

Committee: Open Spaces

Date: 4th October 2022

Title: Open Spaces Team Report

Purpose of Report

To inform member of activities that have been undertaken by the Open Spaces team since the last report by the Countryside Manager

Report:

1. The Recreation Ground

- 1.1. We cut the hedge along Canal Way, though have left the top. After some thought we think that the best option for the hedge will be to lay this, which we will start this winter, this will improve the structure of the hedge and prevent the encroachment on the footpath along Canal Way.
- 1.2. Party in the Park was a great success as always. Though the organising team did a great job tidying up, the bags left behind next to the Workshop were not only an eyesore, but also a nuisance as every day they were being ripped open by badgers and birds which made our daily litter pick a nightmare. Next year we should request that the bins be left either in a skip or even in the blue barrels or some other secure structure to prevent this occurring again



2. Herne Hill

2.1. With the help of volunteers in August we carried out a veteran tree survey in the woods. We found ten notable trees either being veteran or ancient, in line with the Herne Hill Management Plan, we will *recruit five of these this year and another five next year.

*Recruit - bring trees on to a management regime to enhance notable qualities and allow favourable conditions for it to continue its life cycle.

2.2. Over the August bank holiday weekend, we had a rather large oak come down. The oak had brown cubic rot present on the inside, this would have weakened the structure and with the dry weather making it so brittle and being rather one sided, it unfortunately snapped. We left the stump standing as this is a valuable habitat.

2.3. We have also managed to make some really good progress on path works which we have had some great feedback from regular users who really appreciate the effort in trying to make the hill more accessible.



3. New Road Cemetery

- 3.1. Grass cutting has continued at the cemetery. Though it will soon start slowing down with winter approaching, we will continue to cut the grass when the weather permits but at a slightly higher height to give the turf a bit more protection throughout the wet season.
- 3.2. We have been working through the maintenance plan and are making some progress but hope our efficiency will increase now that the Recreation Manager has started.
- 3.3. We have edged and reformed the edges of the path which immediately gives the area a smarter well looked after feeling.



4. West Crescent Meadow

- 4.1. The final cut of the year for the meadow will take place soon. We will arrange with our volunteers to help rake up the cuttings once done.
- 4.2. Further seeds will be planted as part of an SSDC initiative which will hopefully help improve the species diversification.
- 4.3. Two of our volunteers undertook a survey of the meadow, and they hope to do the survey quarterly so we can monitor the success of our management and cutting regime.

5. Volunteers

5.1. This month we carried out a Veteran tree survey with the volunteers which was an interesting exercise, and we came across some lovely trees which were classed as veteran or ancient.

5.2. I've touched base with our PPLO who a keen local walker is and very keen to help improve our local walking systems and work with us as well as County Council on this. Moving forward he will keep me informed of issues occurring on our rights of way which I will relay through these reports.

6. Staff Training

6.1. This month we did some in-house training before the upcoming hedge laying season and had a bit of practicing of binding the hedge in a more formal way.



**Jake Taylor
Countryside Manager
September 2022**