



The Friends of Sandall Park Trustees' Annual Report



January 2012 – December 2012

The Friends of Sandall Park (FoSP) 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, green open space and a special, safe, place for families to visit.

In the last 7 years we believe we have achieved some excellent results and the visitor numbers are testament to those results. We are working determinedly and innovatively to create a park that is environmentally and ecologically friendly, sustainable, and requiring as little maintenance as possible. Our 5 year Business Plan reflects our vision for the future of the park.

Our membership starts at the very young end of the scale with a 6 year old volunteer and tops it off at 87 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, and 540 'friends' on Facebook.

1. Crime in the Park

All crimes, though of a minor nature, were reported to the police 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 place for all the litter dropped. This is a problem which has been highlighted regularly over the last few years: there is a need for repairs to the lake edging which will include measures to deal with the litter. We receive numerous complaints about this corner and rightly so – it is an eyesore and detracts from the beauty of the park. A request for funding has recently been submitted by DMBC, in collaboration with FoSP, to WREN (Waste Recycling Environmental Limited) for match funding to repair the lake edging. A decision will be made on Feb 28th 2013.
 - Plastic bottles left by football teams has been a constant source of nuisance though due to measures taken by DMBC this year, there has been a reduction to some degree.
 - 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. These are being targeted on an ad-hoc basis by undercover DMBC patrols.
- c. The theft of plants and damage to trees has been minimal though recently became more frequent. Marshall's garden was attacked on a few occasions and plants stolen and plants were stolen from the herb garden.
- d. A memorial tree was planted and attempts made to steal it a week after it was planted. It was subsequently 'secured' to prevent further attempts.

- e. Dogs being allowed to run loose to chase the wildlife are still a cause for concern. Numerous owners have been asked to put dogs on leads, especially when they've been seen to chase ducks and geese, those with greyhounds have appeared to see it as a sport. Several have been served with notices with a view to prosecution if they persist. The offences committed caused some consternation between the police and DMBC but these issues have now been resolved and the council will pursue any offenders through the courts.
- f. Unsavoury activities around the toilets have been reduced drastically though there is still an element to be policed. Meetings took place with the police and Crime Prevention Officers to discuss these issues.
- g. Early in the year thefts of fish were reported – crab lines being the favoured method. This seemed to resolve itself with increased patrols by the angling club and Neighbourhood Team.

2. Events

- a. The fourth Fake Festival took place in May and was another huge success for the park and for Doncaster.
- b. The Aurora 'Care to Run' charity run/walk of two laps around the park was staged in September. 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 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. Ready Steady Store again provided their staff, bottled water and support for the day. The Deputy Civic Mayor was in attendance.
- c. The annual Quiz night was held at Club 39 and raised vital funds in addition to providing a good night's entertainment for the group and its supporters. House of Fraser Outlet was well represented as usual; and we welcomed Friends of Martinwell Lake to the event for the first time.
- d. Another Race Night was organised and raised a substantial amount of money. The profits from this enabled a donation to be given to the Friends of Martinwells Lake and staff from House of Fraser Outlet Store who were raising money for their chosen 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.
- e. Our proms in the Park event was a success in raising funds for the group and providing an afternoon of free musical entertainment for the community. Always a lottery for the weather, but this time we managed to go ahead.
- f. A second Music in the Park event by the Doncaster Concert Band raised funds for the band itself. Both concerts were well attended and the band members were thanked for their sterling performances.
- g. The FoSP were invited to participate in a Boot Camp organised by Keep Britain Tidy Group. This involved members of Local Authorities nationwide attending Doncaster for a conference on issues including Litter and Anti Social Behaviour. FoSP had also been invited to do a presentation to the conference on their experiences in tackling these issues in the park.
Two members of the group subsequently joined the Boot Camp, took the 30 or so delegates on a tour of the park and presented a 10 minute

overview of what had been achieved in the park in collaboration with the Neighbourhood Team.

As a direct result of this Boot Camp we have received further invitations to conferences and to liaise with other groups who are aiming for the same objectives and wanting to set up Friends Of groups.

