

Welcoming Wildlife

Autumn News 2024



The recreation grounds at the Downs Leisure Centre are slowly transforming into a parkland for visitors and a haven for wildlife. As well as dog walkers, families and football devotees, other residents and visitors to the Downs include flocks of starlings, herring gulls, wood pigeons, a robin, magpies, crows, blue tits, blackbirds, swallows in flight, hedge sparrows and even a day tripping family of ducks!

Undisturbed verges and meadow host varieties of bees, damsel, crane and hoverflies, moths, butterflies, shield bugs, centipedes, millipedes, grasshoppers, crickets, not to mention foxes and other less seen, but oft heard nocturnal creatures.

Yet this year seems to have been a hard one for some wildlife with noticeably far fewer bees and butterflies everywhere. In response our activities are focused on creating more favourable conditions to help wildlife survive spells of unseasonal weather and reverse some of the habitat loss in our neighbourhood.

You can help to Welcome Wildlife at the Downs in a free event this Autumn:

Saturday 2nd November, 2-5pm - BUILD BIRD BOXES

Help birds find shelter and take part in other bird-themed activities inside the leisure centre, with free refreshments and warming apple crumble and custard served for all helpers!

Saturday 30th November, 1-3pm - PLANT A HAZEL WILDLIFE HEDGEROW

Hedgerows can host many creatures that forage and nest in them including birds, butterflies, moths and caterpillars, squirrels, hedgehogs, field mice. Hedgerows also form green corridors that sustain wildlife moving from place to place. Bring a spade if you have one, waterproofs and wellies just in case!

Sunday 8th December, 10am-midday - PLANT BULBS

Early flowering crocuses, grape hyacinth and fritillaria help bumble bees and insects off to a flying start as they emerge hungrily from winter hibernation. Planting will be behind the all-weather pitch.

Info/register for any of the above events at: friendsofsuttondowns@gmail.com

Other news:

OVER 35 TREES PLANTED

Thanks to our volunteers and partner groups, Trees for Seaford and Brighton Permaculture Trust, Friends of Sutton Downs have planted over 35 trees giving beauty and shade around the recreation grounds, sanctuary to wildlife, and a promise in future years of free organic fruit – apples, pears, cherries, plums and mulberries in the community orchard.

RAIN GARDEN COMPLETED

Earlier this year, thanks to successful collaboration with Lewes District Council, we completed our project to collect and channel water from the leisure centre roof into storage tanks, planters and a rain flower bed before it seeps slowly into the ground. Water storage is invaluable for looking after young thirsty trees at the Downs during dry spells. Slowing the flow of heavy rainfall on roofs and roads before reaching storm drains can help to prevent flooding and sewage outflows that pollute our rivers and sea so it's our hope that rain gardens will become much more widespread. Together with other active groups in Seaford and everywhere we feel these acts make a real difference to our environment and give cause for hope. Together we can be the change!



<https://www.friendsofsuttondowns.co.uk>