# Friends of Portsdown Hill Newsletter

JAN 2023

**A New Year arrives and the season of low sun but with gradually increasing day length is with us. Even if the weather these days is behaving erratically, the progression of the celestial clock of planetary movement is unchanged.**

Winter is the busy time for conservation management such as scrub control. The deadline of the nesting season, which causes a halt to vigorous scrub control, soon arrives. Days lost to rain reduce the time available for the work leaving a surprisingly short time available to get the task done. The Site of Special Scientific Interest is just over fifty  percent scrub, trees or brambles. Our intention is maintain around fifty seven percent as grassland — so we have some work to do.



**Lichens and bryophytes from the top of an ash tree.**

**You get different species in the grassland**

**They all love the winter !**



Whilst the distinctive chalk grassland wildlife (flowers and insects) is on pause during this time of year, the winter months are good for observing birds, as they have less foliage to hide behind. Also lower plants, bryophytes and lichens come into their own. Winter's cool damp conditions are ideal for them to flourish and many species festoon trees. Different species are found on a variety of other surfaces as well. In the same way there are rare flowers on Portsdown there are also uncommon lower plants. Not surprisingly they are easily over -looked and even if they are noticed they are more challenging to name.

Richard Jones

*Countryside Officer*

**On the Web**

**www.portsdown.org.uk/ The FoPH website**

**www. havantnature.net/Wildlife information on Portsdown and further afield.**

**www. portsdown-tunnels.org.uk Portsdown's underground history.**

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## Events

**Talks** — Between October and April we meet on the second **Tuesday** of the Month at the Church of the Resurrection Hall, Brecon Avenue, Drayton, PO6 2AW. Starting at **7.30pm**.
£ 2.00 on the door

**Talks are now on a Tuesday evening**

In order to allow more space between everyone at our talks, we shall meet in the larger room at the Hall. **This means that we will be meeting on a Tuesday (rather than a Wednesday) evening**

### THE NATURE OF PORTSMOUTH

**Tuesday 10th January**
Hannah Thompson is a new Portsmouth City Council Countryside Officer, she will be talking about her work of raising awareness of wildlife across the City.



### COASTWATCH - THE EYES AND EARS OF THE COASTGUARD

**Tuesday 14th February**
Mathew Hurst is a Coastwatch volunteer, he will be describing the work of The National Coastwatch Institution in maintaining a watch on our coasts and liaising with Search and Rescue organisations.

### PORTSDOWN HILL: A STROLL THROUGH TIME

**Tuesday 14th March**
Nigel Gossop presents a pictorial circular walk discovering past and present features on the hill. Booking required for this talk.



### AGM AND A REVIEW OF THE YEAR

**Tuesday 11th April**
The AGM will be followed by an account of events and progress in managing the hill, given by Richard Jones.

**Guided Walks Meet at the East Gate of Fort Widley 10.00 am — 1.00 pm**

Tuesday, 28th February **Lets look for Spring**

On the agenda is the tantalising return of flowers, the boisterous calls of territorial birds and the precocious buzz of bees.