





The Friends of Sandall Park

Annual Report January 2017 – December 2017



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The Friends of Sandall Park
Trustees' Annual Report

January 2017 – December 2017

1. Introduction

2017 has been another good year for the park and the group. We had even more new volunteers join – some full members, others ad-hoc helping at events or doing their own litter picks - and this instantly had an impact. It injects new enthusiasm into the group and introduces new energy and new ideas. Our new Treasurer has also brought her own ideas for our development. Sustainability is key to the success of any group, and new members provide this.

The Friends of Sandall Park team¹, working with the Stronger Communities Team (SCT) - do a tremendous job working all year round in the park, and volunteering hours this year have been totalled up at 7,595. That's 1,085 seven-hour days, 189 forty-hour weeks. Pretty impressive by anyone's standards.

This includes:

- Writing reports, minutes of meetings and letters
- Litter picks
- Gardening/planting
- Maintenance tasks
- Maintaining and cleaning the toilet facilities – this has been completed daily and the toilets have remained spotless throughout the year
- Organising events (including preparation and clearing away afterwards)
- General volunteering in the park
- Liaising with other groups and organisations
- Organising tours of the park for other groups and organisations
- Dealing with ASB, crime, offenders and reparation of damage
- Arranging 'Volunteering Days' for other groups and supervising the same
- Attending the Doncaster GreenSpace Network & National Parks & Green Spaces Forums
- Dealing with email/telephone/Facebook/website enquiries
- Keeping Facebook pages (FoSP; FoSP Volunteering Group and Santa Dash); websites (FoSP and Santa Dash) and Twitter updated
- Treasurers book-keeping
- Printing articles to keep the notice boards updated, and updating the same.
- Writing Christmas cards and distributing them to our supporters; sponsors; business partners
- Working with DMBC towards the Management Plan and applying for a Green Flag Award.
- Putting together funding bids
- Strategic Planning for the park
- Facilitating and meeting potential park users to organise events
- Attending seminars/conferences for related issues (health; green space; exercise)
- Attending meetings re the future development of the park
- Attending meetings re the café development
- Meeting with police and Director of Prosec UK regarding incidents in the park

¹ The Friends of Sandall Park 'Team' includes the Sandall Park Angling Club.

The results are noticeable, the park has a pleasant atmosphere, and the number of visitors it receives - calculated now at 400,000 per annum is evidence of its popularity and appeal.

The accolades received by email and comments on Facebook and Trip Advisor are testament to the changes the park has gone through and the image it now has. The park was again awarded a Certificate of Excellence 2017 by Trip Advisor and achieved Green Flag status on first application.

2. Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour in the Park

a. Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

1. The year started well but in the closing two months the park suffered from a minority of youths causing problems and damage.
2. The newly erected Woodland Adventure Play area, funded by WREN, DMBC and FoSP, was attacked. They tried to set fire to it, but the ropes weren't flammable, and the only damage caused was melting, repaired immediately by DMBC Grounds Team. Volunteers trying to prevent a reoccurrence the following night were surrounded by a group of 15 – 20 teenagers in a threatening situation. The volunteers spoke to the group and explained that they were there to prevent damage. The NRT (Neighbourhood Response Team) and police were contacted and on arrival of the NRT the group dispersed. It seemed to do the trick and the group never returned to carry out their threat of firebombing the equipment.
3. The 'spinning disc' for disabled children in the fenced off play area was set alight with fuel, causing damage to the equipment and the safety surface. It was repaired immediately by DMBC Grounds Team.
4. The ladies' toilets were trashed during the school holidays – toilet roll holders broken open and toilets and sink filled with the large toilet rolls.
5. One attack by a graffiti tag but cleaned off immediately by FoSP members and finished off by DMBC Flag Team.
6. The stone steps were again targeted by youths who wanted boulders to throw onto the iced over lake. (The reparation of the steps is included in the Maintenance Plan).
7. Volunteers cleaning the toilets found drugs paraphernalia in the gent's toilet on a few occasions. The decision was made by FoSP to close the toilets earlier in the afternoons and this had the result of preventing this behaviour.
8. The biggest problem the park suffers from are the quad and motor bikes that go in periodically, often when events are underway. Several offenders have been visited and bikes seized, mainly because of the public providing information. A December campaign by the police and council targeted known offenders.
9. The Chairman contacted a local security company Prosec UK and asked if their teams could pay attention to the park as they were on their way to other commitments. They agree wholeheartedly and said they would support the park and the group in any way they could.

