

## Biodiversity on Portsdown Hill

Notes for TECS Scrutiny Panel on Biodiversity 01 02 2022

PCC-maintained public open space on Portsdown Hill is managed to maintain a variety of grassland and scrub habitats with intermediate communities in a mosaic of optimal proportions for biodiversity, that also enables easy public access. The core area is the SSSI (55ha), a similar area of non-SSSI land is managed to extend and complement the SSSI, with the focus on species-rich calcareous (chalk) grassland.



Portsdown SSSI June 2019

Over the last 25 years management has been changed on 13ha of low ecological interest land such as agricultural fields and mown amenity grassland so that they now support much more wildlife. This has been assisted by the translocation of seed and plants from intact communities elsewhere on the hill. The use of Portsdown gathered seed sources helps establish locally adapted plants.



Former agricultural land July 2021

The aim of the management is to reverse the widely reported decline of biodiversity. Biodiversity loss is not just the disappearance of species but also the reduction of population sizes (bio-abundance) and genetic variation. The best way of reversing this is to re-establish a connected ecosystem that allows a flow of plants, animals and fungi.

Connecting wildlife-rich sites along the Portsdown escarpment would bring considerable biodiversity benefits. This accords with the DEFRA's Nature Recovery Network <sup>1,2</sup>.

Threats to biodiversity include the lack of appropriate management, invasive species and pollution such as nutrients and litter.

Any increase in biodiversity requires that monitoring occurs. The key sites on Portsdown are surveyed, and the data is passed on to biological recording schemes.

Richard Jones

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**Parks and Open Spaces, Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services**

1 [www.gov.uk/government/publications/nature-recovery-network/nature-recovery-network](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nature-recovery-network/nature-recovery-network)

2 [www.documents.hants.gov.uk/biodiversity/MappingtheHampshireEcologicalNetworkFinalReport.pdf](http://www.documents.hants.gov.uk/biodiversity/MappingtheHampshireEcologicalNetworkFinalReport.pdf)