

Brunswick Square Gardens Care Plan 2026

Friends of Brunswick Square & Terrace (FBST) Volunteer Gardening Group



Friends of Brunswick
Square & Terrace

The centrepiece of a historic Grade I listed square established in 1824, featuring key elements of its original Regency design, updated with sustainable features that reflect our changing climate and lifestyle.

Our mission

- *To collaborate* with Brighton & Hove City Council's CityParks department to maintain Brunswick Square Gardens year-round and to enhance its beauty and long-term sustainability.
- *To strive* to make the garden an award-winning public space for all visitors, while fostering community spirit and engagement among the local residents.
- *To honour* the original garden's historic Regency design, in harmony with natural, less formal elements that reflect our changing climate and lifestyle.

Our guiding principles

Our garden design aligns with guiding principles informed by Brighton & Hove CityParks department, as well as the Royal Horticultural Society's best practices for garden design and guidance from RHS judges for the continued development of Brunswick Square Gardens.

- *Seasonality*: All-year interest with long-lasting seasonal highlights
- *Right plant, right place*: Shade lovers, sun lovers appropriately placed; may require cutting back some overhanging shrubs, large trees to provide sun
- *Rhythm*: Repeat patterns/plants/combinations throughout garden to create rhythms
- *Block planting, simplicity*: Large drifts - avoid spotty planting - more plants but fewer species
- *Scale/Proportion*: Varying heights of plants; hide railings with shrubs
- *Sustainability*: Low-maintenance plants that require less water and attention
- *Resilience*: Robust to salt and wind, mindful of the garden's nature and position on seafront; resilient to climate change, drought, and more extreme weather.



A snapshot of our 3-year plan

2024

Establishing new leadership team for FBST Gardening Group; weeding and maintenance; removing ivy, weeds and dead plants from borders; pruning oversized shrubs in beds; planting spring bulbs; reviving wildflower meadow.

2025

Researching and purchasing new plants: based on criteria such as climate, drought and wind-resistance, historic garden records, colour patterns.

By autumn the garden contained 22 of the 25 “Coastally Tolerant Perennials in Brighton & Hove” on Sarah Carlisle’s list.

2026

Maintaining existing plants and shrubs; conducting audits of plants and shrubs and filling gaps where necessary.

Restoring balance to the garden design with minimal rearrangement of plants.

Seeking funding and implementation of water source.

Following sustainability criteria when selecting any new plants.

Working with CityParks on plans to hard-prune North and South Eyes and to replant where shrubs are removed.

Expanding the Coppice and reseedling the Wildflower Meadow with assistance from CityParks and Rangers.

Tending to general soil health with mulch, compost and best practices.

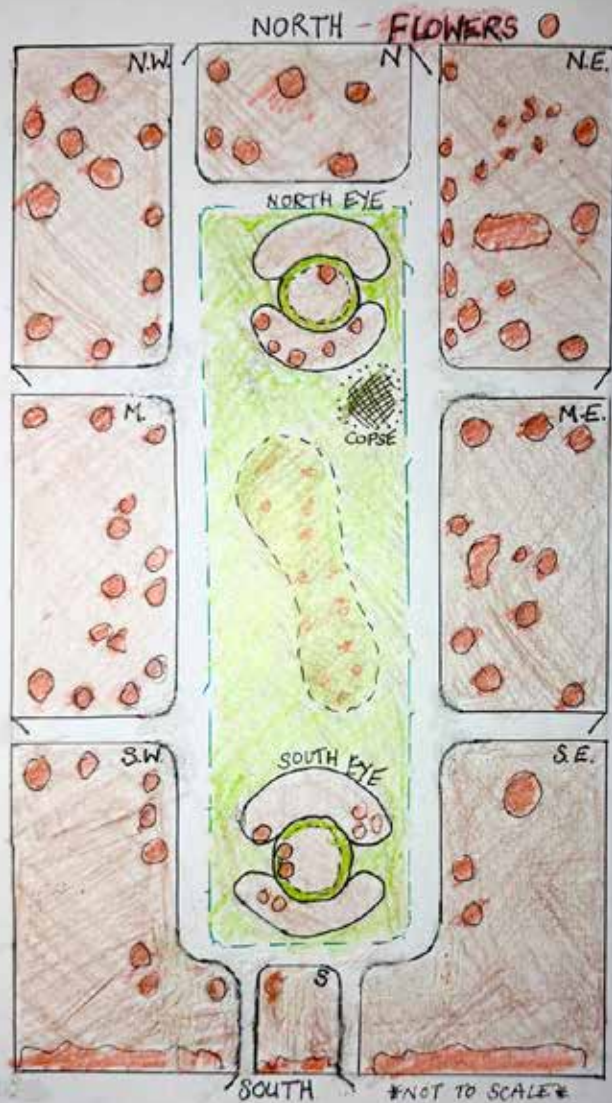


Our volunteer gardeners

Out in all weathers caring for the garden throughout the year, our core team of 8 more than doubles in the summer months.



