



The Friends of Sandall Park Trustees' Annual Report

January 2011 – December 2011



The Friends of Sandall Park group is made up of a team of volunteers - committed individuals and families - who are working with the local council Neighbourhood and Grounds Teams to transform the park into a wildlife haven, family open space and a special place to visit.

Our membership starts at the very young end of the scale with a 5 year old volunteer and tops it off at 86 yrs, with our numbers growing year on year. Additionally we have numerous ad-hoc 'Friends' who turn out at events to help with marshalling and organising events.

We are working tirelessly and innovatively to create a park for children of the present and the future to enjoy. We want to create a new generation of 'unforgettable memories' so that "I can remember the boats and train" will be replaced by "I remember the play tower, Nature Trail, Adventure Trail" and hopefully much more. Our 5 year Business Plan reflects our vision for the future of the park.

1. Crime in the Park

All crimes, though of a minor nature, were reported to the crime desk as they occurred, and copied to police and Neighbourhood Team.

- a. Minor damage to benches is still an irritation but due to our persistence in pursuing offenders and doing instant repairs, criminal damage and graffiti remains minimal.
- b. Litter - the corner of the lake nearest the football pitch remains the gathering ground for all the litter dropped. This is a problem which has been highlighted regularly over the last years. It needs repairs to the lake edging which will include measures to deal with the litter. A result is still awaited and not likely to be resolved in the near future, which is frustrating. We receive numerous complaints about this corner and rightly so – it is an eyesore and detracts from the beauty of the park. Additionally litter left by football teams has been a constant source of nuisance.
- c. Dog fouling has decreased dramatically through our campaigns and with the issuing of Fixed Penalty Tickets. There are still however a minority of offenders who do not 'pick up' after their pets.
- d. The theft of a volunteer's spade whilst working in the park was reported and whilst minor, was annoying.
- e. 3 cygnets were killed this year; the first two were the initial hatchlings, a second attempt brought another cygnet into the world and this *almost* reached adulthood before disappearing. A large part of the problem seems to be dogs allowed to run loose to chase the wildlife, several owners have been asked to put dogs on leads, especially when they've been seen to chase ducks and geese. Owners will not accept that their dogs chase wildfowl. Until it's too late. Foxes may also be responsible.
- f. Arson has been experienced on several occasions – a privet hedge set on fire causing damage to nearby trees; one new plastic rubbish bin; a willow tree which then had to be chopped down for safety

reasons; and the hedgerow near to the park houses set on fire. All undetected.

- g. Thefts of plants is a constant problem and difficult to police. Large numbers of ornamental grasses were stolen from the Heritage Garden; shrubs and Aubrietia from the rockery; and a large amount of shrubs from Marshalls garden.
And petty though it seems, theft of daffodils is a major issue. This is exacerbated by the fact that parents are as bad as the children, walking off with arms full, in full view of everyone as though it is acceptable.
- h. The shooting of birds occurred in the early part of the year with numerous corpses found near the bog pond. No offenders were traced.
- i. Thefts of fish have been prevalent through the year and numerous illegal traps have been removed by the angling club. All undetected.
- j. Unsavoury activities around the toilets have been reduced through the introduction of a CCTV camera and more recently, frequent police patrols. One persistent offender has been spoken to by the police.
- k. Insp. Jakki Hardy moved to the area around August and has provided positive results for the park, examples are the installation of CCTV and increased patrols. She has shown an interest and remained in constant contact with the group to keep abreast of any incidents.

2. Events

- a. The third Fake Festival took place in May and was another success for the park. A great family day out for those attending the event and those just picnicking nearby. Jez of FakeFestivals is undoubtedly a 'Friend' of Sandall Park and has sponsored the heritage garden and notice board near the café.
- 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. Our thanks to the Neighbourhood Team, who provided equipment and staff, and to all our volunteer marshals who did an excellent job (we received comments from the public to that effect). Medals were presented by Carolyn Hodgson again who plays a marvellous role in encouraging the fundraisers. The two FoSP sponsored trophies were presented to the first male and female and they also received individual trophies.
- c. A Quiz night was held at Club 39 and raised capital in addition to providing a good night's entertainment for the group and it's supporters. House of Fraser was well represented again; they are proving to be avid attendees at our social events.
- d. Another Race Night was organised and raised a substantial amount of money. The profits from this one were shared with Friends of Martinwells Lake and staff from House of Fraser Outlet Store who were raising money for Starlight Charity. The sharing with other groups seems to be a winning formula in that it helps them raise funds without the trouble and expense of organising a race night; it publicises our cause, and it creates a network of charitable groups. Several other groups were represented on the night as a means of experiencing the race night concept for their future use.
- e. A FOSP tombola stall was put on for two days at Tuby's fair during the Bank Holiday and raised funds for the park.

