

Friends of Sandall Park **Annual Report**

January 2007 – January 2008

The year from January 2007 to 2008 has been a productive one and we have achieved some lasting improvements to the park. This is a brief summary, though I apologise for the length of it – there is just so much to report.

1. New policies adopted

- a. Amendment to constitution and other administrative documents to comply with Charity Commission requirements.
- b. Business Plan has evolved with several major changes and updates.
- c. A welcome pack has been designed for new volunteers and new Charity Trustees.

2. Crime in the Park

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

- a. Crime has been a continuing problem throughout the year and one which has taken up a substantial degree of volunteer hours. The new steel benches which have been erected all around the park have continually been targeted by vandals and have been repainted by Don on a weekly and sometimes daily basis. Four had to be moved from the far side of the park due to the amount of damage being caused. We have conducted our own enquiries and with the help of Debbie Ward have identified and processed offenders. Several youths have been interviewed about the damage to the benches.
- b. Don made a citizens arrest of two offenders causing damage to the council building in the compound – a result is still awaited for this from the police.
- c. A particular family of boys has been causing anti-social problems in the park and are being dealt with by the police and other agencies. One ASBO was successfully obtained for one of these boys through the tenacity of FOSP members.
- d. Litter dropping continues to be a problem. It also continues to be a problem when football matches have taken place. CF is aware of this. Included in litter is dog fouling.
- e. The bog garden and island was vandalised on a weekly basis, until its resurrection in October, since then it appears to have been left alone (other than more recent cycle tracks which have now been dug over).
- f. The positive aspect of all this is that due to our persistence in pursuing offenders, damage has been reduced to a minimum and we seem to have turned a corner. Vigilance still remains the watchword and damage caused will be dealt with as soon as it occurs.
- g. Liaison between FOSP and the community police has improved over the year and good relations have been fostered. This can only be of benefit to the park and its users.

3. Events

- a. Sponsored walk organised by SNT in conjunction with Asda Doncaster raised funds which were split 50-50 with Friends of Grove Gardens.
- b. Quiz night held in March, funds raised and split 50-50 with Friends of Grove Gardens.
- c. Music in the Park went ahead after a last minute reprieve with the extra funding required to organise the event. The concert was a substantial success and raised £1083.
- d. FOSP stall at Tuby's fair in the park raised £375, which included a very generous donation from Roger Tuby. The stall also raised awareness with regards to the damage being caused in the park – our display boards drew a lot of attention.
- e. Health walks took place with trained walk leaders.
- f. Two sponsored walks took place around the park – for Children in Need in November, and for local hero Ben Parkinson in December.

4. Projects

- a. Picnic area commenced (2 benches purchased during 2006/7 year – installed in January - 1 with access for a wheelchair).
- b. Consideration of reinstating the golf course – abandoned before any progress was made as being not viable.
- c. Project undertaken to have us registered as a Charity which was successful. We are now registered charity 1120679.
- d. Campaign to have the toilets re-opened – successful. They had been closed due to a lack of funds. As from July 2007 they will open daily until October when they will only open at weekends and Bank Holidays.
- e. A campaign to have park wardens reinstated was undertaken but was unsuccessful. An on-line petition raised interest but overall we lacked the force needed for such an initiative.
- f. Bulb planting undertaken by volunteers.
- g. Volunteer week: plants planted; 40 bird boxes erected; bog garden dug over again and re planted; benches repainted; metal fence painted; 'deceased' kite removed from top of tree; line of rough ground dug over and levelled where fence was taken down.
- h. Fitness trail launched. Another example of hard work by a volunteer brought this project to a successful conclusion, aided by the £4820 grant from Awards for All.
- i. FOSP registered on-line with GreenSpace Every Action Counts.
- j. On-line Hall of Shame created on web site. (This page receives most 'hits' of all the pages on the site).
- k. Outdoor classroom – result of funding from Veolia Environmental Trust – created. This comprises the completion of the picnic area; the 40 bird boxes; wildlife interpretation and nature trail boards; new trees and shrubs; footpaths and two additional benches provided through DMBC funding.
- l. WACUP notice board repaired and taken over by FOSP. Information regularly updated, including a new bi-monthly newsletter.
- m. Partnership forged with Yorkshire Swan Rescue Hospital – who subsequently treated and ringed two injured black swans.