Flowers



North Bed: Osteospermum, Marigolds, Hollyhock, Foxgloves, Margaritas, Allium, Sedum, Roses mixed, Michaelmas Daisies

North East Bed: Euphorbia, Spanish bluebells, Lords & Ladies, Echinacea, Japanese Anemones (pink), Mallow (pink), Globe Artichoke, Viper's Bugloss, Roses (pink)

Mid-East Bed: Rosemary, Alliums, Honeysuckle, Osteospermum, Poppies, Salvia (blue), Crocosmia, Perennial Sweet Pea, Marigolds

South East Bed: Acanthus, Thyme, Forget-me-nots, Periwinkle major

South Bed: Rosa Ragosa, Valerium

South West Bed: Lavender, Euphorbia (red), Marigolds, Wold, Garlic Mustard (seeded by birds), Geranium (Roxanne), Verbena, Japanese Anemone, Coreopsis, Forget-me-nots, Cosmos (annual)

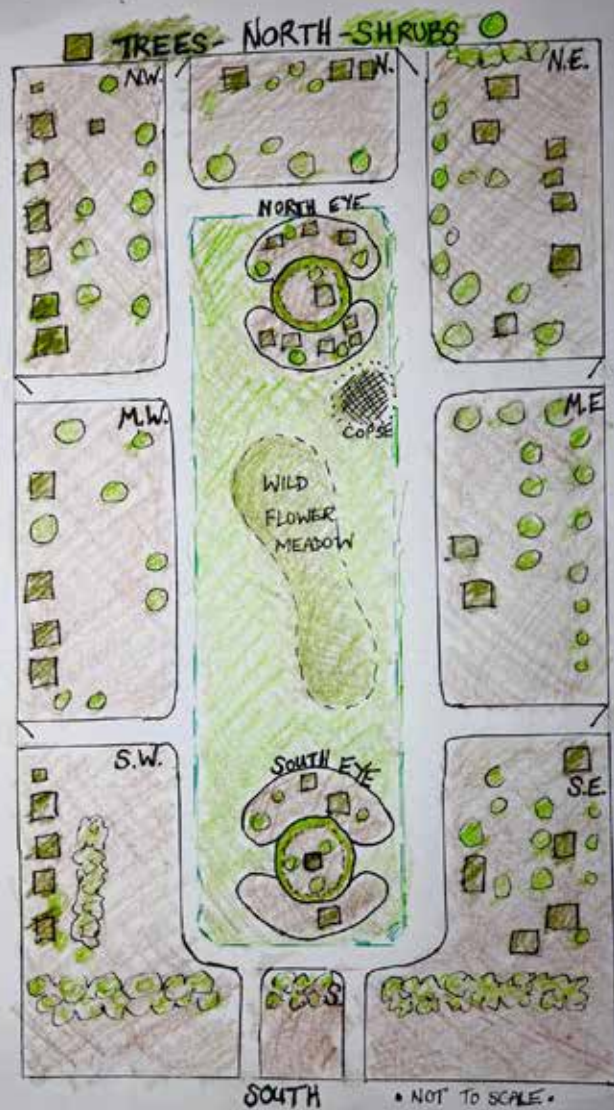
Mid-West Bed: Agapanthus (blue), Lavender, Geranium (Roxanne), Ornamental grasses, Ceratostigma (blue), Nepeta, Verbena, Periwinkle minor, Hydrangea, Honesty, Spanish Bluebells, White Lilies, Red Hot Poker, Crocosmia, Wild Garlic, Miniature Anemones (corms), Valerium (white), Roses (3 varieties), Hebes

North West Bed: Marguerites, Euphorbia (green), Hollyhock, Hebe, Alchemilla Mollis, Garrya (pink), Salvia (red)

North Eye: Lavender, Rosemary, Hollyhock, Helibore, Acanthus, Forget-me-nots, Valerium

South Eye: Vinca, Geranium, Cistus, Cotton Lavender, St John's Wort, Aqualegia.