- f. Our Music in the Park event had to be cancelled for the second year due to torrential rain. The gazebos were set up and the sound man was ready to go. But it was not to be – it poured it down!
- g. A sponsored 12 hour 'Brass Band Bash' by Hatfield Brass Band did go ahead from 9am to 9pm and raised funds for the running of the band.
- h. A smaller version of the Doncaster Concert Band concert later in the year was also cancelled due to torrential rain in the morning. It was a hard decision to make, made even worse by the sun coming out just before the scheduled start time. These decisions aren't taken lightly, but they have to be made given the time it takes for the sound man and musicians to set up
- j. A presentation evening at the Mansion House saw the group receive a Doncaster in Bloom Silver Gilt Award in recognition of the Heritage Garden and Notice board, and the use of recycled items including the topiary sports figures and boat.
- j. Two FOSP members attended the Doncaster Free Press and Doncaster Council presentation evening at the Keepmoat Stadium. They were pleased to receive a 'Love Where You Live' – runners up award on behalf of FoSP and sponsored by St. Leger Homes.
- k. A Santa Dash was organised to support Aurora in their quest for funds. Around 250 Santa's and reindeers turned out on a cold day (15 degrees warmer than last year though!) which was a positive result for Aurora and their fundraising. Thanks again to the Neighbourhood Team for providing equipment and help, and to all the marshals. Thanks were given to Nick and Jason of Ready Steady Store for helping: bringing their gazebo and all the Santa suits, donating drinks, *and* doing the run.
- l. A health walk incorporated into the borough-wide Walking Festival was organised by the Neighbourhood Team with some FoSP helpers turning out on the day.
- m. A celebration was held at the Wheatley Hotel for the ILM Team at the completion of their contract. They were presented with a letter of thanks and a certificate of achievement from FoSP.
- n. The group were delighted and justifiably proud to be awarded the Queens Award for Voluntary Service this year – one of only 3 groups in Yorkshire and Humberside and the only one in South Yorkshire. Four members of the group were democratically selected to go to Buckingham Palace for a Garden Party. An official presentation took place at the Mansion House at the invitation of the Civic Mayor (and FoSP member) councillor Eva Hughes, the scroll and symbol being presented to our youngest and eldest members by the Lord Lieutenant of South Yorkshire. The scroll and symbol are now housed in a glass cabinet in the Tourist Information Centre in Doncaster.
An informal celebration evening for the group and all our sponsors and supporters was hosted by the chairman and her husband at Club 39.
- o. A Hook a Duck competition raised funds for Doncaster Cancer Detection Trust Scanner Appeal, and an Easter Egg Hunt was sponsored by Ready Steady Store, which was free to enter. Each entrant received a goody bag containing several items including a free chocolate egg. The Neighbourhood Team did a marvellous job in rallying the hundreds of visitors who attended on the day.
- p. Three ladies from Marks & Spencer's volunteered for a day in the park and did an incredible amount of work. They received goody bags and a certificate and letter of thanks from FoSP.

- q. The Big Lunch organised by the Neighbourhood Team with assistance from FoSP members proved to be popular despite the cold weather.
- r. A Christmas Craft Fair organised by and held at Oliver's Fish Restaurant at Edenthorpe raised funds for the group and was extremely popular.

