

Locked Gates - A number of people reported to us that the gates to the car park were locked in the morning a few times in the last 2 months. This was due to the contractor, Quadron, using agency cover and the operative being unfamiliar with the location. The gates were opened late on these occasions following reports to the Council's security team. The Council penalised the contractor for these failures and Quadron carried out training with the operative. If you find a gate locked when it should not be (or vice versa) please let the Friends know and also contact Jon Wren, Green Spaces Monitor, Development & Environment Department, L B Croydon tel: 0208 726 6200 ext 61064 or email Jon.Wren@croydon.gov.uk

Winter Work – We discovered the locked gates for ourselves on 29th January when we turned up for our workday and found a queue of cars. We, like them, were unable to access the car park and the workday had to be abandoned. Part of the problem was that we did not have a key for the padlock to the gate. This has now been rectified. There were, in any case, no problems with access at our next workday on 5th February when a team worked in The Gorses, where we have been cutting back throughout the winter season. [Photo right from Neale Fox shows Ted loading Gorse onto the bonfire](#). Before leaving we controlled the fire and taped off the ashes. Large flints were taken to Linden Glade/West Gorse to add to the deep ruts left by the contractors' vehicles.

















Our thanks to Peter Underwood, Senior Project Officer for The Conservation Volunteers, who, with a colleague, spent a wet miserable day brush-cutting the Ash seedlings and bramble in the Centenary Plantation. This area of special interest was created in 1983, when Councillor Dudley Mead helped to raise a fund to plant 100 oaks to commemorate the Centenary of Croydon Council. The FSW wish to see this area kept as an Oak plantation as originally designed but we do not have the resources to undertake the removal of the thousands of Ash seedlings which threaten to swamp the Oaks so we are especially grateful to TCV for their help with this.

Winter Problems – Many thanks to those of you who reported the water pouring from the roof of the toilet block after the January frost caused a burst pipe. The Council responded quickly and the FSW allowed them access initially to turn off the water and the following day to effect repairs. However, the flood caused the ceiling to come down in the Ladies and water damage to the décor and doors in both the toilets. Thankfully our store room and museum were undamaged. In the event of another emergency, do please let us know asap and contact Jon Wren – see details above.

The damp conditions also caused the external door to the Ladies to warp and expand so that it jams. When we arrived in the car park for the workday on 5th February, water was heard running. This was not another leak, simply that a tap had been left turned on. This has happened on several occasions and we are not sure who the culprits are as Council contractors and a couple of other groups have keys to the toilets. With difficulty, the door was opened and the water turned off but re-closing the door was another problem. In the end the wood strip on the edge of the door had to be removed. We have notified the council of the need to repair this door and have hopes that this will be completed in the next couple of weeks. If you hear water running at any time do please let us know.

It was also reported to us that when it was very frosty the car park and access road were very slippery. We have contacted the local Highways Agency to ask if a grit bin could be sited either in the car park or on the slip road. They have referred the request to the Parks Department. So far there has been no response but we'll keep you posted.

Proposed Relocation of Rubbish Bin – The bin currently located just inside the field access gate by the car park caused problems on last year's Open Day as it got in the way of the stalls and was offensively smelly to those located close to it. Our local Councillors Sara Bashford has agreed to meet the cost of having it moved (from her Community Budget) and this work has been put in train. The bin will be re-sited on the opposite site of the green overspill car park, next to the hedge.

<p>Signs of Spring☺</p> <p>Sadly, Spring is much delayed this year compared to 2016. To be fair last year was the unusual one as none of these signs were seen until at least March in 2015. See the dates for both years for each picture. We have not spotted any of these signs yet in 2017 but they surely can't be far away.</p>	<p>Primrose</p>  <p>First open flowers near the north-western corner of David's Crook. (20/1/16) (7/3/15)</p>	<p>Cherry Blossom</p>  <p>In the Great Field by the cut through to David's Crook. (29/1/16) (19/3/15)</p>	<p>Common Daisies</p>  <p>In the overspill car park. (31/1/16) (7/3/15)</p>	<p>Buttercup</p>  <p>In Field 2, Vale Meadow near Jubilee Plantation. (3/2/16) (2/5/15)</p>
<p>Celandine</p>  <p>Beside Courtwood Lane Gate. (9/2/16) (31/3/15)</p>	<p>Periwinkle</p>  <p>In Linden Glade. (9/2/16) (23/3/15)</p>	<p>Dandelion</p>  <p>In Langford's Way near the Courtwood Lane gate. (12/2/16) (25/3/15).</p>	<p>Laurel</p>  <p>Path from Greenhill Way to David's Crook. (13/2/16) (no 2015 date recorded)</p>	<p>Bluebell</p>  <p>In Smith Grove near field end. 2016 must be the earliest sighting ever. (13/2/16) (3/4/15)</p>
<p>Crocus</p>  <p>Behind poo bin by Courtwood Lane (21/2/16) (7/3/15)</p>	<p>Bullace</p>  <p>In Field 1 in Vale Border. (22/2/16) (no 2015 date recorded)</p>	<p>Plum</p>  <p>In David's Crook. (23/2/16) (no 2015 date recorded)</p>	<p>Barren Strawberry</p>  <p>In Langford's Way. (23/2/16) (1/4/15)</p>	<p>Hoverfly</p>  <p>On pollen-rich Hazel catkin in David's Crook. (23/2/16) (no 2015 date recorded)</p>