

Elms for Adur Hairstreaks' Project — Jamie Burston

Elms for Adur Hairstreaks will see 550 disease-resistant elm trees being planted across the Lancing College estate, an area of the Adur valley, situated within the South Downs National Park. Estimated to have killed over 60 million British elms in two epidemics, Dutch Elm Disease continues to spread today. Its impact on the White-letter Hairstreak butterfly, which uses elm as its sole larval foodplant, has been significant. Across the UK there has been a 53% decline in distribution since the 1970s and a decline of 29% across the SE region since the mid 1990s



The Elms for Adur Hairstreaks project will improve the local landscape, by restoring lost habitat using disease-resistant elm cultivars, helping to mitigate the loss of elm as a result of disease. We anticipate that Whiteletter Hairstreak numbers will increase with the Adur valley becoming a hotspot for this threatened species.



The White-letter Hairstreak has been observed around the boundary of the Lancing College estate this year. Lindsay Morris and Patrick Cook have recorded a maximum count of 12 in the elm canopy and seven feeding on Bramble, west of Applesham Farm, along the path through Cow Bottom. An additional four butterflies have been recorded in McIntyres Field, which is an extension of Lancing Ring. These records confirm the viability of the

project and the need to support the remaining local strongholds.

The project will start this autumn. Between September and November preparatory work will be undertaken to clear overgrown areas before the

disease resistant elms are planted between November 2018 and January 2019. The trees will be planted as young whips of between 1 and 1.5 meters in height.

Do please get involved in the exciting volunteering opportunities that the Elms for Adur Hairstreaks project has to offer. More information on the volunteer days and tasks will be posted on our website, Facebook and Twitter pages, so please do keep a look out and get involved.

The project will see the inclusion and participation of visiting school and college students, providing all with volunteering and educational opportunities. Will we also encourage a wide range of people to participate in the Elms for Adur Hairstreaks project, from local communities, groups and other conservation organisations.

Our grateful thanks go to Lancing College and in particular Jon Hutcheon. The project is led by our Sussex Branch, in collaboration with the South Downs National Park Authority, for which we are thankful for their continued help and support, notably from Mark Rose. A massive thank you also goes to our project grant givers - South Downs National Park Trust (Sustainable Communities Fund), Tesco Bags of Help and Stanley Smith (UK) Horticultural Trust. The project has also received financial support from the Sussex Branch. Thanks go to Butterfly Conservation Head Office and the Sussex Branch committee for their support and in particular of Chair, Nigel Symington.