5. Funds

- a. The Weather Lottery continues to provide us with a monthly income, usually around £26. Membership take-up has been disappointing especially as it is an easy source of income.
- b. Donations have been made by Neil Marshall after collections from Rovers Travel Club.

Full report from Treasurer.

6. Grants applied for – unsuccessful

- a. Community Champions: Chairman applied for £2,000 but the Champion was not allowed to be a member of the Executive team so she was not in a position to progress the award. Instead the idea of the nature trail was incorporated into the wildlife boards.
- b. £5000 Park It! grant applied for, we came in 2nd place out of the Yorkshire and Humber area and received £1000 towards Music in the Park 2007, so in this respect it *was* successful (We had to match this funding).
- c. South Yorkshire Key Fund: application submitted for funding for Feasibility Study for the farm. After several months of preparing reports, attending meetings, interviewing potential consultants and preparing the groundwork – the application was refused due to insufficient funds, we were informed.
- d. Application to DMBC for funding for a data projector – rejected as not fitting the criteria for that particular fund.

7. Grants/donations received

- a. Awards for All – Sport England: £4,820 for Fitness Trail.
 - i. 6 new benches purchased and installed.
 - ii. Trail markers installed around the park
 - iii. 3 Trail signs erected (1 kept in reserve to replace any damaged signs).
 - iv. Walk leaders trained and kitted out
 - v. 500 Trail leaflets designed and purchased.
 - vi. Launch event by Rosie Winterton MP
- b. Music in the Park – £1000 from GreenSpace Park-It! And £995 from Doncaster CEN.
- c. £8000 became available from DMBC – capital funding. A business case was produced and proved successful, which resulted in two footpaths to enhance the picnic area and ‘outdoor classroom’ and 2 additional picnic benches with wheelchair access.
- d. Onyx landfill (which evolved into Veolia Environmental Trust). £6725 was awarded for the Nature Trail¹:
 - i. 6 wildlife interpretation boards
 - ii. 9 trees
 - iii. 40 bird boxes
 - iv. 2 picnic benches with wheelchair access

¹ There was a problem with this grant in that Veolia will only pay in arrears and FOSP had insufficient funds to pay for the items in advance. This meant Sandra and Don bankrolling the project for the amount of £6700, plus £1500 for the two benches paid for by DMBC which they also refused to pay for in advance. This needs to be rectified for future funding – this did not become apparent until after the grant was agreed.

- v. 39 Laurels (to border the new footpaths and provide a backdrop for the wildlife boards). *See Projects – 4(k)*.
- e. Tickhill Garden Centre donated £350 of additional shrubs to complement those provided by Veolia.
- f. £500 donation from Lloyds TSB (courtesy of Neil Gethin).
- g. £165 cost of Nature Trail leaflets funded by FOSP
- h. One memorial bench donated by a member of the public and a memorial picnic bench with wheelchair access donated by two members of FOSP for the picnic area.

8. Publicity Material

- a. New FOSP logo designed (free of charge by wildlife board designer)
- b. Labels purchased bearing FOSP logo
- c. Frisbees for sale at events bearing FOSP logo labels
- d. T shirts printed with logo for sale/prizes
- e. Puzzles for sale at events bearing FOSP logo labels
- f. Canvas shoppers printed with FOSP logo
- g. Web site continues to be updated regularly (problem during Dec/Jan)
- h. Newsletter produced (copy displayed in park notice board)
- i. Power Point promotional CD of Music in the Park concert

9. Press releases

Included items such as:

- a. Return of wardens
- b. Re-opening of toilets
- c. Music in the park
- d. Memorial benches
- e. Volunteer Make a Difference week
- f. Vandalism
- g. Wildlife notice boards
- h. Picnic benches

In several publications:

- a. Numerous articles in Free Press
- b. Numerous articles in Doncaster Advertiser
- c. Numerous articles in Edenthorpe Arrow
- 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
- h. Posters in park; café and locales.

10. Meetings

- a. Active Doncaster (fitness trail).
- b. Numerous with community first (about all projects and plans).
- c. Numerous regarding Pleveys and the Business Plan. These did not offer any solutions. Pleveys found our BP incompatible with theirs and the plan stalled. No resolution to date.
- d. Several with local schools and groups regarding Nature Trail
- e. Doncaster CVS (funding).

