

**Friends of Sandall Park**  
**Trustees' Annual Report**

**January 2008 – January 2009**

The year from January 2008 to 2009 has seen some major improvements and events in the park - a lot of hard work has been undertaken to move it into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**1. New policies adopted**

- a. Volunteer Policy
- b. The Business Plan has been completely revamped to reflect current trends and requirements. This now forms the basis for the monthly meetings and has been agreed by the SNT and Police.

**2. Crime in the Park**

All crimes were reported to the crime desk as they occurred.

- a. Litter dropping continues to be a problem. It also continues to be a problem when football matches have taken place. The Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) is aware of this. Included in litter is dog fouling. Several members of the public have been challenged for both offences. As a result SNT sent 3 youth's letters to their homes regarding litter dropping.
- b. Due to our persistence in pursuing offenders over the last two years, damage has been reduced to a minimum and there have only been a couple of instances, none since September 08. Any damage that does occur continues to be dealt with as soon as it has been caused and the damage rectified.
- c. Thefts of and damage to bird boxes were remedied by removing the ladder that had been secreted in the park.
- d. Unsavoury activities were observed around the toilets when they were open, particularly on Sunday mornings. A sustained operation by the local Safer Neighbourhood Team and police nipped this in the bud.
- e. Shrubs continued to be stolen throughout the year. Future shrubs need to be 'low key' and unattractive.
- f. Several off-road motorcyclists dealt with; one was burnt out on the golf course; some had motorcycles seized.
- g. FOSP members visit the park on a regular, if not daily basis and speak with the visitors – gradually, the public have joined in the crusade to rid the park of the anti social element causing all the problems.

**3. Events**

- a. Aurora 'Care to Run' inaugural charity run/walk of two laps around the park. FOSP members played a major role in organising the actual run including marshalling duties. A special thanks to the Air Training Corps and SNT.
- b. Quiz nights were held at Club 39 and raised funds in addition to providing a good night's entertainment.
- c. Race Night organised and raised a substantial amount of funds.
- d. FOSP stall was put on at Tuby's fair in the park and raised funds which included a very generous donation from Roger Tuby. The stall also raised awareness with regards to the improvements in the park – our display boards drew a lot of attention.

- e. Launch of the Wildlife and Nature Trail with representatives from Veolia Environmental Trust and Kingfisher School attending. A presentation at the Wheatley Hotel was followed by a light buffet.
- f. Despite numerous attempts to raise capital, the Music in the Park event could not go ahead. Enquiries to have it included in the Hothouse Festival were rejected.
- g. Litter picks were undertaken on a regular basis, including The Big Tidy Up, aided by staff from Macdonald's restaurant.
- h. FOSP were invited to participate in BBC's SpringWatch with a view to being filmed doing a project. We were successful through the first phase only to be rejected the day before our elimination 'interview' on radio due to the large numbers of groups requesting involvement.

#### **4. Projects**

- a. The campaign continues to have the toilets permanently opened – they are due to close at the end of March 2009. Not seen as a priority by the council directors (who refused to meet with us, though Mayor Winter and the Neighbourhood manager did). The Government Document 'All Cisterns Go' has not had any impact. Letters were written to the Mayor and the Prime Minister – replies made it clear that it is the responsibility of the local council.
- b. Bulb planting completed by volunteers.
- c. Earth Tech Morrison undertook work to remedy the drainage problem near the old boat house site. Thanks to Neil Marshall who facilitated this work.
- d. Web site - various options were looked at and eventually a new site was developed by Flicks Media of Wheatley. This has had a major impact on our publicity and marketing to the public. We now have complete control of the site and it is updated on a daily basis to maintain interest.
- e. New notice boards were acquired – recycled having been taken out of commission elsewhere in the Borough. Plastic coated by a local firm, and framework revamped by the DMBC Playground team. Items in the boards have been updated regularly from articles published on the web site. These have proved to be very popular and have increased the interest in what is happening in the park. One on the toilet wall was repeatedly damaged by the refuse collectors – a new one is to be purchased by them.
- f. Rounder's equipment was purchased and advertised for free loan in an effort to get people active and using the golf course. Two rounder's events were undertaken by FOSP members and families with some success.
- g. A request from a children's nursery in Cheadle to re-home 3 Indian Runner Duck chicks they had raised saw the chicks arrive and introduced to their first deep water. Having been taught to swim, they are now quite settled on the lake and their previous owners donated £300 to FOSP funds in gratitude.
- h. Hard work by FOSP, SNT and the grounds maintenance teams enabled us to enter the park (and group) in the Doncaster in Bloom competition. A presentation was attended at the Keepmoat stadium where we were pleased to be announced Gold Standard in the Community Group Award, and overall winners of that category. The winning prize of a large sack of mixed bulbs is now taking up roots in the park.

- i. A major project of having the Leylandii Conifers taken down along Thorne Road and wire fencing erected was undertaken as a result of much negotiation between FOSP and council departments. This was key to Designing Out Crime on the golf course and developing the site into a family recreation and exercise area. The equipment needed to fulfill this project is subject to a funding bid which is still ongoing.
- k. Make a Difference Day/Volunteer week: work undertaken included - paths weeded; bulbs planted; litter picks; bog garden dug over again and re planted; security fencing erected to safeguard the 'wildlife sanctuary' created in the corner with the planting of reeds and water plants; £798 of plants planted with donation from South Yorkshire Community Foundation; low privet hedge taken down to open up the area to the rest of the park and with a view to reducing anti social behaviour in that area; corner of the lake dredged at cost to DMBC.  
*Thanks to all volunteers and Wheatley SNT who worked hard on the project.*
- l. A blog on the web site created for the one remaining black Cygnet – appropriately named Lucky.
- m. Survey of visitors conducted in the park.

