



# Newsletter

## September 2025

### **Phew, what a scorcher...now what a soaker!**

Summer 2025 will be memorable for being one of the hottest, sunniest, and driest on record. It was great so many people making the most of the fine weather to enjoy the park, but the heat waves and drought were a big challenge for our volunteers maintaining the Community Garden beds and newly-planted trees. And now we face the problem of repeated bouts of heavy rain, hampering our preparations for autumn!



### **New views of the Park**

These aerial photos taken by Sam Rebeiro illustrate the trees, features, and facilities following our work over the past few years. With approval and support from PCC, we will be using these images as the basis for new signage. One of our main goals for the near future is to improve awareness of the Park and its features. It's surprising how many people—especially those new to the area—don't know about that this lovely public open space! A noticeboard will be erected at the Memory Lane entrance near the Community Centre and a new sign will be placed erected on the gate leading from Sackville Close.

### **Support from PCC**

We have had useful meetings with PCC officers from the Grounds and Parks Team and have renewed the lease enabling our activities to enhance the Park's facilities. We are extremely grateful to the Councillors from Dunstone Ward (Stefan Krizanac, Maria Lawson, John Stephens) and Radford Ward (Rebecca Smith, Daniel Steel, Kathy Watkin), who came together to provide a generous grant from their Community Funds. It's particularly gratifying to have these contributions from both Wards bordering the park, recognising the value of this important green space to the surrounding neighbourhoods.



### Community Orchard

Once again, we enjoyed the lovely spring blossom in the orchard. The established apple trees produced a bumper early crop due to the warmth. Many people collected these, together with the prolific wild blackberries. Despite the very dry weather, the new trees in 2023 and 2024 seem to have fared well, thanks to mulching and watering by our volunteers and the PCC team. We're looking forward to our first harvest of cherries, pears, plums, medlars, and quinces in the coming years. Together with the rhubarb, gooseberries, and black and red currants in the raised beds there should be plenty of further opportunities for making lots of pies, crumbles, and preserves.

### Trees and hedges

The hedging planted in the Lower Field in 2023 has established well. Our volunteers have undertaken regular weeding and clearance of grass around the young trees, followed by mulching with a cardboard surround and mulching. In the Upper Field, the new woodland copse and the oak, walnut, and hornbeam specimen trees all growing well.



### Community Garden update

July marked the third anniversary of building the raised beds (in the heatwave of 2022). We're pleased to have established this new attraction and amenity in the park, and many visitors have commented on how much they appreciate it. We've learned a lot! This summer has been particularly hard, and a lot of the planting has suffered. We're very fortunate to have received some professional advice from Jack at Fordbrook Nurseries in Brixton and we will be undertaking remedial work this autumn. We'll be replenishing the compost and preparing the different beds to contain a succession of edible vegetables, salads, and soft fruits, combined with pollinator friendly herbaceous perennial and annual flowers. Our aim is to have an



pollinator-friendly herbaceous perennial and annual flowers. Our aim is to have an attractive and productive display throughout the seasons.



Our volunteers meet every Wednesday at 10.30 in the Community Centre coffee lounge, before undertaking an hour or so of gentle gardening (weather permitting) – sowing, planting, weeding, and watering. You don't need to know anything about gardening or undertake any physical activities if that's not appropriate for you. The most important aspect is that the Garden provides a focus for social interactions and friendship, combined with the proven benefits of green space for well-being. Please come along and give it a try if you are free, or tell your friends or relatives who might benefit from this.



In June, we received an award from the Devon Wildlife Trust *Gardening for Wildlife* scheme in recognition of our work to improve habitats to enhance biodiversity in the Park by planting food sources and habitats for insects, invertebrates, and birds. This autumn, we will be doing more work to improve the fenced-off wildlife area with the pond, bog garden, and 'bug hotel' thanks to support from the local Councillors.



### **Woodchip paths**

We've just taken delivery of two loads of woodchip, so we'll be replenishing the paths over the next few weeks. This helps to lessen the problems of churned up mud following heavy rain.

### **More information and contacts**

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