3. Projects

- a. Bulb and plant planting around the park was completed by FOSP volunteers on numerous days.
- b. 50 trees were donated by the Woodlands Trust via BTCV, these were planted by FoSP volunteers and their families with the help of the ILM team.
- c. The Heritage Garden was created using a boat donated by Hatfield Water Park, filled with soil and planted with pansies and other colourful plants. The heritage notice board depicting the history of the park to present day was sponsored by Jez Lee of FakeFestivals. All this happened with the help of the Grounds Team (DMBC).
- d. The Topiary Garden was created using sports figures which had been removed and discarded, cleaned up by the volunteers and re-sited by the Grounds Team into the flower bed. Ivy has been planted to grow up it and the surrounding garden planted by the Grounds Team.
- e. Volunteers have spent a great deal of time tending the rockery and planting new plants to develop its appearance as a rockery and not a playground. Several of the large lavenders were stolen once in flower and recognisable.
- f. Removable barriers were put in next to the depot to facilitate vehicular access away from the play area. This was funded and executed by the ILM team.
- g. A Hopscotch pitch was marked out and has proved to be popular.
- h. Another 250 shopping bags, bearing the FOSP logo and a slogan *Winners of the Queens Award for Voluntary Service* were purchased after the success of the initial projects. People love to have a free gift and it enables the volunteers to engage the public in conversation about the park as well as educating them about the problems with litter etc
- i. Bird food has been purchased and one group member has taken responsibility for ensuring the swans, geese and ducks receive a regular 'balanced' meal through the winter months.
- j. Marshall's Garden is a garden adopted by our newest recruit and his mum – along the perimeter of the small car park near the café. They have cleared it of rubbish and systematically planted it up with perennials and bulbs. Unfortunately within weeks of completion the vast majority of the shrubs were stolen.
- k. Heritage research with a view to producing a book is being completed by one member. This is time limited to school holidays when the archives at Balby can be visited.
- l. The ILM Team continued to work well completing all the jobs in the park that had needed doing for some time, including turfing the boat house area and taking down all the lower branches of the conifers along the Wheatley Hotel end alongside the path. This has made it safe for pedestrians using the path. A slope was put in to give better access to the golf course from the main park area.
- m. The north bank of the lake has been sealed off by ILM, with new fencing erected to create a safe area for wildlife. This has been breached by youths on numerous occasions but hopefully the wild

plants and bushes will soon take over. A large amount of new saplings were planted within the area.

- n. Volunteers have given all the old wooden benches a facelift with a lick of preserver paint.
- o. Regular litter picking has taken place by Gateway School on Barnby Dun Road, with all recyclable items being sold and monies donated to the Riding for the Disabled School on Bawtry Road.
- p. A CCTV camera was installed near to the toilet block. This may be a temporary measure should the camera be required elsewhere.
- q. A fountain was installed in the lake but its maintenance has proved problematical. It ceased functioning properly less than a month after installation and continued to dwindle. It is currently out of action for remedial work to be completed.
- r. One volunteer suggested purchasing charity Wristbands for FoSP, which we did, and these are to be sold at our events to raise awareness as well as capital.
- s. An Adventure Trail is due to be started early in the year. Funding has been approved and is awaiting confirmation documents to be signed. FoSP will be contributing around £2000 to the project.
- t. Negotiations have been ongoing with Bob Allan and his team and a sculpture sensory trail will be installed in the park in the coming months.

4. Funds

- a. The Weather Lottery continues to provide us with a monthly income of around £26. If we could increase our membership of this, we could benefit greatly from the income generated.
- b. Easyfundraising is an on-line shopping facility whereby a chosen charity can benefit from purchases made through recognised companies. FoSP is now registered with this and it is hoped the interest will grow, and so subsequently will our funds. So far we have raised £19 through this system with 5 different purchases.

Full report from Treasurer.

5. Grants applied for – unsuccessful

- a. An application to the Big Lottery Fund: Awards for All for the adventure trail was rejected.

6. Grants/donations received

- a. Lloyds TSB Foundation provide match funding for the Race Night, and additional donations for volunteer time by their employee and our Treasurer Neil Gethin.
- b. Several donations have been made by a FOSP member Mrs Downing in support of the group.
- c. Several donations from Roger Tuby and his staff, some of which will be contributed towards a new notice board.
- d. Ready Steady Store donated a large amount of capital; storage space at their facility for all our equipment; gave of their time and help at events; provided bottled water for the charity events; sponsored the Hook a Duck Championship and donated prizes.
- e. Jez of FakeFestivals sponsored the Heritage Garden and Heritage Notice Board.
- f. Perry's of Doncaster – the car dealer – sponsored car stickers depicting 'We love Sandall park'; our 2011 Christmas Cards and 2012 Calendars.