#### **5. Funds**

- a. The Weather Lottery continues to provide us with a monthly income, around £26.
  - b. Quiz nights organised for other groups and donations received from them.
- Full report from Treasurer.

#### **6. Grants applied for – unsuccessful**

- a. Awards for All – outdoor fitness suite
- b. Two separate submissions to B & Q: dog kennels for duck houses on islands; bulbs for park
- c. ABC awards – a crime prevention notice board
- d. Primary Care Trust (PCT) - outdoor fitness suite
- e. Doncaster Community Empowerment Network (CEN) – Music in the Park

#### **7. Grants/donations received**

- a. £500 donation from Lloyds TSB (courtesy of Neil Gethin) match funding for the Race Night.
- b. £798 from South Yorkshire Community Foundation for plants for bog pond and garden (volunteer week). Additionally, £100 of bulbs donated by California Garden Centre, Howden.
- c. £300 donation for Indian Runner Ducks to be re-homed in the park.
- d. Several donations have been made by FOSP member Mrs Downing in support of the group.
- e. Low level staging from an Intake charity which no longer requires it.
- f. £200 bursary awarded from CVS for FOSP members to attend courses run by them.

#### **8. Publicity Material**

- a. Web site continues to be updated on a daily basis.
- b. Newsletters produced (copies displayed in park notice board) and handed out during volunteer week; Aurora Run, Health Walk.
- c. Power Point promotional CD of Aurora Event, copies sent to Aurora and SNT.

- d. Good Old Days posters produced showing development of park

#### **9. Press releases**

Included items such as:

- a. Intended closure of toilets
- b. Music in the park – insufficient funding for it to go ahead (promises of donations from members of the public were made, but still insufficient to go ahead)
- c. Volunteer Make a Difference week
- d. Vandalism
- e. Article about fitness trails in GreenSpace national magazine – Spaces and Places (issue 33, June 2008)
- f. The Big Tidy Up
- g. Arrival of the Runner Ducks in the park.
- h. Proposed Fake Festival

In several publications:

- a. Numerous articles in Free Press
- b. Numerous articles in Doncaster Advertiser
- c. Numerous articles in outlying village 'Arrow's
- d. Numerous articles in Hatfield Flyer
- e. Articles in Wheatley publications
- f. Articles in DMBC publications and web site.
- g. BBC Radio Sheffield and Trax FM – several live interviews
- h. Posters in park; café and locales.

#### **10. Meetings**

- a. With Arts Dept; DMBC re Music in the Park 2009.
- b. Numerous with SNT (about all projects and plans).
- c. Doncaster CVS (funding and advice).
- d. Police and PCSO's (Police Community Support Officers) re incidents in the park
- e. Mr P Chambers re funding bid for golf course project
- f. CVS Courses attended with a bursary.
- g. With Mayor Winter in the park to discuss the toilet situation
- h. With Jez, Community Parks and SNT staff regarding a Fake Festival. This is planned to take place in May 09 and, if approved, is a major coup for FOSP – and a first for Doncaster.

#### **11. Angling Club**

- a. Lake cleared of rubbish on a regular basis.
- b. Competitions organised for youngsters and funded by the club.
- c. Assistance rendered at volunteer events, particularly where a boat was required or 'waders'.
- d. New fishing signs erected.
- e. Regular representations at meetings.
- f. Successful in having their lease renewed for another 3 years.
- g. Enquiries to install fountains in the lake proved to be too costly.

#### **12. Park Future**

- a. The Business Plan has been totally re-written to reflect current trends. This forms the basis of monthly meetings and continues to develop.
- b. The permanent opening of the toilet facilities is key to the success and future development of the park. Without them, the picnic, play and

exercise facilities will become under utilised and the park itself will be used as a public toilet which is not a healthy option.

### **13. The Charity's Policy on Reserves**

The annual running costs for the charity are as shown and this amount should remain ring-fenced for the charity to be able to continue its current activities throughout the year. This equates to:

Web Site maintenance	-	£80
Printing cartridges	-	£90
Photo paper for notice boards	-	£50
Insurance	-	£150
Hire of office space	-	£50
Postage	-	£ 5
Gaming Licence renewal	-	£ 20
Phone cards for mobile phone	-	£ 20
<b>Total:</b>	-	<b>£465</b>

### **14. In Conclusion**

2008 proved to be a very busy year and saw the biggest changes yet to the park. The excellent relationship we maintain with Wheatley Safer Neighbourhood Team and other key DMBC departments has ensured that our partnership has been productive and has created some eye-catching and lasting improvements.

The positive aura in the park generates positive attitudes and behaviour from the visiting public, and they too now take an active and healthy interest in what is happening. This upturn in attitudes is due in no small part to the volunteers who attend the regular meetings and 'do their bit' volunteering. Our plan to 'Design out Crime' maintains a steady pace.

2009 will see a continuing campaign to keep the toilets opened permanently, and if this is successful, further major funding bids and developments to the park's facilities.

I hope that the current membership will remain and retain their verve and enthusiasm, and that we will boost our numbers through the continued commitment that has been shown this last year. Well done everyone and thank you all for your input, however small or often. I look forward to working with you through an eventful 2009.

*The trustees declare that they have approved the trustee's report above.*

Sandra Crabtree  
Chairman 2008 - 2009

21.01.09