

Views from the Tree Wardens for Portsmouth & Southsea and the Charles Dickens Community Orchards.

Our groups and volunteers have been planting orchards and other trees in many different areas around the city. We have noticed a lack of wildlife corridors in some areas particularly in the North End area where it is densely populated. Some areas lack the easily accessible local park or small green areas others have. This leads to a lack of wildlife corridors. Maybe some thought could be given to finding some disused land or brownfield site in North End that could be changed into a local amenity. With wildlife at the heart of it.

On occasions we have seen the removal of large shrubs which provide a habitat to the local birds and wild animals that enables them to thrive and shelter in cold weather.

Planting fruit trees provides humans and animals alike with food and foraging opportunities, harvesting events and bringing the community together to learn about and celebrate nature. As we have seen in the Charles Dickens Centre orchards and Ark Dickens fruiting hedge. They give free fruit for local people will help those with a diminishing amount of finances to lead a healthier lifestyle. Where they can pick what they need from local trees. Communities will then invest themselves in looking after their local trees. When they can see what they will get out of it. Excess produce has been given out to the food banks and larders to help those most in need and provides an amazing source of support, which has been very appreciated.

Perhaps people could be encouraged to plant trees in their gardens to feed birds and help our pollinators. Maybe people could be encouraged to have green space on roofs to help wildlife.

Rooftop gardens in the city and growing walls will all encourage biodiversity and reduce pollution through removing particulates. There could be an encouragement of beehives on roofs that would help pay for the maintenance costs of local trees. Help the local economy and provide a healthier source of food. More importantly protect the pollinators.

Different types of habitats could be explored by introducing to some areas boggy areas or ponds creating a different habitat.

Perennial wildflowers suitable to the types of soil in our urban areas could be introduced. This would reduce mowing, energy costs and labour needed and create a more pleasant environment for local people. More wildflowers on verges please.

Fruiting hedges should be allowed to grow 50cm per year until about 5' wide and allow the fruits to be harvested by animals and people. Not cut back harshly each year by the flail machine. There is a fruiting hedge in Hilsea planted by the Tree Wardens which has been growing for 12 years. It is not treated as a fruiting hedge by Colas, it is harshly cut back and is never allowed to fruit. It's just treated as a normal hedge.

Resident initiatives should be given priority and supported to encourage ownership of their local environment and community trees.

It would be good to stop tarmacking tree pits. During the last few years, we obtained permission to plant trees in tree pits and planted them. Shortly afterwards someone removed them and retarmacked. There needs to be greater communication between

teams that carry out maintenance. The Charles Dickens community orchards have suffered some losses due to information not being passed from one team to another. When it should be recorded as part of the history of the area and subsequently passed on to the new team taking over. Whether it be a new contractor or otherwise.

Strimming around tree trunks should be carefully avoided, more damage is done by labourers doing this than anything else and this can set back trees many years. Greater care needs to be taken over strimming.

More native and heritage trees need to be planted in Portsmouth.

A tree nursery to grow our own native trees in Portsmouth is needed. Propagating from our rare varieties

We need to increase the tree canopy in Portsmouth we can do this by celebrating the Queen's platinum anniversary. More wildflowers on verges to encourage butterflies and birds.

The reduction of pesticides in the city would be good and perhaps use some other chemicals that biodegrade quickly such as industrial vinegar and bicarbonate of soda. Which is far less harmful to the environment.

Great care should be taken in coming years to provide mulch for every tree planted so they can retain moisture and cope with the drier weather we are due because of climate change.

A large pot of money needs to be put aside for future maintenance of all trees in Portsmouth. We need more tree canopy cover for future generations to survive in the coming years.

The National Tree Charter has become the Charter for Trees after 800 years. The Tree Wardens and the Charles Dickens Community Orchards have signed up to this agreement. It would be good if Portsmouth City Council did this as well, declaring how the council means to go on. The Local Portsmouth Tree Charter will need to include the Tree Wardens more in what is done and how communities of interest are kept informed of things like tree removals and tree preservation orders for our very rare trees.

Gardening competitions could be reintroduced into Housing services and across the city. Which helps people to take pride in where they live, improve the environment and keep people interested in wildlife.

Ownership of small micro plots by community groups to grow things in areas that are grassed currently would be a great idea. Removing some of the tarmac in urban areas will break up the landscape and allow the rain to soak away more readily, reducing flooding risk and urban run off. Trees soak up water and pollution.

Biodiverse areas may look unmanaged because they are not trimmed and cut back as much as those neatly kept gardens some folks are used to. Perhaps some local guidance with the aid of the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Trust and friends of the Earth could be made available to help with this.

The city should make more of valuing the trees and their contributions to the environment. Giving a listing and protection for the very rare varieties like the Black poplar we have in

our city. (there are only 7,000 in the country). The city could introduce trees which have add biodiversity and supply food for wildlife to the city. Such as Oak trees which support a large variety of wildlife. Also by having a variety fruiting trees or hedges. We also now have some very rare fruit trees incorporated in our orchard planting such as the Bardsey apple.

Larger trees should be valued more and have more protection such as (Tree protection orders) as they work harder for the environment. There could be designated community trees, orchards and fruiting hedges under these protection orders.

More could be made of the horticultural opportunities for careers in the city. Our very own National Tree Council Director of Science and Research, advisor to DEFRA lives locally. More could be specifically offered through horticultural and national training with a career path into different areas.

The new Environment Bill November 2021 comes into effect shortly, so this will mean more people having to train in these areas so that Portsmouth city council will meet its legal obligations.

Above all we need to offer opportunities and incentives for residents in both private and rented accommodation to grow more trees at home. Perhaps free trees, resources and training working with the support of schools to help inform young people of the benefits to them in the future. Problems faced by residents and community groups are funding for trees, compost, mulch and moving large items from a delivery area to the site.

I have included some pictures of the fruiting hedge in Hilsea planted by the Tree Wardens. The pictures below demonstrate the damage done by the flailing machine to the fruiting hedge.







