

# Friends of Wimbledon Park

[Friendsofwimbledonpark.org](http://Friendsofwimbledonpark.org)



## SGRA 2024-09-22

Landscape, biodiversity and habitat

## 2

# Wimbledon Park Volunteers (WPV)

---

- 1) Wimbledon Park Volunteers (a subgroup in Friends of Wimbledon Park)
  - a. Park maintenance is carried out by paid staff so volunteer tasks add value to their work.
  - b. This group oversees all volunteer related tasks planned and undertaken thus ensuring a joined-up approach.
  - c. Provide an agreed risk assessment for the tasks in hand that is shown to participants.
  - d. The Community Payback Team (CPT) carry out unpaid work because of court awards for Community Service. This ranges from erecting the fence around the veteran tree, watering, mulching and litter picking.
  - e. Liaison between the three groups is important and each group has a clearly defined role which is understood and respected by all.
  - f. Volunteer activities will be published via website and social media
  - g. Volunteers can offer to help for an hour or more but 2 hours minimum for tree planting. Numbers and hours required for each task will vary.
  - h. Volunteer details will be kept on computer solely for legitimate interests and these include updates and information on the Heritage Park.
  - i. To join the WPV apply via <https://www.friendsofwimbledonpark.org/contact>
    - i. Volunteers can ask for their details to be deleted at any time - see our website for more details of our Privacy Policy:  
<https://www.friendsofwimbledonpark.org/privacy-policy>

# 3

## The Copse

managed by Wimbledon Park Volunteers (WPV).

---

This clump of cornus (dogwood) planted 2019 provide colourful stems during autumn and winter. They will then be pruned hard to regenerate in spring and summer.



- 1) This clump of blackthorns (*prunus spinosa*) has been allowed to develop to add to habitat and interest.
- 2) Blackthorn sends up many suckers and these will be trimmed regularly.



4

## The Copse in 2024

Stinging nettle cluster hiding 2 hawthorn whips, cornus and blackthorn clump

---

SPRING



AUTUMN



# The Great Field

---

- 1) The row of black poplars alongside the eastern perimeter path are slowly dying. The most recent is the one by the veteran tree. The trunk lies beside the veteran tree fence.
- 2) Hornbeam standards were planted in 2019 as a replacement for these losses. 3 were lost due to vandalism but the remainder are growing well but needed watering during the summer drought.
- 3) Whips are cheaper and easier to maintain, and we planted some in flower beds in 2021. This was in March just after the covid restrictions were lifted. Another 10 were planted November 2022.
- 4) Cornfield annuals were planted around the whips.



6

Hornbeam Meadow  
in the Great Field

# Horse Close Wood

---

- 1) The wood is at least 300 years old.
- 2) Bramble occurs naturally in the wood. It thrives where shade is not too heavy, which is especially in glades and where safety work has thinned the woodland canopy. It provides valuable habitat, especially for birds and insects, in the form of cover, fruit and nectar. It impedes access, which helps reduce disturbance of nesting birds by dogs. The shade cast by Bramble may impede the establishment or maintenance of woodland wildflowers. When cleared, Bramble grows back vigorously, so it is expensive to keep large areas clear of it. The policy is to cut back to maintain agreed access, open space and wildflowers only.
- 3) Ivy, too, occurs naturally in the wood. Unlike Bramble, it can stand heavy shade, but it only flowers and fruits where it can climb a tree and gain access to more light. It provides excellent wildlife habitat, both flowering and fruiting when little else is available, and provides valuable cover, especially in winter. The popular prejudice that Ivy harms trees it climbs is largely incorrect, but it obscures the bark of trees of landscape value. Some Ivy may need to be removed to enable safety inspections. The policy is to retain climbing Ivy, except where it is a threat to trees or for safety inspections and, in a few places, for amenity. Some of the larger trees along the main path are free of Ivy and should be maintained this way for landscape reasons.



8

1000 trees planted in Horse Close Wood by about 100 volunteers in 2016 and now fruiting

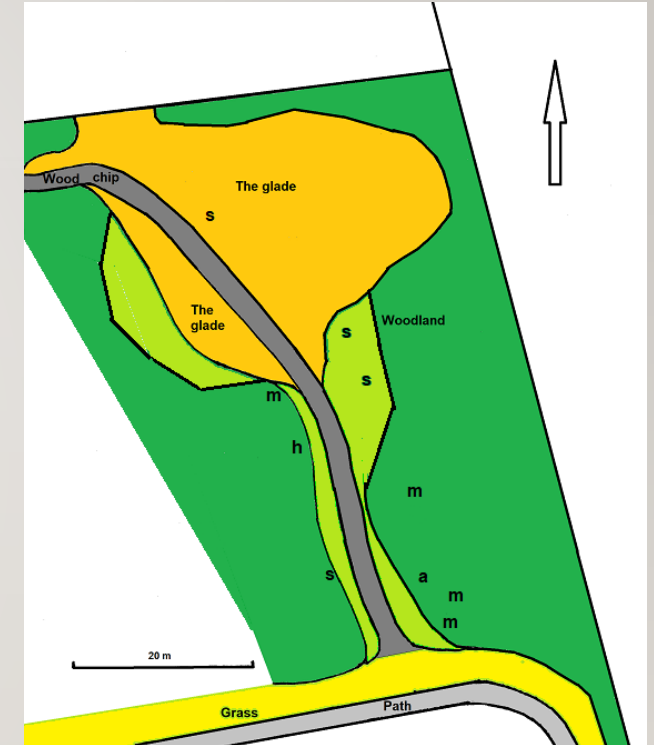


# 9

## The Glade

Managed by Wimbledon Park Volunteers (WPV).

