which are well maintained and have excellent facilities.

Sadly, The Level was not awarded a Green Flag this year, following the continued closure of the café and toilets, and an increase in anti-social behaviour. However, work is already underway to refurbish the MacLaren Pavilion, providing a kiosk and new toilet facilities and improvements to the playground are proposed for 2025/26. In addition, the council continuing to work with the police and The Level community to increase security and tackle and reduce anti-social behaviour.

Branching Out – Tree Council grants

The Tree Council's grants programme for community groups, schools, small registered charities, and Tree Warden Networks seeking to establish trees, hedgerows, and orchards in **The 2024/25 planting season** is now open for applications.

The fund provides grants ranging from £250 to £2,500 in value – with faster decisions for those applying for funds below £500. To find out if your group is eligible, please read the [Application Guidance](#).

Branching Out presents a fantastic opportunity for schools and community groups large and small to get their spades in the ground and start establishing life-enhancing and biodiversity boosting trees, hedgerows, and orchards in their neighbourhoods.

The final deadline for applications is midnight, Sunday 1 December.

<https://treecouncil.org.uk/grants-and-guidance/our-grants/branching-out-fund/>



Albion Community Garden - garden trail idea?

We just wanted to update you on an article that appeared in the last newsletter about the Community Garden Trail. You might remember that the Albion Community Garden and White Street Garden asked for people who might be interested in restarting a Community Garden Trail to get in contact with them.

Nine Community Gardens met in early October to see what people's thoughts were about restarting the trail. We had a very constructive meeting and are now exploring the idea of having a coordinated Community Garden Open Day early in June of next year. Our aim is to raise the profile of the Community Gardens in Brighton and Hove, to develop a network of urban spaces in bloom and give each other help, support and encouragement and possibly fundraise for a local garden charity.

If this is something you would like to get involved with contact Michael at albiongardenbn2@gmail.com or Paul at Paulbrixton@btinternet.com with any thoughts, ideas and encouragement!



Paul Brixton
Albion Community Garden

Wildflower Meadow in Hove Park

Like many other parks, due to Council cutbacks, Hove Park has lost all its flower beds many having been grassed-over, so apart from an occasional cut, most of the main areas are nearly maintenance free. Friends of Hove Park decided that it would be a great idea to add colour and increase pollination and aid biodiversity by creating our very own Wildflower Meadow.

We set out to raise the funds for the wildflower seeds and are greatly indebted to Hove Soiree Rotary club's environmental committee who could see the benefits of our project.

Sarah Carlisle on behalf of BHCC was most helpful and gave us her full endorsement. We next approached Keith Harris the Park's Head Gardener who gave us his full support and agreed to help as much as possible.

I then approached James Newmarch from B&H Green Spaces Forum for his expert advice and he agreed to become part of the team for which we are very grateful. A four-day programme was agreed with the important help of CityParks Ranger Neil Doyle and his volunteers.

Day 1 The gardeners cut the grass area of 250mx 25m

Day 2 Neil and his team raked the whole area

Day 3 Due to weather the grass had to be cut again

Day 4 Neil and his team returned to rake again

Day 5 Six volunteers mixed the seeds with sand and sowed the whole meadow by hand.

A big thank you to everyone involved and we wait with baited breath till next Spring to see the results of our endeavours.

Alan Moon

Chair FO Hove Park



Benfield Wildlife and Conservation Group



Benfield Wildlife and Conservation Group has had a great summer.

The first highlight was the moth trapping evening on 10th May. This was well attended. We were fortunate to be led by Dave Green from the Sussex Moth Group and Alice Parfitt from Buglife. Light traps were set up at the bottom end of the hill, where it was sheltered and some lovely moths were found. However, the moths were somewhat eclipsed by the spectacular appearance of the Aurora Borealis. What a night. It was topped off after midnight by the sighting of a barn owl quartering over the reserve and caught in my torchlight. Magical all round.

Could this be surpassed, you may ask? Well, the Glow worms didn't disappoint. They are now famous courtesy of BBC SE Today and the Journalist Charlie Rose. We were filmed on one of our Glow worm walks led by our local expert Prof Alan Stewart of Sussex University. He attracted 30 males using a lure, which mimics the females glowing bottom.



Alan managed to find 2 mating.

Not only were they on BBC SE Today but they also featured on the main BBC news on election day 4th July. We were thrilled to get such publicity. Thank you Charlie.

We have held 2 wildflower ID walks and found over 60 species on each, which is pretty good.

Our new notice boards produced by The Acorn workshop and part funded by the National Lottery Community Fund and South Downs National Park Trust funds were installed in 2 locations on site. These are helping more people to know what to look for and to enjoy the reserve. These were installed by our team and the South Downs NT volunteers. A good job done by all.



Courtesy of Froglife, in late September, we built a hibernaculum covered in wildflowers for our beautiful reptiles. Let's hope they like it

Finally to top it all off, having been worried that our Dormice were not doing very well this summer, I found 11 animals in October. This included 3 litters of young, which is not unusual. They often have a litter in early Autumn. I also found a whopper of a male, who weighed in at 37grams, a record in my surveying career. He was well prepared for hibernation when it gets cold.

Sally Wadsworth

Chair, Benfield Wildlife and Conservation Group

Secret Garden Group

A big hello from the Secret Garden Group. We are a small group of volunteers who maintain the community garden behind St Leonards Church in Hove.



We've had a busy year with two fundraising events; A plant sale in May where we were blessed with the sunshine which had a very popular turn out. In August we hosted a Mad Hatters tea party where we welcomed the local community to come along for fun, games and cream tea. It was lovely meeting neighbours and seeing people enjoy the garden we work so hard to maintain.

The garden is open for all to come and enjoy and we would like to encourage new volunteers to join us. We meet every Saturday (weather permitting) at 11 and we're a friendly bunch. We share out the gardening tasks between us and enjoy a tea or coffee over a chat whilst we soak up our wonderful garden.

We also provide community compost boxes as part of the B&H Food Partnership compost scheme (<https://bhfood.org.uk/directory-hub/community-composting/>). We'd like to thank all our neighbours who currently use the scheme. Please keep your food scraps and cardboard coming :). This combined with our garden waste all contributes to creating nutrient rich compost which is vital to our garden.

If you're interested in learning about composting or wish to become a member please do get in touch or come along to the garden to meet us.

If you're interested in joining our compost scheme or volunteering at the garden, please email us at secretgardengroup@outlook.com

You can also find us on Facebook, Secret Garden Group (<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100070044105018>)



Friends of Preston Park



The Friends of Preston Park (FoPP) is made up of local residents who are keen to know about the Park and whose aim is to maintain and improve the facilities of Preston Park by representing the interests of all who use it. Heading the FoPP is the committee who try and democratically decide what needs addressing. Last year we fought for public toilets to remain open and this year one of our tasks is the refurbishment of the pétanque court. Our book box has been very popular and we organised community events including nature walks, wildlife workshops, wreath making and a picnic to celebrate the blossoming of the cherry trees. Just recently the Rotary Club donated thousands of purple crocus bulbs, which we are planting to raise awareness about the importance of vaccinating for polio.

Currently, our main gardening task is to look after and improve the outstanding Rose Garden, one of the very few of this size left in the country, but one of the best kept, believe it or not! Our team of 10 to 20 Rose Garden volunteers weed, deadhead and prune all year long and have a key role in informing the public on the many varieties we have. With between 4000 and 5000 roses, the garden rewards us with an astonishingly beautiful and colourful display of scented roses all summer long. One of the new tasks FoPP has taken on is the replanting of the east and west herbaceous borders, with plants and flowers that are specifically chosen for pollinators. We are entirely self-reliant as all our plants have been grown on our propagating bench or given by volunteers. This year, the FoPP committee entered the Rose Garden into the South and South East in Bloom competition for the first time. The Rose Garden was awarded Level 4 – “Thriving” in the “It’s Your Neighbourhood” category, a huge accolade to our amazing volunteers.

However, we continue to face many challenges, from recruiting volunteers to finding funds to purchase much needed fertiliser and mulch. We scrape by raising donations from the public, through our events, or by commercial sponsorship, in order to afford gloves, tools and the ingredients the roses need to grow healthily. We continue to have an excellent relationship with David Austin, the world-famous rose grower, and owing to their incredible generosity we were able to plant 350 roses last year to replace ailing and dead ones and will replace a further 150 this winter.