- g. Hatfield Water Park provided the boat for the heritage garden.
- h. Martin Blagdon of The Olive Bar and Grill wrote a substantial cheque to boost the financial coffers of the group.
- i. A grant from Veolia Environmental Trust of £14,137 will be finalised in January.
- j. Donation from Oliver's Fish Restaurant of a complete Tombola of gifts for FoSP to run at the Oliver's Craft Fair.
- k. Other gifts received were:
 - Lanyards, raffle prizes and race night donations from House of Fraser and staff;
 - Raffle prizes from Yorkshire Wildlife Park; Red Tomato Pizza Takeaway; Wheatley Hotel; Astrabound; the park Café; FakeFestivals (concert tickets) and The Stables pub (who also sponsor a race on race night).

7 Publicity/Communications

- a. The web site continues to be updated on a daily basis and is our major 'window to the world'. The average visits now are around 6,000 a month by around 2,7000 genuine visitors, which is incredible! Our web master does a marvellous job in keeping it up to the minute and current.
- b. Linked to the web site for informing our supporters and visitors of developments are the park notice boards. These are very popular and a good source of information for park users.
- c. Generic business cards were purchased for the group to use.
- d. FOSP are registered on Community Spaces Forum; Donny-online Forum; Twitter, U Tube and Facebook and all receive lots of 'hits'. Information is inputted on a regular basis by our web master.
- e. Shopping bags more recently purchased are imprinted with our logo now bear the "Queen's Award" slogan as opposed to the plastic bags slogan. These are given out to people in the park and supporters.
- f. A5 double sided flyers are printed for music events and distributed locally and via the Tourist Information Office in Doncaster.
- g. Banners and flags displaying our logo are used at displays and on the park fence in agreement with council, to advertise events in the park.
- h. Sandall Park has been registered on Trip Advisor, a national database for appending opinions on places visited.
- i. An article in the SAGA magazine was published and Sandall Park was one of only 3 parks mentioned in the double page spread. A really good article that showed the park in a good light.
- j. Video advertising of FoSP is on-screen at Aurora events, and in their event programmes
- k. ID cards have been introduced to the group with photo's of the volunteers laminated into a holder, for use at events.
- l. A5 leaflets outlining events for 2012 – designed by two local schoolgirls – are to be printed and distributed locally.

8. Press releases

Included items such as:

- a. Fake Festival
- b. World Hook a Duck Championship
- c. The Big Lunch
- d. Music(s) in the park
- e. Aurora Care to Run
- f. Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

- g. Aurora Santa Dash
- h. Articles in the 'We Love Wheatley' section of the Doncaster Free Press, and other areas of the paper as appropriate
- i. keeping off the ice – several more dogs rescued having chased geese onto the ice
- j. Thefts and anti social behaviour
- k. Volunteering
- l. Letter to Santa in Doncaster Free Press (appealing for a benefactor for projects)

In several publications on numerous occasions:

- a. Doncaster Free Press
- b. Doncaster Advertiser
- c. Doncaster Star
- d. Hatfield Flyer
- e. Wheatley local newsletters and publications
- f. DMBC publications and web site.
- g. Facebook
- h. Posters in park; café and locales.
- i. BBC Radio Sheffield, Sine FM and Trax FM – several live interviews

9. Meetings

- a. With the Mayor of Doncaster Peter Davies and Cabinet members
- b. Numerous with Neighbourhood team (about all projects and plans).
- c. Jez Lee of Fake Festivals, Community Parks and SNT staff regarding FakeFest.
- d. Police and PCSO's (Police Community Support Officers) re incidents in the park
- e. Friends of Martinwells Lake – sharing of ideas; reciprocal visits to each other's sites.
- f. Grounds Team re jobs and projects in park
- g. Penny Jewitt with regards to the Queens Award for Voluntary Service
- h. With Gerwyn and an employment agency regarding employing 'volunteers' to gain work experience.
- i. Numerous with Sandall Park café proprietors re events.
- j. The Olive Bar and Grill regarding sponsorship.
- k. Ready Steady Store re sponsorship and events.
- l. Aurora Staff relating to charity runs/walks
- m. Bob Allan and team re projects in the park

