



# Kempton Enclosures Garden Report March 2026

## Contents

Executive Summary .....	000
1. Operational Update .....	111
1.1 Chichester Terrace .....	111
1.2 North Garden Tree Works .....	111
1.3 Horticultural Work Across the Estate .....	111
1.4 Looking Ahead to April .....	2
2. Resident Information .....	222
2.1 Sussex Square Holm Oak Update .....	222
2.2 Frequently Asked Questions .....	222
2.3 Proposed Tree Selection and Replacement Planting.....	333
2.4 Seasonal Horticultural Notes .....	444

## Executive Summary

March 2026 focused on three main areas: continued work at Chichester Terrace, management of the unsafe Holm Oak in the North Garden at Sussex Square, and routine horticultural maintenance across the estate. Tree works in the North Garden were completed, except for the Holm Oak, for which council confirmation and final ecological checks remain necessary before

any removal can proceed. Across the estate, the team continued with weeding and edging while preparing for the start of the main growing season.

The Sussex Square garden remains closed as a precaution while the required legal and ecological procedures are followed, that replacement tree planting is being planned, and that residents will be invited to support replacement planting. The proposed replacement trees would introduce greater species diversity, stronger seasonal interest, and a more ornamental character suited to the historic landscape.

## 1. Operational Update

### 1.1 Chichester Terrace

Work continued at Chichester Terrace during March as part of the ongoing programme of improvement in this area. The garden team spent four working days there during the month, reflecting the continued need for focused maintenance and improvement work to bring the area into better long-term condition.

### 1.2 North Garden Tree Works

Connick Tree Care completed the scheduled tree maintenance in the North Garden. Dead material was removed from trees in the north-east section, and the remaining trees were pruned to promote healthier structure and form. The only outstanding issue is the Holm Oak, which has been identified as unsafe and is awaiting a decision from Brighton & Hove City Council regarding its removal.

Following concerns raised by a resident, a bat specialist carried out inspections. The specialist confirmed that there are no bats roosting in the Holm Oak or in any of the bat boxes around the gardens. A follow-up inspection is planned for May, when the positioning of the bat boxes will also be reviewed, as their current placement and exposure to coastal winds may be limiting their suitability for wildlife.

### 1.3 Horticultural Work Across the Estate

During March, the team focused mainly on weeding and edging the beds around the estate. Some areas remain to be completed, but the overall standard of the gardens is improving, and the team has received positive feedback from garden users regarding the appearance of the main garden.

## 1.4 Looking Ahead to April

In April, lawn cutting is expected to become more regular as temperatures rise and grass growth increases. The team will continue to spend time at Chichester Terrace, adjust planting in selected areas, and continue propagation of annual plants for use around the estate. A decision is also expected on the Holm Oak in the North Garden, with final wildlife checks to be carried out before any felling work.

## 2. Resident Information

### 2.1 Sussex Square Holm Oak Update

A mature Holm Oak at Sussex Square needs to be removed following the identification of a structural fault, and the tree was assessed by the appointed tree contractor as unsafe. As a precaution, the garden has been closed while the required council process and final ecological checks are completed. This reflects the organisation's responsibility to protect residents, visitors, staff, and contractors while also complying with tree and wildlife legislation.

Because the tree is in a conservation area, the proposed works are being considered through the council's tree process. The tree has already been inspected by the garden team, the tree contractor, and a bat specialist, with no bats identified. A further check will be carried out on the morning of the works. A final inspection for active bird nesting will also be completed before any work begins.

The loss of a mature tree is significant, and replacement planting is being planned. A tree planting proposal is currently being prepared for submission to the council, and replacement planting would take place from October 2026 onwards, which is the appropriate planting season. Residents who would like to contribute to replacing trees are warmly invited to get in touch.

### 2.2 Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Why is the tree being removed?**

The tree has developed a structural fault and has been assessed as unsafe by a qualified tree contractor.

**Why has the garden been closed?**

The garden has been closed to reduce risk while the council process and ecological checks are completed.

**Does the council need to approve the work?**

Yes. Because the tree is in a conservation area, the council’s tree process applies unless a narrow urgent-safety exception is used.

**What about bats?**

A bat specialist has already inspected the tree and found no bats. A further check will be carried out on the morning of the works. If bats were found, the works would have to stop and be reassessed.

**What about nesting birds?**

A final check for active wild bird nests will be carried out before works begin, as they are protected by law.

**Will the tree be replaced?**

Yes. A replacement planting proposal is being prepared, and replacement trees would be planted in the appropriate planting season from October onwards.

**How can residents help?**

Residents who would like to support replacement tree planting are encouraged to get in touch regarding contributions towards new trees.

### 2.3 Proposed Tree Selection and Replacement Planting

The proposed replacement planting introduces a more varied and ornamental tree palette than the former sycamore and Holm Oak, with greater emphasis on blossom, bark, autumn colour, and species diversity. This approach is better suited to a historic ornamental landscape and should also improve long-term resilience. The proposed tree selection is summarised in Table 1.

*Table 1111 Proposed replacement tree selection*

Species	Common Name	Main Ornamental Value
<i>Ginkgo biloba</i>	Maidenhair tree	Architectural form and clear golden autumn colour
<i>Parrotia persica</i>	Persian ironwood	Flaking bark, crimson flowers, and strong autumn colour

<i>Betula pendula</i>	Silver birch	Light canopy, bright bark, and biodiversity value
<i>Acer griseum</i>	Paperbark maple	Peeling bark and vivid autumn colour
<i>Prunus serrula</i>	Tibetan cherry	Ornamental bark, spring flowers, and seasonal interest
<i>Prunus</i> × <i>subhirtella</i> 'Autumnalis'	Winter-flowering cherry	Flowers in mild weather from autumn into early spring

These trees would create a more diverse and visually engaging planting scheme, with more blossom, better bark interest, stronger autumn colour, and improved seasonal variation. This would help reinforce the ornamental and historic character of Kemptown Enclosures while also supporting a more resilient and varied tree population.

## 2.4 Seasonal Horticultural Notes

March has largely involved weeding and edging work across the estate. These tasks are important in maintaining definition in the beds, improving overall presentation, and preparing the gardens for stronger spring growth.

As the season progresses, residents can expect more frequent lawn cutting, continued refinement of planting in selected areas, and the use of propagated annual plants in parts of the estate. These works form part of the transition from late-winter maintenance into the main growing season.