Shrubs & Trees



North Bed: *Shrubs* - Spirea, Red Robin, Buddleia, Spanish Broom, Viburnum
Trees - Russian Olive, Holm Oak, Holly

North East Bed: *Shrubs* - Mahonia, Smoke Bush, Japanese Privet, Pyracantha, Oleander, Black Elderflower
Trees - Magnolia, Russian Olive, Elm, Tamarisk, Maritime Pine

Middle-East Bed: *Shrubs* - Spirea, Gorse, Cornus, Spanish Broom, Phlomis, Lavatera (pink), Honeysuckle, Japanese Privet, Cornus, Pyracantha, Cotton Lavender, Rosa Ragosa, Viburnum, Viper's Bugloss
Trees - Tamarisk, Cabbage Palm, Russian Olive

South East Bed: *Shrubs* - Phlomis, Buddleia, Euonymus, Goji Berry, Japanese Privet, Rosa Ragosa
Trees - Palm, Holm Oak

South Bed: *Shrubs* - Rosa Ragosa, Japanese Privet

South West Bed: *Shrubs* - Rosa Ragosa, Japanese Privet, Goji Berry
Trees - Scots Pine, Russian Olive

Middle-West Bed: *Shrubs* - Japanese Privet, Phlomis, Rosa Ragosa, Euonymus, Gorse, Viburnum, Small Holly, Hydrangea, Ornamental Grass, Ceratostigma
Trees - Sycamore, Scots Pine, Bay, Oak, Tamarisk

North West Bed: *Shrubs* - Rosa Ragosa, Red Robin, Rosemary
Trees - Holm Oak, Strawberry Tree, Rowan, Walnut, Russian Olive

North Eye: *Shrubs* - Fuchsia, Butcher's Broom, Dog Rose, Rosa Ragosa, Japanese Laurel, Gorse, Hydrangea, Tupericum, Viburham, Phlomis
Trees - Strawberry Tree, Goat's Willow, Walnut, Hawthorn, Rowan

South Eye: *Shrubs* - Rosa Ragosa, Phlomis, Gorse, Hydrangea, Spirea, Lavender, Laurel, Fuchsia, Sage
Trees - Holly, Strawberry Tree

Copse: *Shrubs* - Euonymus Japonicus, Spanish Broom, Daisy Bush, Rosa Rugosa, Euphorbia
Trees - Sycamore, Swedish Whitebeam, New Zealand Holly, Black Elderberry, Holm Oak, Wych Elm, Maritime Pine, Grey Poplar

How we work:

As volunteers, we focus on our 3 main pillars and base our planning on seasonality. Ongoing maintenance forms the bulk of our workload.

Our 3 Main Pillars:

1. Maintenance
2. Sustainability and renewal
3. Planting and design

Our leadership team: We currently have a 4-person leadership team and 3 others who form a subcommittee for decision-making and discussion.

2026 Garden Leadership Team:

Josie Taylor (*Gardener*)
Alex Bamford (*Gardener*)
Lara Brooks (*FBST Treasurer*)
Sally Sisson (*FBST Secretary*)

2026 Garden Subcommittee:

Anna Ellison (*Garden Design*),
Danny Homan (*Fundraising, Management*)
Gavin Reynolds (*Gardener*)

Our partnerships and advisors:

The FBST Gardening Group leadership team maintains regular, ongoing contact with the CityParks management team and local law enforcement. It also liaises

with other local gardening groups and seeks advice from gardening judges and consultants. See full list in Appendix.

Brighton & Hove CityParks: The FBST Gardening Group volunteers work in collaboration with the CityParks team to maintain the Brunswick Square Gardens. CityParks handles tree maintenance, hard-pruning of shrubs with motorized tools, lawn mowing, and other major tasks, while volunteers assist with garden planning and planting, weeding, and ongoing year-round maintenance.

Support from CityParks:

2026 Compost, mulch and woodchip:

We will need mulch/woodchip before Summer 2026 for moisture retention, weed suppression, and to insulate against heat. This will also improve the soil quality and structure. Lack of access to this in Summer 2025 exacerbated issues during drought.

Lawn mowing: The Council has agreed to mow every 3 weeks in 2026. This is more frequent than in 2025. They will not rake or bag clippings and have stated that clippings are beneficial for the health of the lawns. However, they did agree to pick up our bagged clippings after the first mow of the season.

Coppice: CityParks to assess state of Coppice and to recommend level of pruning and any replacement or additional trees. Martin hopes this can be done in Autumn 2026. FBST has requested they trim and prune trees and in particular the overgrown hedges in the Coppice after design plan agreed with CityParks.

Trees: FBST has asked to liaise with CityParks, Peter Smalls and the arbour team to review the state of all trees in square with council recommended tree surgeon. Specifically, we have asked them to trim and thin tall trees to improve view into square from higher residencies and to reduce risk of falling trees in high winds. New trees have been provided by the Woodland Trust to replace the diseased ones removed by the Council in 2025. FBST will consult with Council before planting.