10. Angling Club (The Anglers of Sandall Park)

- a. The bailiffs have worked hard to ensure the success of the group, though they have met with aggression on occasions.
- b. Competitions organised for and funded by the club have been successful.
- c. Assistance rendered at volunteer events, particularly where a boat was required or 'waders', but also for bulb planting, litter picks and charity events.
- d. Regular representations at meetings with chairman and secretary being members of FoSP.
- e. Lake and its edges cleared of rubbish on a regular basis.
- f. Illegal anglers are challenged and regular patrols made of the lake, including during the evenings and nights.

This has been a successful venture so far and the group have formed a good relationship within FoSP. There have been fewer calls to RSPCA regarding

geese trapped in fishing line. The chairman and secretary have worked hard to make it a success.

11. Park Future

- a. The Business Plan is our mainstay for our way of working and as objectives are achieved, new ones are inserted. This forms the basis of monthly meetings and continues to develop. New ideas and projects ensure the Business Plan remains a living document, and the park is continually developed along those lines, in consultation with DMBC. All the objectives in our first 5 year plan have been achieved except enforcement, which is now progressing more favourably.
- b. The permanent opening of the toilet facility is, and always will be, key to the success and future development of the park. Without the toilets, the park itself will be used as a public toilet which is not a healthy option. We know this from previous experience when they were closed for long periods of time. We now have an agreement with the council for the opening and cleaning of the toilets throughout the summer, with them closing for the winter to prevent frozen pipes damage.
- c. We have gained more new members who have demonstrated a drive and determination to make the park better.

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	-	£ 15
Printing cartridges	-	£101
Photo paper for notice boards	-	£140
Insurance	-	£232
Postage	-	£ 27
Gaming Licence renewal	-	£ 20
Phone cards for mobile phone	-	£ 20
BTCV membership	-	£ 35
Total:	-	£ 600

13. In Conclusion

2011 has been another positive year despite the economic downturn. Our success though does not rely entirely on monetary donations – the more vital element to our accomplishments is the volunteering workforce: their time; energy; enthusiasm and ideas. And of course the support of the Council and the Neighbourhood Team is key to our functionality.

That's not to say we don't need a little bit of pocket money! Our healthy financial status allows us to buy things like those few extra plants and bulbs; poultry food for the swans in winter and advertising leaflets for events. As far as voluntary groups go, we are in the fortunate position – *which is by design not by accident* – whereby we can raise sufficient funds to pay for insurance and other administrative requirements without leaving ourselves short for other necessities. Donations, sponsorship and grants pay for the additional luxuries such as new notice boards; play equipment; benches and banners.

We have had tremendous support again this year from the 2 ward councillors Eva Hughes and Moira Hood; the mayor Peter Davies; Councillor Mark Thompson and the local Neighbourhood Team led by Rachael Blake and Neil Marshall. Recent additions to the Grounds team – Michaela Rowlands and Gerwyn Jones have proved invaluable allies in tackling issues in the park. Our partnership working has reaped dividends, creating a perfect venue and family open space for groups like Aurora; Lions Fun Day for Disabled; the local concert bands; special needs day trips and our local visitors, to enjoy.

2011 has seen us consolidate our position as a leading charity and volunteer group in Doncaster, other groups looking to us for advice and assistance on occasions. That's not to say that we're perfect of course and we will always strive to better ourselves. The presentation of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (the MBE for voluntary groups) the highest accolade for a voluntary group, is testament to that position and I pay tribute to each and every one of the group and our DMBC partners for making that achievement possible.

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

Sandra Crabtree
Chairman 2010 - 2011

18.01.12

Glossary of terms:

FoSP	Friends of Sandall Park
ILM	Intermediate Labour Market
ETL	Employment Training Links
DMBC	Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council
CCTV	Close Circuit Television
BTCV	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
RSPCA	Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals