



Proposed changes in land management practices to enhance biodiversity in the parish

Background

- May 2021 - KPC agreed an **Environmental Policy and Action Plan**. KPC committed to *“manage the land we own to minimise environmental pollution and....to promote biodiversity”*.
- Funding from the SDNPA obtained to commission a report – the first of its type in SDNP.
- ***Nature Recovery Opportunities in the Parish of Kingston*** - May 2023. Highlighted opportunities and recommended: *“allowing sections of the grassland areas to grow, and introducing more diverse habitats in the Greens, the verges, and in gardens, in conjunction with recreation and people & nature areas”*.
- The report was welcomed and approved by the Parish Council in June 2023.
- The **Kingston Nature Recovery Group** (a working group reporting to Kingston Parish Council) was established in June 2023 to carry the KPC’s environmental work forward.

Context

- This paper to KPC from KNRG provides an overview of the recommended actions to enhance the biodiversity of land owned by the Parish Council.
- The proposed initiatives take forward plans proposed in the ***Nature Recovery Opportunities*** Report, align with the expectations of the SDNPA and fit in with the Sussex Nature Recovery strategy being developed by ESCC.
- Improving management of green spaces to benefit wildlife and biodiversity is taking place all over the country in recognition of the need to support Nature Recovery.
- The proposed plans tie in with similar activities in Lewes, such as [The Lewes Mosaic Project](#), and Brighton, such as [Greening the Cities](#) and [Wilder Verges](#).

Why it's important

- Bringing wildflowers into our village provides vital habitat stepping stones for wildlife.
- Bringing the Downs to our doorsteps benefits not just wildlife but also people.
- The Kingston Priorities Statement Community Survey in November 2023 showed that 76% of respondents felt “***A biodiverse place that is rich in wildlife and connected to outlying local wildlife sites***” was a high (4 & 5) priority.

What has been done already

- The creation of a wildflower meadow area on the Village Green since 2020 has proved popular.
- In 2023, many butterflies, ladybirds, spiders, grasshoppers, and other invertebrates recorded. Virtually none previously. In October, 17 species of plants still in flower.
- Monitoring ongoing to understand how much biodiversity is being improved.



What else is being proposed

- KNRG are now recommending changes in the management of the various green spaces owned by KPC and other authorities.
- The full details are provided in the proposal available on the Kingston Parish Council website.
- One of the most visible changes will be St Pancras Green.

Proposal for St. Pancras Green

- Create 2 additional new wildflower patches (approx. 20m x 15m each).
- Trial 2 patches of uncut grass (approx. 20m x 15m each). Patches unmown from early spring until mid-August (or just prior to the village fete if sooner).
- Reduce frequency of cutting the green from 16 to 12 cuts in 2024 (except the football pitch, its surround, new sports equipment area & paths across the green). A full cut (except wildflower patches) just prior to village fete.
- Leaving a 3m wide strip unmown along the SE boundary by the woodland area. Paths mowed through all usual access points. Assists with water management
- Early flowering spring bulbs planted under trees at the northern end of the green.





In Conclusion

- The proposed management regime not intended to compromise the prime use of St. Pancras Green. An area for sports, games and recreation.
- Recreation for many people includes enjoying wildflowers and the associated wildlife they attract.
- Feedback from the Village Green -
“She said her children run straight past the play structures to the wildflower areas to see what new creatures they might find and especially love the blue butterflies”.
- All proposed changes are reversible, and on a trial basis.