

Friends of Sandall Park
Trustees' Annual Report

January 2009 – December 2009

The year from January to December 2009 has seen some more major improvements and events in Sandall Park. A lot of hard work has been, and continues to be undertaken to ensure that *our* park is the best in the borough and beyond. This is a brief résumé of that work.

1. Crime in the Park

All crimes were reported to the crime desk as they occurred, and copied to police and Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT).

- a. Litter dropping continues to be a problem. It also continues to be a problem when football matches have taken place, this situation is despite warning letters having been sent to the clubs. The SNT is aware of this.
Included in litter is dog fouling. Whilst it has decreased somewhat on the golf course, it appears to be on the increase elsewhere in the park.
- b. Due to our persistence in pursuing offenders criminal damage and graffiti has all but disappeared. Several picnic benches were damaged on the golf course, but youngsters were spoken to by members of FOSP and this ceased.
- c. Unsavoury activities are still in evidence in and around the toilets.
- d. During the year numerous ducks and geese have been killed, including the male swan (of the mating pair) and 2 cygnets. Part of the problem seems to be dogs allowed to run loose and chase the wildlife.
- e. A child was injured as a result of twine stretched across a footpath. This remains undetected. (The family concerned were sponsored by FOSP to enter the Santa Dash and enjoyed the day).
- f. Interviews were given to the newspapers and local television by a FOSP member regarding two youngsters detained for serious offences elsewhere, but who had caused many problems in the park and who had been dealt with accordingly.
- g. Members of FOSP 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. This is evident through the comments we receive personally or via the web site.

2. Events

- a. A lot of effort was put into encouraging Jez Lee and his company Fake Festivals, into staging a Rockfest in Sandall Park. After much negotiation with DMBC the Festival did indeed go ahead and was a resounding success for the park and the area. Around 800 people attended and enjoyed a selection of bands, both local and national. The date of 22nd May 2010 has already been booked for the next event and it is likely to continue on an annual basis.
- b. The Aurora 'Care to Run' charity run/walk of two laps around the park was staged again. FOSP members played a major role in organising the actual run, arrangements on the day and marshalling duties. A change of start and finish location ensured a more organised conclusion to the event.

- c. An official launch of the Golf Course Project took place at the Care to Run with a representative from Groundwork UK/Community Spaces attending. The project celebration cake was cut by Caroline Hodgson of YTV fame.
- d. Quiz nights were held at Club 39 and raised capital in addition to providing a good night's entertainment for the group and its supporters.
- e. Another Race Night was organised and raised over £1000.
- f. A FOSP stall was put on at Tuby's fair during the Bank Holiday 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 again. (Suggested that we put this on for two days in August 2010).
- g. The main Music in the Park event could not go ahead due to lack of funds, but a smaller version without staging and supporting equipment was performed near the children's play area by Doncaster Youth Stage Band and Doncaster Concert Band. This was a great success with many people braving the cold weather to support it.
- h. Litter picks were undertaken on a regular basis by volunteers from the group.
- i. Bulb planting with Kingfisher School and Junior Rangers provided an opportunity for the children to become involved in the park's future.
- j. Health Walks organised in conjunction with Active Doncaster (DMBC) and the SNT saw many people enjoying outdoor exercise, many of whom were visiting the park for the first time.
- k. A Santa Dash was organised for the first time to support Aurora in their quest for funds. Over 350 Santa's and junior 'reindeers' did two laps of the lake and produced a fabulous fun and colourful day in the park. We were supported by Nuffield Health who provided two very nice lady Santa's to do the warm up.
- l. Two FOSP members attended the Aurora Presentation Evening in December and were presented with an award for the assistance and support given to Aurora Centre by FOSP during 2009.

3. Projects

- a. The campaign continues to have the toilets permanently opened – they are currently open 7 days a week during the summer and weekends only during the winter months. This is due mainly to the Safer Neighbourhood Team changing their working practices to fund the toilet facilities. Their opening is by no means a foregone conclusion.
- b. Bulb and plant planting around the park was completed by FOSP volunteers.
- c. The drain near the boat house was cleared on a regular basis by DMBC Grounds Maintenance Team and this has solved the problem of the floods of iron coloured water blocking the footpath.
- d. A worm survey was conducted and the results submitted to a national database – putting Sandall Park on another web site's map (OPAL – Open Air Laboratories).
- e. Bird counts to British Trust for Ornithology highlight the existence of Sandall Park on another web site and national organisation's database. BTO have since been a good source of advice for us.
- f. 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 Danum Centre where

we were pleased to receive a Gold Standard in the Community Group Award.