- h. A presentation evening at the Mansion House saw the group receive a Doncaster in Bloom Gold Award in recognition of the Jubilee Log Garden; Rockery and Marshall's Garden.
- i. Five FOSP members attended the Doncaster Free Press and Doncaster Council presentation evening at the Racecourse. They were pleased to receive a 'Pride in Doncaster – Winners' award on behalf of FoSP.
- j. A talk was given to Bawtry Ladies Circle on the development of the park and we received a generous donation to the group for these efforts.
- k. A health walk incorporated into the borough-wide Walking Festival was organised by the Neighbourhood Team, Health Workers and with some FoSP helpers turning out on the day.
- l. FoSP representatives attended the Mansion House and were presented with a certificate by the Mayor in celebration of Volunteers Week. A five minute speech was given by a group member highlighting our work.
- m. The Free Press Environment Awards saw the FoSP receive two awards: Marshall Barclay was runner up in the Individual, and the group were overall winners in the Community Group Environment Award.
- n. Our 'World Championship' Hook a Duck competition raised funds for The Friends of Sandall Park, 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.
- o. An award evening, with Local Authorities from all over the country attending for the National Keep Britain Tidy Awards Ceremony and conference at Sheffield City Hall, saw Marshall Barclay receive the KBTG Young Ambassador of the Year 2012 award, to a lengthy standing ovation.
- p. The Santa Dash was organised under a different guise to what we have normally done. To encourage larger numbers to participate and make it more of a spectacle, it was decided to embrace more than one charity. So the Aurora Centre, Macmillan Cancer Support and Riding for the Disabled Association were supported in their endeavours to raise funds, kindly supported by the Doncaster Scouts Marching Band (who received a donation from FoSP).
Around 260 Santa's and reindeers turned out on a cold sunny day, to be greeted by 3 of the South Yorkshire Police's fine horses from the Mounted Branch. Thanks again to the Neighbourhood Team for providing equipment and help, and to all the marshals. Thanks were also given to the staff of Ready Steady Store for helping: bringing their gazebo and all the Santa suits, donating bottles of water, and doing the run.

Projects

- a. Bulb and plant planting around the park was completed by FOSP volunteers on numerous days, assisted by the efforts of the Grounds Maintenance Teams.
- b. 100 trees/hedging shrubs were donated by the Woodlands Trust as part of the Jubilee celebrations. These were planted by FoSP volunteers and their families.
- c. The Jubilee log garden was created on a spare patch of earth that had been cleared of overgrown weeds, using logs from trees that had been

- felled (and provided by the DMBC Tree Team). Holes were cut into the wood and Alpine plants inserted in and covered with mesh to stop the geese pulling them out. Herbs and sensory plants were planted around the base to provide a sensory garden, and a plaque installed identifying it as a commemorative garden celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee year.
- d. The Adventure Trail was completed in April and the launch day coincided with the Easter Egg Hunt and Hook a Duck Competitions. The funding for the trail was provided by The Veolia Environmental Trust, with their operations manager attending the opening ceremony. Additional funding provided by FoSP purchased the train and carriages and has proved hugely popular with the children, as has the whole adventure trail which comprises a synthetic climbing boulder; jump ramp; leapfrog; balancing beams and balancing stools. Installed at the same time was a time capsule preserving some of the history of the park and to be lifted in 30 years time – 2042.
 - 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. The Sensory Trail has been something of a challenge – rather unexpectedly as it was only a minor project with a small budget comprising wooden carvings; a meadow; bird feeder and information boards. It was a project supported through the Community First Neighbourhood Matched Fund programme administered by CDF for the Office for Civil Society (administered by WACUP) which was designed to be an educational and attention-grabbing facility to engender interest in the surroundings and nature. The challenge came with trying to get the equipment installed by DMBC, with resulting delays to the completion of the project. Our thanks to the Neighbourhood and Grounds Maintenance Teams for their contributions and enabling the project to be finalised.
 - g. Fundraising wristbands were purchased bearing the FoSP name to raise funds and raise our profile, to be sold at events.
 - h. 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 at Mexborough.
 - i. Bird food has been purchased and several group members have 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 Marshall and his family – 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. This year has seen a stunning transformation from a weed patch to a beautifully tended garden resulting in many favourable comments from visitors.
 - k. Heritage research with a view to producing a book was being completed but as available time to do the research was limited to school holidays when the archives at Balby could be visited, the project had to be put on hold. A bid was put in for University Students to donate their time, but this was unsuccessful.
 - l. A fountain which was installed in the lake has enhanced the lake, aerating it and keeping ice at bay, but has proved problematical in that it is often out of action for remedial work to be completed.
 - m. The north bank of the lake which has been sealed off, with new fencing erected to create a safe area for wildlife, is continually being breached by people breaking through the hedgerow. A large amount of new

saplings were planted within the area – donations from the Woodland Trust.

