

## **Downs Management Report 24 January 2022**

**Ben Skuse: Parks Supervisor**

The depths of winter see no discernible drop off in our tasks and duties out on the Downs. Daily duties continue, despite the relative lack of visitors (and associated litter). In wintertime we have many fewer bins out on the Downs, we still see full bins as a daily occurrence. This unfortunately is largely due to our considerable van dwelling community using them to dispose of their rubbish. This is fine, after all they are bins for rubbish disposal, but it does mean that this job does not really drop off in frequency in wintertime anymore.

A major task is also keeping our football pitches fit for play on a twice weekly basis. This requires considerable amounts of the teams' time and effort during the week. We do our level best but as ever in this type of work the weather tends to have the final say! We are constantly looking at forecasts in the hope that we get favourable conditions to do our work. Let's see what the next few months through the spring will bring. The weather and the state of the ground really dictates a lot of what we do and how we operate at this time of year.

In terms of the water tower event site, the clock is ticking down to the arrival of our old friends Funderworld onto this site. Getting the site fit for their arrival after much residual damage from previous events is another top priority in the coming weeks.

New bench installation and maintenance continues. Again, as in previous years I intend to utilise a community payback group that come to the Downs once weekly to carry out some bench painting and re wood staining. They have done a good job for us in previous years and have many hands to get a large amount done.

As ever at this time, we are working with our scrub management plan until bird nesting season begins on 28<sup>th</sup> Feb. After that we'll look to do some maintenance pruning on low tree canopies to ensure good access for mowing activities to resume in the spring.

A note for members:

Our 3 Sunday road closures of Bridge Valley Rd are upcoming.

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> Jan

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> Feb

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> Feb

The road closures enable the annual cutting back of vegetation on the rock slopes above Bridge Valley Road. This allows for rock and structural inspections to take place. During this process we can identify any hazardous loose rock or dead trees or branches that can be removed or brought off the slopes safely.

In the next few weeks, I will continue to engage with meetings and planning for the event programme at the Downs in 2022. This includes planning for an event to commemorate the Queens jubilee.