- g. A major project of having the 248, 40' 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 resulting grant of £21,632 from Big Lottery Fund; Community Spaces and Groundwork UK enabled the following work to be undertaken:

- Thousands of bulbs planted under and between trees;
- 200 meadow plants put in the rough area under the trees;
- 300 plants dug into the copses;
- 200 cyclamen set under the trees;
- New trees ordered (not yet planted);
- Installation of 4 pieces of outdoor fitness equipment;
- 6 picnic benches;
- 6 litter bins;
- 8 dog waste bins;
- New paths were put in to enable disabled access to the benches and fitness equipment;
- A gap was opened up in the Hawthorn hedge to include the project area in the rest of the park;
- New fitness trail leaflets were produced to incorporate the fitness equipment;
- Promotional chocolate bars were purchased to hand out at health walks;
- A substantial gazebo was bought which will serve us for many years to come and which will bear a banner with our web site and the funder's logo on;
- FOSP liveried banners and flags;
- Corporate FOSP t shirts.
- A Rounder's pitch marked out.

This was a major project with major results for the park – crime and anti-social behaviour has been all but stamped out on the golf course area and a family facility has been created. There is still room for more work.

- h. New litter bins, with baiting traps for rats were installed by DMBC to combat the rat population which is causing a problem around the main lake.
- i. Research into heritage of park was commenced but will take time to complete.
- j. Surveys of visitors were conducted in the park on a regular basis.
- k. The Youth Action Team conducted a three day volunteering event assisting the gardener with his tasks. A planned rounder's match at the conclusion of their visit was abandoned due to the wet weather.
- l. Three wide parking bays were marked out by DMBC in the car park for vehicles participating in the Blue Badge scheme.
- m. Dog fouling and litter signs were purchased by FOSP and erected by SNT around the park at pedestrian entrances.

- n. An entry was submitted to the Best Park in Britain award, but we weren't successful in this instance.
- o. A Playbuilder Project, sponsored by the Government, is to build a new play area for young children in the wooded copse near to the main car park. Work has already commenced on this and is due to be completed in 2010. Incorporated into this will be the clearing of the boat house area which will be grassed over.

4. Funds

- a. The Weather Lottery continues to provide us with a monthly income of around £26.
Full report from Treasurer.

5. Grants applied for – unsuccessful

- a. Warburtons were to donate corporate jackets for FOSP, but they appear to have forgotten about it, despite several reminders. This project has been abandoned.
- b. Enquiries were made about our applying for Parks for People funding, which needs to be supported and submitted by DMBC (and could have included plans for the lake edging). The Director Neighbourhood and Communities would not support our application so we were unable to apply.
- c. A request via a health initiative for funding for an ash path around the circumference of the golf course was rejected. This scheme has not been abandoned but will need another source of funding.
- d. A request for a local firm to assist with rebuilding the lake edging is still undergoing negotiation.

6. Grants/donations received

- a. £500 donation from Lloyds TSB - match funding for the Race Night.
- b. £20 from a well wisher
- c. 250 shopping bags, bearing the FOSP logo and a slogan 'The park is fantastic, so take home your plastic' donated by Doncaster Community Recycling Partnership.
- d. Several donations have been made by a FOSP member Mrs Downing in support of the group.
- e. Donation of a lifesaving rope from a visitor rescued from the icy lake by FOSP members.
- f. £200 bursary awarded from CVS for FOSP members to attend courses run by them.
- g. A free raffle was held at a finance course attended by the Chairman, and she won a laptop for the group. This is currently being used by a FOSP member for funding bids.
- h. Several donations from Roger Tuby and his staff.