- n. Volunteers have given all the old wooden benches a facelift with preserver paint.

4. Funds

- a. The Weather Lottery was dispensed with in favour of a 100 Club, which is now raising around £46 a month for the group.
- 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.
- c. EasySearch is a similar facility whereby every search done on this search engine (instead of 'Google') reaps funds for the group.
- d. We have recently registered on Charity Giving which enables people to directly donate to the group on-line.

Full report from Treasurer.

5. Grants applied for – unsuccessful

- a. An application to the Peter Harrison Foundation for £80,000 for a wheelchair trail around the golf course was unsuccessful due to the financial constraints in effect at the time.

6. Grants/donations received

- a. Lloyds TSB Foundation provided match funding for the Race Night profits, through our Treasurer.
- b. Lloyds TSB Foundation also provide additional donations for volunteer hours given by their employee and our Treasurer Neil Gethin for his time given to the group.
- c. Several financial donations have been received from Roger Tuby and his staff, some of which contributed towards a new notice board; and large cuddly toys for raffles.
- d. Ready Steady Store have again donated a large amount of capital; storage space at their facility for all our equipment; gave of their time and helped at events; provided bottled water for the charity events; sponsored the Hook a Duck Championship and donated prizes.
- e. A grant from Veolia Environmental Trust of £14,137 was finalised in January and provided the Adventure Trail, supplemented by a donation from FoSP for the Train and Carriages that form part of the trail. (This was paid to DMBC as joint funded and does not show within FOSP income)
- f. A donation was received from Bawtry Ladies Circle in gratitude for a talk given to their group on the development of the park.
- g. Funding provided by the Community First Foundation provided the Sensory Trail.
- h. Several donations have been made by a FOSP member Mrs Downing in support of the group.
- i. A donation was made by the Keep Britain Tidy Group in recognition of Marshall Barclay's award and work in the park.
- j. Other gifts received were:
Raffle prizes from Yorkshire Wildlife Park; Red Tomato Pizza Takeaway; FakeFestivals (concert tickets); JJ's Café and Fawcett's Pet Store donated vouchers for the Best Decorated Buggy and Best Dressed Dog Competitions at the Doncaster Santa Dash.

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 2,700 genuine visitors. 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 hand out and are used on a regular basis.
- d. FOSP are registered on Community Spaces Forum; Donny-online Forum; You Tube and Facebook and all receive lots of 'hits'. Information is inputted on a regular basis by our web master.
We do have a minor problem with the Facebook of the park café – it directs all enquiries to FoSP and we receive regular phone calls asking what time meals are served, or have we found a handbag etc. We have requested the café alter this but the problem still exists.
- e. Recordings of radio interviews have been appended to the web site and Facebook.
- f. A5 double sided flyers were printed for the 2 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 receives many comments on Trip Advisor, a national database for appending opinions on places visited.
- i. Advertising of FoSP is in the programmes at Aurora events.
- j. A5 leaflets outlining all the FoSP events in the park for 2012 – designed by two local schoolgirls – were printed and distributed locally.
- k. Further supplies of shopping bags, bearing the FOSP logo and a slogan 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.
- l. Our events and meetings are advertised on CVS E-News and the SNT newsletters.
- m. Several radio interviews were given by 3 members on general issues to do with the park, and about gardening projects in the park. Some of the interviews were live, and Marshall did a live one regarding his work in the park and awards.
- n. The park was used as a backdrop for staff training in preparation for the Olympic Torch Relay through Doncaster in June. The video was used to train DMBC staff.
- o. Sandall Park was also used for filming for a video about single parent fathers which was to be used in a television documentary.
- p. Several wedding photographers have used it as a backdrop for wedding photographs.
- q. The group commissioned a Wikipedia entry so that Sandall Park can be researched on the internet.

8. Press releases

Included items such as:

- a. Fake Festival
- b. World Hook a Duck Championship
- c. Pride in Doncaster Award
- d. Music(s) in the park
- e. Aurora Care to Run

- f. Keep Britain Tidy national Young Ambassador of the year Award (Marshall Barclay)
- g. Doncaster 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. The group were featured in a case study in the Free Press of 'Make a Difference to your neighbourhood'. The article was comprehensive in reflecting what the group does and what it has achieved.
- m. Numerous interviews on Radio Sheffield (some live). Several people were interviewed by RS reporter Alice Griffin at the Christmas coffee morning.
- n. The Doncaster Star did a Christmas Special on Christmas Eve of the 12 Stars of 2012 – Don and Sandra featured as one of the 'stars' in relation to FoSP.
- o. The Sensory Trail.

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
- j. CVS E-news

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. With the police Crime Prevention Officer re preventing offences in the park.
- f. Grounds Team re jobs and projects in park
- g. Ready Steady Store re sponsorship and events
- h. Aurora Staff relating to charity runs/walks.
- i. Playground Team re projects in the park.
- j. Keep Britain Tidy regarding the Boot Camp.
- k. Presentation to KBTG Boot Camp.
- l. Cantley Park Community Group
- m. With members of the FA regarding the possibility of providing changing facilities in the park (which hasn't has yet developed into anything).
- n. Friends of Martinwells Lake – sharing of ideas; reciprocal visits to each other's sites.
- o. With DMBC enforcement team re dog control orders and other issues relating to offences in the park and relevant legislation.
- p. Funders Seminar at Keeble Hawson in Doncaster.

10. Angling Club (The Anglers of Sandall Park)

- a. Competitions organised for and funded by the club have been successful
- b. Assistance rendered at volunteer events, particularly where a boat was required or 'waders', but also for bulb planting, litter picks and charity events.
- c. There have been fewer calls to RSPCA regarding geese trapped in fishing line, just a couple that we are aware of - the anglers tending to assist the wildlife where they can.
- d. Illegal anglers are challenged and regular patrols made of the lake, including during the evenings and nights
- e. Lake and its edges cleared of rubbish on a regular basis.

11. Park Future

- a. The Business Plan is the foundation 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.
- b. All the objectives in our first 5 year plan have been achieved except adequate enforcement, which we continue to strive for. There has been some enforcement, but it is an ongoing issue and the park needs to see more of it for it to benefit from less litter and dog fouling.
- c. The permanent opening of the toilet facility is, and always will be, key to the success and future development of the park. 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 has worked well and continues to do so.
- d. 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/hosting	-	£170
Printing cartridges	-	£ 45
Photo paper for notice boards	-	£140
Insurance incl. TCV membership	-	£232
Postage	-	£ 27
Gaming Licence renewal	-	£ 20
Phone cards for mobile phone	-	£ 20

Total: - **£ 654**

13. In Conclusion

- a. 2012 has been another positive year though not without its hiccups. Due to restructuring within DMBC we have experienced problems in getting new facilities installed in the park. We will need to negotiate DMBC input for future developmental projects.
- b. The most vital element to all our accomplishments is the volunteering workforce: their time; energy; enthusiasm and ideas. Of course the

support of the Council; the Neighbourhood Team and the Grounds Maintenance Team is key to our functionality.

- c. Our healthy financial status allows us to purchase sundry items; advertising leaflets for events; banners updating etc. 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.
- d. We have had tremendous support again this year from 2 ward councillors Eva Hughes and Moira Hood; the mayor Peter Davies; Councillor Cynthia Ransome and the local Neighbourhood Team led by Rachael Blake and Neil Marshall. The Grounds team – Michaela Rowlands and Gerwyn Jones have proved invaluable allies in tackling issues in the park and providing additional planting and assistance with projects. Our partnership working has reaped dividends, creating a perfect venue and family open space for groups such as the Lions Fun Day for Disabled; the local concert bands; special needs day trips and our local visitors, to enjoy.
- e. 2012 has been a good year for promoting the park through the awards that we have received, the press releases and radio interviews that have gone out but more importantly through the public accolades that the park receives from its myriad visitors.
- f. We have accomplished so much this year, with so much more to do in 2013. With the support of the council and the continued dedication of our volunteers we can build on what we have achieved thus far, and make a real difference in Sandall Park

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

[Sandra Crabtree](#)

Sandra Crabtree
Chairman 2011 – 2012

16.01.13

Glossary of terms:

FoSP	Friends of Sandall Park
DMBC	Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council
CCTV	Close Circuit Television
TCV	Trust for Conservation Volunteers
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
RSPCA	Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
WACUP	Wheatley Area Community Partnership