b. Litter

1. Regular litter picks around the park have been performed by members of the group, including members of the Angling Club.
2. Dept. for Work and Pensions staff from local branches did a day's volunteering litter picking and on another occasion – painting.
3. Great British Spring clean campaign was signed up to with a few members of the public joining in, including a team from Costa Coffee.
4. Remedi contacted us with a view to taking juvenile offenders to the park to litter pick. They were shown the Superbin and how to access it whenever they wanted to do any work. They have attended on numerous occasions.

5. The Superbin (which we trialled and were the first in the world to have) contains all the equipment volunteers need to litter pick in the park, contained in a coded accessible cupboard. This has proved to be invaluable for our volunteers. We have provided feedback for the company so that they can improve on the design. It is also used by other groups for offenders doing reparation, and members of the public who have shown an interest.

3. Events ²

1. A 'Get Doncaster Walking' health walk took place with FoSP members and the Stronger Communities Team.
2. The Eid in the park was a unique event and a first for Doncaster. Hugely successful and hopefully to be repeated annually.
3. Party in the park was organised by and to raise awareness and funds for a Dementia Ward at DRI. A great fun day enjoyed by many.
4. Another Family Fun Day was organised along the same lines and proved popular.
5. The Great Get Together was organised by a local church and was part of a national celebration of the life of the MP who was killed whilst performing her duties.
6. Easter Activities
 - Our 'World Championship' Hook a Duck competition took place and needed no advertising – other than our banners on the fences.
 - The Easter Egg Hunt which was sponsored by Ready Steady Store, and which was free to enter was again a huge success. Despite the rainy weather over 1,000 eggs and sweets were handed out.
 - The tombola helped boost funds.
 - This event is proving so popular that significantly more volunteers were needed to cope with the demand.
 - The SCT, as always did a marvellous job in organising the Hook a Duck competition itself and the staff from Ready Steady Store helped in administering the Egg Hunt.
 - It is an extremely popular and now recognised holiday event, especially with Mickey and Minnie Mouse attending, they were accosted by hordes of children as soon as they entered the park.
7. The 9th annual Fake Festival took place in May and was another huge triumph for the park and for Doncaster. It sold itself without much need for advertising and around 2000 people attended.
8. A presentation evening at the Mansion House saw the Anglers and FoSP receive Doncaster in Bloom awards for their sustainable planting and innovative endeavours. A display by the angling club was made special mention of, along with all the work they had done on the lake edging.
9. The Doncaster Santa Dash:
 - St Leger Rotary of Doncaster took on even more responsibility this year and it has now become easier on FoSP, who can concentrate on the logistics for the actual day. The Rotary Club ordered and paid for the Santa suits, antlers and medals, arranged the music, sound system and stage, organised the Dog and Buggy competitions of the day and arranged for the cast of Annie to perform. Mulled wine was an addition to the 'free' giveaways in addition to mince pies. All in all, the feeling was that it was the best event to date, despite a key organiser having suffered a Stroke weeks prior to the event.

² All conducted with the invaluable assistance of the Stronger Communities, and the Grounds Team.

- This year it was fully funded by Weldricks Chemist; Hill House School; Taylor Bracewell Solicitors; St Leger Rotary Club and FoSP. This meant we were again able to give the participating charities all the entry fees from their supporters, and with FoSP not now organising the finances for the event, we became one of the recipient charities for the second year.
 - FoSP volunteers organised the logistics of the day and marshalled the event, assisted by the DMBC Stronger Communities Team who did a tremendous job.
 - Our appreciation was extended to the staff of Ready Steady Store for taking entries and distributing Santa Suits since September, allowing us to use their gazebo and providing water for the runners.
 - Our thanks to The SCT as always, for providing equipment and help, and to all the marshals who did a valuable PR job as well as helping the event run smoothly.
 - The new website donated by Indizine Web Design has proved to be an excellent way forward for booking on and paying online to enter the event.
10. The Sandall Park Rangers JFC continue to organise matches and weekly training.
 11. The parkrun, now in its 5th year is still going from strength to strength and encouraging more and more people to take up exercise many of whom had not previously undertaken exercise. The birthday run in September had the highest number of participants at 329.
 12. The Green Flag Award, Flag Raising ceremony was a great day for the volunteers and DMBC. The flag was raised by one of the founder members of FoSP and truly put the park on the map, having achieved this high standard.
 13. The Lions Fun Day, whilst not our event was attended by our volunteers who helped. It is an excellent event for the park and the participants who come from within and beyond the borough. This was joint funded by the Stronger Families Innovation and Aiming High Activity Fund.
 14. National Breastfeeding Week event was again successful and well attended.
 15. The launch of the Woodland Adventure Play was attended by Dame Rosie Winterton MP and the Mayor Ros Jones. An information gazebo along with a celebration cake and free drinks, provided much interest for the visitors who attended,
 16. Love Parks Week allowed visitors to see information about the park with our Meet and Greet day.

4. Projects/Work Undertaken

1. Planting:
 - Bulb planting, tending the rockery and planting new plants, tending Marshall's Garden; the topiary garden; the Jubilee Garden and the new planters around the park continues an annual basis by FOSP volunteers on numerous days. Numerous shrubs which have been donated by volunteers and their neighbours have also been planted. The main flower beds were planted by DMBC.
 - Our latest recruit has transformed the previously neglected Duck/Tranquil garden into an area that looks loved again.
 - To celebrate Le Tour de Yorkshire event, 2 decorated cycles bedecked with flowers, representing the Tour, were again mounted on the fence and which remained there all summer. One was stolen in December.
2. 'Pongy corner' (The end of the lake where all the rubbish and silt gathers,) requires continual work to keep it clear of debris. The problem of children removing boulders from the gabions was solved by refilling the cages, wiring

- them up and in-filling with soil to allow the grass to grow over the top. Our thanks to DMBC for the top soil.
3. A CPR kit was applied for from the British Heart Foundation and several members undertook the training. The kit has also been used by parkrun volunteers and other groups.
 4. Volunteer Days (general maintenance undertaken).
 5. Negotiations are ongoing with Doncaster Brewery to have a beer named after the park - to promote both the park and the brewery.
 6. Running of the toilet facilities:
 - The toilets are now open all year round.
 - FoSP members monitor weather conditions and if there is a threat of frozen pipes, close the facilities and drain the system.
 - FoSP volunteers have undertaken to keep the toilets clean and tidy as a supplement to the cleaning performed by the council - they are cleaned daily and re-stocked as necessary.
 - The supply of all the items for the toilets has proved expensive but has provided the park visitors with a commendable facility. Sandall Park Café contributed to the winter opening costs. DMBC have recently taken over provision of toilet rolls.
 - Due to council staff shortages, the cafe staff continue to close the toilets. This in fact enabled them to remain open longer during the light evenings.
 - The staff were sent a letter of thanks.
 - An interim step was installed by DMBC to reduce the height of the step.
 7. Another memorial bench was installed opposite the lake – undertaken with new DMBC policy on memorial benches.
 8. The defibrillator purchased through parkrun from donations has been used several times as a result of incidents outside the park.
 9. Lots of reparation work has taken place on organised volunteering days - benches painted etc. work in progress. A family attended on their own and did a day's litter picking with their young 4-year-old grandsons
 10. Four benches were installed by FoSP members with wood provided by DMBC.
 11. The car park markings were re-painted by DMBC (as opposed to being done as a temporary measure by volunteers).
 12. 'Don't be a Loafer' campaign continued to try to prevent the lake being polluted by excessive amounts of bread and more geese suffering from Angel Wing. More donations of bird seed from B & Q enabled us to give free seed to park visitors and embark on a campaign of changing feeding habits. The donation of seed also supplied our bird feeders, and supplied groups from the Doncaster GreenSpace Network. New and professional signs were designed and erected by DMBC to reiterate the problem and deter bread feeding.
 13. FoSP sponsored the team shirts for Sandall Park Junior Rangers FC.
 14. A Dog Poo Bag dispenser trial was launched in the park, with the installation of a dispenser that dog walkers could take bags from to pick up after their dogs. It proved to be popular and has been well used.
 15. The Great British Spring Clean was supported by Costa Coffee staff on their Day to Make a Difference.
 16. The Civic Trust donated 11 mature trees, these were planted by Pleveys around the park. One, a willow was planted near the lake to help soak up excessive water.
 17. The 'garden birds' feeders on the sensory trail are filled up on a regular basis.
 18. Real Junk Food project took some of the apples from the bog pond area.
 19. Bikes supplied by the SCT were painted and planted up in support of Tour de Yorkshire again.

20. The fountain fell into disrepair and was replaced through a funding source obtained by the Safer Communities Team.
21. Gabions (unpicked and boulders removed to throw into the lake) were fixed by a FoSP and an angling club member.
22. DW\P volunteers attended on two separate occasions and spent a day volunteering with lots being completed.
23. Armthorpe Beavers turned out in force and did a litter pick.
24. National Volunteer Week saw FoSP members getting drenched on a rainy litter pick, but other days were good allowing for some painting to be completed.
25. The issue was raised on Facebook about the steps to the ladies' toilet being too high. This was picked up on by the Chief Executive of DMBC and the matter was rectified – an interim step was installed by DMBC.
26. 24 new beech trees were installed as a result of 8 being removed to widen the path outside the park.

5. Funds

1. The 100 Club continues to raise funds on a monthly basis.
2. Give as You Live was introduced on the website as an alternative fundraising initiative.
3. BT MyDonate as a means of donating on-line has proved useful. Especially when people add the Gift Aid option.
4. For the 2nd time this year FoSP was a charity for the Santa Dash and should realise some income from it.
5. The council took over the buying of toilet rolls thereby saving FoSP an average of £50 a month.
6. Full financial report to be presented by Treasurer at the AGM.
7. After the Treasurer announced in June his intention to retire from the post at the AGM, an appeal was put out and a new Treasurer came forward almost immediately. She was welcomed to the group, and co-opted as a Trustee in order for the signatories to be changed over prior to the AGM. She has done a tremendous job in taking the group forward in her inaugural year.

6. Grants applied for – unsuccessful

1. Aviva Fund for a wheelchair roundabout – though we are to receive £100 consolation prize.

7. Grants/Donations received

1. Indizine Web Design have donated in-kind by designing a new Santa Dash website, so people can book directly on-line for the Doncaster Santa Dash.
2. A substantial donation was made by Fake Festivals.
3. Financial contributions have been made by a FOSP member and her brother who lives in Berkshire, in support of the group, along with donations from members of the public.
4. Donation of knitted items which were sold via Facebook
5. Donation of a limited-edition print which is to be auctioned
6. Ready Steady Store have again sponsored the Easter Egg Hunt and in-kind donation of storage space at their facility for all our equipment.
7. Tesco Bags of Help and Cash for Kids paid for the Inclusive Nest Swing, along with donations from a Crowdfunding page.
8. Donations of bird seed from B & Q Distribution Centre
9. Donation from the café towards winter supplies for keeping the toilets open.
10. Substantial donations received from Rascals Bouncy Castles.
11. Woodland Adventure Play: £38,000 from WREN; £4,995 from the Mayor's Fund; £5,000 from FoSP funds.
12. Two memorial benches: donated by families, installed by DMBC.

8. Publicity/Communications/Networking

1. The notice boards remain very popular and a good source of information for park users.
2. We had sufficient Christmas cards left from last year to send to our business partners, sponsors and funders.
3. Flyers are printed for music events and distributed locally and via the Tourist Information Office in Doncaster.
4. Media coverage of the installation of the inclusive nest swing. A local family requested more inclusive play and they were included in the press releases. The same family were filmed for a promotional video for the next project – a wheelchair roundabout.
5. 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.
6. Trip Advisor received more comments this year, mostly good and generally 4* ratings. Certificate of Excellence received – 4 stars.
7. Advertising of FoSP and the Santa Dash is in the programmes at Aurora events.
8. Our events and meetings are advertised on the DMBC web site and newsletters and the SCT e-newsletters as well as local media.
9. Several radio interviews were given by 3 FoSP members, on general issues to do with the park, at the Santa Dash and parkrun; about gardening projects in the park; the bread campaign; the new fitness equipment; vandalism. Some of the interviews were live.
10. The closed Facebook page which was set up just for FoSP volunteers so they can see what is happening and what needs doing in the park, has proved very useful in sharing ideas and work undertaken. It also highlights the amount of work that does go on in the park by group members.
11. Lots of photos and videos of the park are sent in to us via Facebook, including those of offenders.
12. Sandall Park now has its own page on the Welcome to Yorkshire website.
13. The Doncaster GreenSpace Network (DGSN):
 - Founded by FoSP, the Countryside Ranger team have now taken over the organisation of it and continue to arrange meetings, speakers and provide the premises at Sandall Beat wood.
 - The recent areas for discussion have been Public Space Protection Orders, insurance cover for smaller groups, and the application to Tesco Bags of Help Fund for Superbins for groups who are members of the DGSN. This was successful and £10,000 was granted.
14. Sadly, there was a death in the park with a man taking his own life. A FoSP member found him in the gents' toilets. FoSP worked with the police and were in contact with the family to offer assistance. The FoSP member received support from DMBC.
15. A Health Conference relating to parks and green space, held in Leeds, was attended by the Chairman and Comms Manager who were able to contribute to the debates with Sandall Park proving to be at the forefront of health issues relating to parks.
16. The Green Flag Award Ceremony in Hull was attended by the Chairman and Comms Manager, along with other Doncaster groups and the DMBC Green Space Officer.
17. Pokémon Go still takes place in Sandall Park and brings many more visitors in, with them doing exercise without realising it!
18. Radio Sheffield Clueless again ended in the park and allowed for a radio interview of the FoSP Comms Manager.

9. Press releases

Included items such as:

- Fake Festival
- World Hook a Duck Championship/Easter Egg Hunt
- Scarecrow Festival
- Doncaster in Bloom awards
- Doncaster Santa Dash
- Eid in the park
- Party in the Park
- Family Fun Day
- Parkrun
- Damage in the park and threat to volunteers
- Volunteering days
- Dog Poo Bag Dispenser Trail

In several publications on numerous occasions:

- Doncaster Free Press
- Doncaster Star
- Posters in park; café and locales
- DMBC publications and web site.
- Facebook
- Twitter
- BBC Radio Sheffield, Sine FM and Trax FM
- The Arrow village magazines

10. Meetings

- With DMBC Programmes Team re funding for major projects.
- Numerous with Stronger Communities Team (about all projects and plans; applying for Green Flag status).
- Fake Festivals, Community Parks and SCT staff regarding Fake Fest.
- Several with FranLou Festivals re a possible event for 2018
- Grounds Team re jobs and projects in park
- Ready Steady Store re sponsorship and events
- Numerous with Charity Fundraising Staff and St Leger Rotary Club, relating to Santa Dash.
- Playground Team re projects in the park.
- Doncaster Place conferences
- Doncaster GreenSpace Network, several meetings and tours of the park
- Party in the Park representatives re their event
- Eid in the Park representatives re their event
- Great Get Together re their event in the park
- Organisers of Doncaster parkrun
- Potential new volunteers
- Anglers re angling club and lake developments
- Sandall Park Cafe and private investor re Sandall Park café and future plans for the park
- Various council officials for tours of the park
- Gardening Clubs – tours of the park
- Prosec UK and police re supporting FoSP in the park.

- Civic Trust re trees for the park
- Indizine regarding re-designing and installing a new website for the Santa Dash.

11. Angling Club (Sandall Park Angling Club)

1. Three members now sit on the FoSP Group and attend the monthly meetings
2. Members do litter picks of the park, lake and north bank regularly, involving youngsters as much as possible, along with their own children.
3. Members check and assist with the cleaning of the toilets.
4. The Lake was re-stocked with fish.
5. Every fish in the lake has been caught, weighed, photographed and logged to ensure a complete record is kept of their growth and numbers.
6. New pegs were constructed, and others updated.
7. Numerous plants installed to shore up the lake edging.
8. Are continually working to upgrade the lake and its surroundings with reed cages; work to control flooding and work to shore up the lake edge
9. Organise and plan the bookings for anglers and maintain discipline in the booking of all pegs, including night fishing.

12. Football Club

1. Are needing more juniors to join the teams, plus coaches and volunteers
2. Train twice weekly and have matches each weekend during the season.
3. A regional competition was again organised in June and attracted teams from all over South Yorkshire.
4. A referee course has been attended by one member.

13. Park Future

There is always something happening in Sandall Park and this year has been particularly busy. In addition to the new events of Eid in the Park, Party in the Park and Great Get Together hosted by other groups, the Friends of Sandall Park introduced the Scarecrow Festival to add to the fun days of Hook a Duck and Easter Egg Hunt. Events in the park are a major factor in encouraging families to utilise it to the full - it was always our intention to make the park so nice so that others would organise events, and this is now happening.

There has been lots of maintenance and planting, garden tending and toilet cleaning by volunteers. Many things going on in the background that perhaps aren't noticeable to our visitors – but it's all happening to make the park nice. Of course, the park users are doing their bit too – litter picking, challenging people who don't pick up after their dogs and generally taking an interest in ensuring the park's success.

There have been new installations: fountain; nest swing for Inclusive Play; the large Wooden Adventure Play equipment on the old golf course (plans are already underway to extend this, doubling its size); memorial benches and reed beds for the lake.

Through the hard work of the council, the FoSP and the public, the Park has been awarded the Prestigious Green Flag Award. This is evidence of how the park has progressed and developed into the family friendly place it is to spend leisure time.

The Management Plan, developed by the DMBC Green Space Officer, SC Team Leader, our Treasurer, Chairman and Comms Manager, was created to take the park forward and work towards applying for Green Flag status, which was successful on first application. It will, alongside the Business Plan, ensure that the park is developed to its full potential and ensure its sustainability for the future. The maintenance of the park through the Management Plan will now maximise that sustainability.

The development of the café is key to the success of the park moving forward but this is proving problematical. More and more hurdles appear to be put in front of the plans for the developers. The café was closed for a period due to a roof fall, the building is not going to last much longer, and the park is in dire need for the new build. We desperately need this to progress.

This year has seen more valuable and energetic new members join and we hope to build on that to ensure sustainability and for the group to progress and develop.

14. 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/hosting	-	£ 90
Printing cartridges	-	£101
Photo paper for notice boards	-	£140
Insurance	-	£196
Postage	-	£ 27
Gaming Licence renewal	-	£ 20
Phone cards for mobile phone	-	£ 20
Toilet facilities: sundries	-	£495
Total:	-	£1089

15. In Conclusion: A statement from the Chairman

The new Woodland Adventure Play, funded by WREN with contributions from DMBC and FoSP, was installed in October and this will take the park to a new level. A Phase Two to extend it is already in progress.

Thanks are due, as always, to the to the Stronger Communities, Grounds and Tree Teams who have assisted us when the needs arose. The SC Team Leader in particular has, as always, been a major asset and without him the work of FoSP would be incredibly difficult. The DMBC Chief Exec has also been hugely supportive.

Our team of dedicated volunteers, especially those who visit the park day in day out thus ensuring the park remains at it its best, provide an invaluable and incalculable service that largely goes unnoticed. Without them, the park would not look as good as it does today. The public do appreciate what is being done on their behalf though and this is noticeable through comments made on social media. I offer my sincere thanks to them – without them FoSP wouldn't be the successful group that it is, they are all a credit to the community.

There's lots to look forward to in 2018, it's going to be another great year for Sandall Park and for FoSP!

Sandra Crabtree

Sandra Crabtree, Chairman 2017

17.01.18

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustee's report above.

16. Current FoSP Committee Members:

Sandra Crabtree (chairman)*	Moira Hood	Carol Burton
Ron Ketley (secretary)*	Jean Ketley	Carolyne Burton
Kristen Ismay-Johnston (treasurer)*	Barbara Senior	Mairaid Smith*
Wendy Barclay (vice-chair)*	Alex Barclay	Frank Woolley
Sarah Stokes*	Derrick Bewell	Scott Holland (SPAC)
Don Crabtree*	Marianne Downing	Jane Kidd (Cllr)
Eva Hughes (Cllr)	Neil Marshall (SC)	Colwyn Pugh (SPAC)
Lee Stanley-Gonsales (SPAC)	Les Jones (SPAC/FoSP)	Sam Cummins

- = Trustees