



## Open Spaces Report December 2021

### IRUS

Due to staff absences the first week of the IRUS was slightly hindered, however with help from the office staff and many councillors volunteering their time, we managed to get the job done. Loxton's allowed us to defer our second week which we will use in January to get to the parts up Herne hill we didn't manage to get to.

With the new setup of countryside team and recreational team, we will hopefully have more time to undertake works throughout the year meaning we won't need the Irus next year as we will be able to keep on top of the growth with brush cutters and the Ferris before the slopes become too slippery.

### Drainage

We have created a shallow drainage ditch in one of the worst affected areas of waterlogging up on the hill. This will hopefully prevent surface water running onto the path. At the bottom of the ditch is a culvert to pass the water across to the other side. We will monitor the success of this design over the coming months and if successful, apply it to other key locations.

### Hedgerows

We have trimmed the hedgerows which we laid last year, side and tops, to encourage it to thicken up a bit. Moving forward, we will manage these in accordance with the Herne Hill Management Plan; cutting the sides each year to keep access clear but allow the tops three years growth before its next cut. This cycle can be carried out three to four times before the hedge will require laying again.

We have made a start on the prep work for laying which we hope to undertake in December/January by removing the "rubbish" from the hedge lines.

### Volunteering

We have had two volunteering tasks, the first, we prepped a section of hedgerow which we will lay with our volunteers in January. This involved removing many of the plastic tree guards from around the trees. Although there was a lot of interest, a few volunteers unfortunately couldn't make the day, so there was just one attendee nonetheless, we got the job done and they seemed to really enjoy themselves.

In our second task, we used some of the cuttings from around the site to restore the dead hedge on the



northern slopes of the hill. Despite the bad weather, we had three volunteers turn up who braved the showers to help us out.

We're taking a break in December for Christmas but will be meeting again at the end of January for some hedge laying and coppicing.

### **Wildflower Meadow**

We have seeded the wildflower meadow, which will benefit from the frosts we've had, although we have only had two mornings where we have had real frosts. Yellow rattle needs 5 periods of freezing temperatures to germinate in a process called stratification which is considered essential for successful germination.

We will continue to cut in accordance with the wildflower meadow plan and through wildflower surveys monitor the success of the project moving forward.

### **Storm Arwen**

We had a few trees down up on the hill which we managed to sort out in house and three hanging branches on the recreation ground which we used the extendable pole saw to dislodge. We will use the arisings in and around the wood to help with surfacing, dead-hedging and stakes for hedge laying.