- f. Social enterprise team of Doncaster CVS (feasibility study)
- g. Gina Troy to progress Business Plan
- h. Numerous with various DMBC officials to progress Business Plan.
- i. Several with the proprietors of the café with regards to a new building and its relationship with FOSP. This plan appears to have been shelved.
- j. Several with the ASBO team and solicitors.
- k. Insp England and Carly Speechley regarding the way forward with crime in the park and the park generally.
- l. Doncaster CVS – training for Charitable status

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.
- d. New fishing signs erected.
- e. New fishing pegs erected, including disabled ones.
- f. Regular representations at meetings.

12. Park Future

- a. The Business Plan aspect relating to the Small Animals Farm reached an impasse with the stalling of negotiations with Pleveys. An alternative Plan was followed up looking at becoming a Partnership with Ian Thompson who leases the nurseries within the park. So far these plans have made no headway. With the retirement of the main Business Plan writer from the group, it was decided that the Animal Farm should be put on hold until such times as a member felt in a position to take on this huge responsibility.
- b. All projects initially directed at the golf course end of the park have been shelved due to the vandalism. All efforts are being concentrated on the main lake area.
- c. The Business Plan is being developed with smaller projects and as always, is a living document which changes constantly. Liaison is now taking place with North Doncaster Development Trust to progress the Plan.

13. In Conclusion

Our success is due in no small part to our partners² and whilst *everyone* has contributed in some way to a successful 2007 – I feel members should be highlighted for specific undertakings:

- Neil Marshall (and the Community First Team) for helping and supporting whenever we have asked, and in particular Debbie Ward who has dedicated a great deal of time in supporting our efforts, helping in the park, following up crime enquiries and working hard in the background.
- Siggie Parrat-Halbert for the unbelievable amount of time and effort she put into the Business Plan, subsequent amendments and feasibility studies.

² Please see attached list of acknowledgements.

- Ron and Jean Ketley for the arduous task of pulling together the Music in the Park concert and all the volunteers who worked physically hard on the day including our two ‘greeters’ Bell Darrand and Pat Ellis.
- Don Crabtree for the Fitness Trail – putting together the funding bid, designing the trail (with assistance from Active Doncaster) and implementing it.
- Neil Gethin for the hard work done on researching and registering us as a charity and being our charity ‘champion’.
- Eva Hughes for actively supporting and encouraging me in my role and being our voice where it mattered, in particular spearheading our cause for the toilets to be reopened.
- Mairaid Smith, Moira Hood, Jacqueline Hall, Eva and Derek Hughes Ron & Jean Ketley, Mick Woodland, Barrie Boughen, Neil and Will Gethin and Don Crabtree for all the volunteering time at events.
- Geraldine Gillings and her family – volunteering on behalf of FOSP to promote and lead Health Walks around the park.
- Will Gethin for representing the youngsters at every meeting.
- All the officials for the time they put in during the year.
- Non-FOSP volunteers: Pat Ellis, Mick Ward and Martyn Oxley for assisting at events, and my family for providing ‘the crowd’ at public events!

We have all contributed to make an impact on the park and it’s all down to this small group of dedicated volunteers.

Our efforts at targeting the criminals, repairing the damage caused immediately and generally keeping the park looking nice have reaped benefits and damage is now minimal. We have engendered a working relationship with the community police and this in turn has enabled us to target known offenders with positive results.

Well done everyone! And thank you very much for your input. Whether it has been your attendance at meetings, planting a few bulbs, fishing rubbish out of the lake, or having sleepless nights over a major project – every contribution however small has been important. The group has benefited, the park has benefited, and ultimately its visitors and wildlife have benefited.

The park is looking nicer than it has done for a while but we can’t afford to lose the momentum. Let’s continue our quest and make sure that everyone acknowledges that we have the best park in the Borough. Doncaster is on the up, and so is the boating lake. We should now look to 2008 with an energy and vision that will *really* put Sandall Park on the map. Let’s see what we can achieve *this* year. I look forward to receiving your continued support.

Sandra Crabtree
Chairman 2007 – 2008
16.01.08