With a cash strapped council and so few trained gardeners employed in our parks, the role of volunteers continues to be vital to maintain most of the flowerbeds within the Park, and in order to obtain funds or professional advice, sadly we increasingly rely on private companies or individuals to achieve this. With these thoughts in mind we are therefore always on the lookout for more people to work with us and for anyone who might wish to donate further funds

Stanford and Cleveland Community Garden

This has been a busy and not always easy growing season for us due to weather conditions and the armies of snails and slugs intent on munching their way through our seedlings. We replanted our runner beans four times before we managed to get them to grow! As we grow organically without pesticides we tried a variety of slug and snail defences around young plants, including recycled plastic bottles with copper tape around them, netting, grit, removing slugs and snails by hand, Strulch, crushed baked eggshells, and crushed whelk shells sometimes in combination! Eventually patience and perseverance paid off and we were able to harvest our beans, courgettes, and other crops. The flowers in the garden looked beautiful all summer and the sunflowers are still blooming. A bonus due to the high rainfall this year has meant we haven’t had to do much watering!

Throughout the season from May to the end of October we kept a logbook of the crops growing and harvested and our reflections on our growing experiences as part of the Bite-size Biodiversity project alongside other growers throughout the city. We look forward to seeing the results of this project later in the year.

In July we were judged by South and South East in Bloom and were awarded Outstanding Level 5 for our efforts. Two of us had a great day out at RHS Wisley in September to collect our award and have a wander around the inspiring gardens. It was also good to meet other entrants during the day.

At the end of July we held an Open Garden event to raise funds for the Martlets hospice. Although the weather wasn't brilliant, we were able to raise a sizeable sum to help those suffering from terminal cancer. It is so rewarding that we can make a difference to those in need through community gardening.



Friends of Grand Avenue Lawns

Winter 2024 Update – Wrapping Up a Productive Year!

As we transition into winter, our fantastic team of volunteers for Friends of Grand Avenue Lawns have been busy clearing the edging around the entire lawn, removing those stubborn brambles from the beds, and giving the trees a much-needed trim. The space is really starting to take shape!

We're also nearly ready to spread grass seed on the bare patches across from the beds, so fingers crossed for some lush new growth soon.

Looking ahead, we're excited to announce the next phase of our project involves laying down woodchip, provided by Brighton Council, to enhance the beds. This allows us to continue maintaining the area and will provide better conditions for the plants as we head into winter.



Winter pruning sessions are planned throughout the season ahead. This will help us care for the shrubs and trees in the Avenue, ensuring they remain healthy through the colder months. Volunteers of all skill levels are welcome, and no prior gardening experience is needed – just enthusiasm!

While we don't have any big events or garden parties planned for now, we're hoping to bring a bit of festive cheer with a casual Christmas drink and some carol singing. Stay tuned for the date, it's the perfect chance to come together, celebrate our hard work, and spread some holiday joy.

If you'd like to join us for the Christmas gathering or get involved in our winter projects, we'd love to have you! Thank you to everyone who's helped make this year such a success—here's to a green and joyful winter!

Friends of Grand Avenue Lawns

info@grandavenuehove.org

Keep the Ridge Green

This last year has been difficult with weather conditions constantly against us when trying to have volunteer work days. It has been a case of 'fire-fighting' to keep access routes and paths open where nettles and weeds have grown out of control with so much wet weather.

Andy our CityParks Ranger has however battled to clear our pond from the invasive Parrot Feather that has taken over smothering most of the aquatic marginals.

Back last year the group agreed to look into the possibility of planting a Heritage Orchard and after several false starts we began working with Brighton Permaculture Trust. Steven Williams (Spam) has made visits to The Ridge and made soil checks that prove a good depth of quality soil. We have narrowed down two reasonably sheltered sites with high hedges providing a good wind break from the north west winds

The fun bit is deciding what will be the most suitable trees for the future. Our aim of the orchard is to be for the benefit of all, and we are spoiled for choice with eating and cooking apples, plum, damson, crab apple and maybe mulberry. Taking into account the flowering time of different species we can provide nectar for birds and butterflies over a long season and the crab apple will provide food for small mammals well into autumn. So a 'win win' for all.

Brighton Permaculture will provide us with support and help for the 1st three years and our commitment is to continue to care for the orchard for the generations to come.



Maximise the exposure of your Events and News items!

It is very 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>

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 this facility, 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



The BHGSF website Home page colourfully displays member group events every month.