

THE GROWING PROJECT

Friends of Sutton Downs - Autumn 2022 Newsletter



We have exciting news to share plus upcoming planting events to invite you to! Friends of Sutton Downs is a recipient of lottery funding for a 3-year renaturing project at the Downs Leisure Centre, part of a wider bid by Ouse Valley CARES (Climate Action, Resilient Ecosystems and Sustainability). This funding will enable us to create a food growing community garden, put in benches and a nature trail for people to enjoy nature close to home and when they visit the Downs.

This autumn/winter we continue tree planting with a hedgerow inside a section of the wall along Sutton Drove, and a mini orchard of apples, pear, cherry, damson and cherry plum trees in part of the meadow behind the astroturf. We're delighted to be working again with Trees for Seaford and with funding from Lewes District Council Chair's fund to make this possible. But we still need some help to plant these beautiful trees. We're gearing up for action with 2 planting days and would greatly welcome your help if you can join us!

DATES TO JOIN IN PLANTING FRUIT TREES & HEDGEROW:

Sunday 20th November, between 11am & 3pm - Planting 200 Hedgerow Plants.

Sunday 11th December, between 11am & 3pm – Planting a Community Orchard.

We'd love you, your family or friends to join us in what promises to be fun, active community planting days. To reward everyone's efforts our friends at the local enterprise, Super Foods, will be serving some tasty, free warming food. On 11th Dec, Sutton Barn Choir join us to bring the event to a festive close with carol singing.

Please check our Facebook page nearer the time should weather conditions require a date change.

Why plant a hedgerow? The hedgerow inside the wall of Sutton Drove will create a wildlife habitat providing food and shelter for wildlife. Its spring blossoms will bring natural beauty to the neighbourhood, and in autumn edible berries, hips and fruit that people can forage. There'll be signposted gaps where those agile enough can climb the wall to shortcut or collect footballs that go over. **Planting Fruit Trees** is not only an excellent way to support pollinating insects, a community orchard holds future promise of locally grown organic fruit that needs no packaging, pesticides or road/air miles that can be picked and eaten straight from the tree!

Contact us via email: Friendsofsuttondowns@gmail.com
Or find us at www.seafuture.org/friends-of-sutton-downs
or on our [Facebook.com/friendsofsuttondowns](https://www.facebook.com/friendsofsuttondowns)



WILDFLOWER MEADOW UPDATE

Lewes District Council sowed seeds for last summer’s spectacular, nectar-rich meadow that enabled bees and butterflies to find food and habitat in the area behind the Astro-turf pitch that was hitherto regularly cut. Due to the long dry season the meadow flowered late and set seed early and at the peak of the heat wave, the Fire and Rescue Service advised LDC to cut and remove the meadow biomass, although a small patch was left for wildlife. We are pleased to be working together with LDC who have fully endorsed the Growing Project that is helping to deliver the council’s biodiversity strategy at the Downs. The use of non-toxic hot foam to prepare the wildflower area last year will not be repeated in 2023. Instead the meadow will be left to see what wild grasses and flowers come up next summer. We’ve asked LDC to mow wide paths further away from low hanging branches of trees.

LOOKING BACK we’re proud and relieved that newly planted trees survived the year’s storm and drought, thanks to the care of nearby residents forming a weekly watering rota during summer.

DO YOU WANT A FREE WILD CHERRY TREE TO PLANT IN YOUR GARDEN?



A cluster of wild cherry saplings have self-seeded in the car park verge beside the hedge. If you would like to lift one out to transplant into your own garden please get in touch as otherwise we will cut these down quite soon.

WHO ARE FRIENDS OF SUTTON DOWNS?

We are a local group who have come together out of concern for the decline of wildlife species and to take positive steps towards supporting biodiversity by renaturing the grounds of the Downs Leisure Centre. We meet at the Downs (on the corner of the playing field) for a Walkabout on the first Tuesday of each month at 10am - if you’re around it’s a nice way to meet and learn more about the project. We hold regular meetings too, mostly in the evening that are open and welcoming to all. **If you would like to get involved or can help in any way - big or small - please get in touch with us at Friendsofsuttondowns@gmail.com**