- 1) The Glade is being managed as a traditional woodland meadow, a habitat otherwise lacking in the park.
- 2) To maintain the Glade, it is cut twice a year, first in early Spring and second in late Summer or early Autumn, with the arisings raked off.
- 3) The cut can be done with a scythe or a strimmer, but some areas might require a brush cutter or hand tools.
- 4) This management allows meadowland wildflowers flourish in Spring and Summer.



*The main natural threats to The Glade are invasion by woody species, especially brambles and shrub willows, and dominance by tall perennial species, such as hogweed, docks, nettles, thistles, pendulous sedge and bindweed. The cutting prevents these species from predominating and the raking-off opens up gaps, thus allowing the regeneration of meadow species.*

## Central Railway Hedge

---

- 1) Wimbledon Park Volunteers (WPV) planted 350 whips in November 2022 so improving this part of the park for nature and visitors. Planted 1m in from perimeter path and a width of 2m.
- 2) This runs from the Revelstoke Road entrance south to the Topiary bed near the brook.
- 3) Due to the compact nature of the soil heavy preparatory work was carried out by Wimbledon Park Volunteers (WPV) and the Community Payback Team (CPT).
- 4) The trees are Hawthorn, Hazel, Blackthorn, Dogwood (cornus) and Dog Rose.

11

Central Railway Hedge making progress



## Southern Railway Hedge

---

- 1) The hedge has some interesting paths to explore. It is well established but with gaps and these are gradually being filled with species by Wimbledon Park Volunteers (WPV)
- 2) Mainly hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) standards were planted in 2019 to provide a line of trees to improve biodiversity and attractiveness to visitors.
- 3) The verge is graded grass. Cut regularly up to about 1m in from the footpath and a southern meadow can be established by allowing grass to grow and other plants to flower closer to the hedge. This will be cut in the autumn by WPV after seeding and the insect cycle is complete.



## The management of the wide grassy strip between the tennis courts and the hedge beside the tube line, Wimbledon Park (Dave Dawson, March 2021)



- Unmown areas don't just remain as long grass and wildflowers. It's natural for them to be invaded by seedling trees and shrubs. To prevent such areas becoming woodland, they must be mown occasionally. This cuts back any tiny trees and shrubs, allowing the grass to prevail.
- In this case, two species are invading the long grass from the hedgerow to the east. This hedgerow was planted well before there was any idea to allow long grass and it has species that now are problematic. Blackthorn sends out suckers which come up in lines perpendicular to the hedgerow. Bramble stems arch out from the hedgerow and root at their tips.
- Quite separately, the woody plants of the hedgerow will need cutting back from time to time to prevent them from casting too much shade on the daffodils and long grass. In doing this, it's desirable to allow some low shrubs to grow at the edge of the hedgerow, so graduating this edge. This cutting back can be done once a year or so by volunteers using a lopper to trim back a strip of shrubs and bramble at the western edge of the hedgerow.

# The Veteran Tree

English Oak (*Quercus robur*)

English Oaks are an important part of our culture and history. This veteran oak began its life around 1780 in a hedgerow between arable fields in Earl Spencer's Wimbledon Park. King George III was halfway through his long reign and the American Revolutionary War was drawing to a close.

The Oak has real conservation value. We plan to keep it healthy and upright. Protecting the area about its roots is very important, and this is the reason why it has got a fence around it. Please keep out of the enclosed area. Holes and dead wood are part of the natural character of such old trees and provide shelter for bats and nesting birds, and places for rare insects and fungi to thrive. We hope to enjoy this fine old tree for many more years.



15

## Veteran Tree now flourishing

---

Daffodils in spring and then squirrels and birds drop seeds so we can then remove whips in autumn and plant in hedgerows and other places.

Species include:

- 1) hawthorns,
- 2) cherry plums,
- 3) horse chestnuts,
- 4) elders,
- 5) oaks



16

Car park bed  
from asphalt to  
cornflower mix  
and sunflowers

---



17

## Salvia Bed

---

Daffodils in spring.

The salvia cuttings rooted for summer and autumn flowering.

The donated rosemary are settling in.

Rosebay Willowherb and creeping buttercups also present

- 1) Salvia Rosmarinus
- 2) Salvia Officinalis
- 3) Salvia Hot Lips





18

---

Wimbledon Park Brook  
a start but further work is needed