Training and volunteer management:

Two FBST volunteers (Josie Taylor and Lara Brooks) took the Leadership Course in January, 2026. Two other volunteers (Alex Bamford and Sally Sisson) will take the Leadership Course later this year if offered a space. We've been informed we should have a trained leader and first aider at each volunteer gardening session and have requested spaces on the next course.

Fundraising for the Garden: In 2024 - 2025, we achieved the fundraising goals below. In 2026 we are applying for *Postcode Lottery, National Lottery, Pebble Trust and CIL* funds for the garden, including for the railing refurbishment and a water source.

| Fund name | Amount Available | Amount Recieved |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| CO-OP Community Fund 2024 | Min £1k | £2,058.06 |
| CO-OP Community Fund 2025 | Min £1k | £3,858.62 |
| Garden Trust | £6,000.00 | £2,500.00 |
| Pebble Trust | £500-5000 | £2,500.00 |
| Safer in Sussex Community Fund | £5,000.00 | £3,000.00 |
| Neighbourhood Watch Community Grants Fund | £100-300 | £100.00 |

Accolades:

“This is an ongoing project led by a few enthusiastic local residents who have made great progress with improving their square. New plantings have been established and general maintenance is good considering the weather conditions this year.”

FBST achieved the highest level of distinction - *“Outstanding”* - at the *RHS South & South East in Bloom 2025* competition, scoring high in the categories of Community Participation, Environmental Responsibility, and Gardening Achievement.

Appendix: FBST Garden Community Partners and Advisors:

- Steve Hyder, Mike Harris, Sarah Carlisle, Martin Connolly, at BHCC
- Lena (our local gardener) at City Parks
- The Green Space forum and Cliff Munn
- Neil Doyle from The Park Rangers
- In dialogue with other local volunteer gardening groups (FOPA/Norfolk Sq/St Annes/ Grand Ave)
- Councillors Andrei Czolak and Ollie Sykes
- Advice and tours with Rob Boyle, head gardener at the Royal Pavilion and Plumpton College and One Garden
- Expertise from Virginia Hintz, James Newmarch (both involved in Regency planting for Brighton and visited in 2023)
- Matt Wakefield /Jean Griffin (RHS South and Southeast in Bloom judges)
- Sussex Police and our PCSO Sophie Hughes re the ASB we experience



Community engagement

Our weekly Saturday gardening sessions foster intergenerational community engagement among regular volunteers and those who drop in occasionally. A range of well supported community engagement events are held year-round. Our annual holly tree decorating and Christmas caroling event will be held for the third year in 2026.

What's growing on?

The FBST Gardening Group Newsletter - Spring 2025



Donations in Bloom

Last autumn, we reported on the amazing results of our collective fundraising. This spring, we're excited to see these funds are taking sprout! The bulk has been earmarked for new plants and shrubs to fit with our master garden plan.

Step One: more than 1,800 bulbs have been planted and a truckload of compost delivered to nourish our garden beds.

Step Two: shrubs and flowering

plants to be delivered and planted in the coming month.

Josie, Lynne and Anna, our plant subcommittee, have steered the research and selection of these new plants and shrubs. From Allium and Agapanthus to Salvia and Sedum, there's a range of new flora in store. Each type was carefully selected based on criteria including climate hardiness, soil type, colour, seasonality, research into Regency heritage

and FBST historical records, and past recommendations from our garden volunteers.



South Eye-Sore

Throughout February, gardeners from City Parks and the FBST worked in tandem to hard-prune, weed, detangle and clean up the South Eye bed. This was initiated as a request by our local Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) to reduce antisocial behavior and crime. No longer an overgrown hiding place for stolen mopeds, the bed is now ready for a fresh start.

Special thanks...

Go to Louise and Alex at **Brices** for their longtime support and their generous donation (£100) for our plant fund.

To **FBST residents** and friends for all of your past donations and for lending a hand.

To **City Parks** for all your help throughout the year. Your expertise and hard work is much appreciated. As is your garden waste clearance!

To donate, please reference your payment as 'garden' to Friends of Brunswick Square and Terrace, account number 00803590, sort code 30-98-74.

Tree talk

Three diseased trees have been condemned and tagged with yellow dots. The Council will arrange for them to be removed, so don't be surprised if you see tree surgeons cutting them down. We will provide advance notice if at all possible.



If anyone would like to donate a tree to replace the ones being removed, please speak to one of the Saturday morning gardeners or email info@friendsofbrunswick.co.uk to learn more about how to do this. Memorial trees are a lovely way to provide shade and lasting beauty to the Square whilst honouring a loved one. We have a list of trees that are compatible with our climate, growing conditions and heritage, and are happy to discuss your wishes.

Please note that any removal of trees and shrubs requires prior permission from the Council.

Finally, do come and join our growing group of gardeners. No previous experience necessary.