7 Publicity

- a. The web site continues to be updated on a daily basis and is our major 'window to the world'
- b. Linked to the web site for informing our supporters and visitors of developments are the park notice boards.
- c. Newsletters produced (copies displayed in park notice board) and handed out during Aurora Run, Health Walk, survey days.
- d. Power Point promotional CD of Aurora Event, copies sent to Aurora and SNT.
- e. Good Old Days posters produced showing development of park

- f. Shopping bags donated by Resource Recovery and imprinted with our logo.
- g. Chocolate bars with our own design to be used as giveaways (purchased through Big Lottery Fund golf course grant)
- h. A flag pole (donated by Bristol Street Motor Nations) and banner displaying our logo for use at displays.
- i. Two smaller flag poles with flags depicting our banners for use at displays.
- j. Two banners (purchased through golf course grant) which affix to the gazebo walls and showing our web site address.
- k. A FOSP stand at Kingfisher School Open Day provided a good opportunity for marketing the group.
- l. Our Nature Trail project forms part of the publicity material for Veolia's marketing of their community involvement.
- m. FOSP are registered on Community Spaces Forum; Donny-online Forum; Twitter, U Tube and Facebook.
- n. A 2010 calendar was designed, purchased through grants (BLF and YTV) and distributed to outlets earmarked as being of most benefit for our exposure. The calendar highlights our annual events.
- o. A presentation slide show of The Aurora Care to Run/launch of the Golf Course Project, was sent to Community Spaces and is now used by them to showcase our project.

8. Press releases

Included items such as:

- a. Intended closure of toilets
- b. Vandalism
- c. Fake Festival
- d. Aurora Care to Run
- e. Aurora Santa Dash
- f. The rescue of a man and his dog from an ice covered lake in the park put FOSP on the front page of local newspapers.

In several publications on numerous occasions:

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

9. Meetings

- a. With Mayor of Doncaster Peter Davies and Cabinet members
- 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 of Groundwork UK/Community Spaces re funding bid for golf course project
- f. CVS Courses attended with a bursary.
- g. Aurora Staff relating to charity runs/walks
- h. Jez Lee of Fake Festivals, Community Parks and SNT staff regarding RockFest.

- i. Community Parks re golf course project
- j. Alison Fox re Biomass Project
- k. Friends of Askern Lake – sharing of ideas
- l. Heritage Lottery Fund re funding bids
- m. Weather Lottery Seminar
- n. SYFAB re funding applications

10. Angling Club

- a. Lake and its edges 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’, but also for bulb planting and litter picks.
- d. Regular representations at meetings.
- f. Some complaints received about the amount of injuries to ducks and geese caused by fishing paraphernalia in the water, and illegal night fishing by non-members. Some SNT patrols took place.

11. Park Future

- a. The Business Plan continues to evolve and as objectives are achieved, new ones inserted. This forms the basis of monthly meetings and continues to develop. New ideas and projects ensure the Business Plan remains a living document.
- 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.

12. 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 |
| Total: | - | £465 |

13. In Conclusion

2009 has proved to be an even busier year than 2008, and saw the biggest single change yet to the park with the Golf Course Project. This has been the largest grant we’ve applied for and been granted, and the work on this project continues well into 2010. It is also an excellent example of partnership working between a voluntary group, SNT and DMBC departments.

One aspect which continues to be problematical in Sandall Park is that we are still lacking in the area of enforcement – particularly of dog fouling and litter dropping. If these two problems were solved, the park would indeed be the ‘Jewel in the Crown’ of Doncaster.

2010 will see a continuing campaign to keep the toilets opened permanently, though finance continues to be at a premium with cutbacks influencing decisions.

Our partnership with Wheatley Safer Neighbourhood Team and other key DMBC departments has ensured that our efforts have been productive and has created a recreational green space that Doncaster should rightly be proud of. The volunteers who attend the regular meetings and give of their time volunteering, the Ward Councillors and representatives from the SNT (DMBC) are a clear example of how partnership working reaps dividends for the public and the community. Long may this relationship continue.

The overall improvements in the park have generated an upturn of positive attitudes and behaviour from the visiting public. There has been a notable increase in the amount of daily visitors and this can only be a reflection of the positive changes to the park and its facilities.

FOSP now has a voice and we have achieved success in cutting through beurocracy, namely to be allowed to display our advertising banners on the park fences to inform the public of events; to have admin and booking fees waived for our events, and to be consulted on major issues for the park. No mean feat for a volunteer group and testament to our professionalism and effectiveness in the Third Sector.

I would like to take this opportunity to say "Thank you" to all our volunteers and supporters. Well done everyone and thank you for your input however small or often - without you the group wouldn't exist and its many achievements wouldn't have been accomplished.

I look forward to volunteering with you all through an eventful and fulfilling 2010. Still lots to do! Lets work together and make it happen.

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

Sandra Crabtree
Chairman 2008 - 2009

20.01.10