



The Friends of Sandall Park

Annual Report **January 2015 – December 2015**



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The Friends of Sandall Park
Trustees' Annual Report

January 2015 – December 2015

The Friends of Sandall Park volunteers do a tremendous job working all year round in the park, which this year has been totalled up at 6417 hours of volunteering (160 working weeks). This includes

- Writing reports, minutes of meetings and letters
- Litter picks
- Gardening/planting
- Maintenance tasks
- Maintaining and cleaning the toilet facilities
- 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
- Arranging 'Volunteering Days' for other groups and supervising the same
- The Doncaster GreenSpace Network & National Parks & Green Spaces Forums
- Dealing with email/telephone/Facebook/website enquiries
- Keeping Facebook pages (FoSP and Santa Dash) and websites (FoSP and Santa Dash) updated
- Treasurers bookkeeping
- Assisting the Angling Club
- Printing articles to keep the notice boards updated, and updating the same.
- Designing calendar & Christmas cards and distributing them to our supporters; sponsors; business partners
- Putting together funding bids
- Strategic Planning for the park
- Facilitating potential park users through the DMBC bureaucracy

If that were paid at the minimum wage of £6.70 it would mean a wage bill of £42,993 per year. That is the equivalent of 3 full time employees in the park working all year with no holidays. Amazing!

Not a bad deal for the council!

The results are clear to see in the park, it's 'calm and peaceful atmosphere' and the amount of visitors it receives - calculated at 370,000 per annum is evidence of its popularity and appeal. Long may this continue, but grow as well.

The accolades received by email and comments on Facebook are testament to the changes the park has gone through and the image it now has. It is no longer the poor relation of parks in Doncaster.

1. Crime and Anti Social Behaviour in the Park

a. Crime and Anti Social Behaviour

1. Several calls were received about 3 youngsters kicking goslings on several occasions. There was a concerted effort by members of the public to catch them and to deter them, especially after it was highlighted on Facebook. The attention they received obviously did the trick because they ceased their activities.

2. The double notice board had it's perspex completely damaged by a BB gun. This was mentioned on Facebook and donations were received to repair it.
3. Members of the public informed us of problems with off road motor bikes and quad bikes racing around the park. This was reported to NRT and the situation was eventually resolved.
4. Mid December the lectern facing the bog pond was smashed, around the same time an attempt was made to smash the main notice board with a heavy instrument. A crime complaint was filed.
5. A local resident with learning difficulties had his fishing tackle stolen from him. Enquiries were made by the new Sandall Park Angling club and they recovered his gear for him, pledging to keep an eye on him in future.
6. A male and female were seen to allow their two dogs to chase the geese. They were challenged by FoSP members, refused to stop their dogs chasing the wildlife and became abusive. They had their registration number noted and the matter handed over to DMBC accompanied by the appropriate evidence, with a subsequent notice being served on them.
7. Several thefts of bolts from lecterns have taken place, leaving the signs on the floor next to the lectern. Not a great financial cost, but much inconvenience caused.
8. Obscene graffiti was sprayed on a picnic bench on the old golf course, and noughts and crosses were carved into the metal. They were all repaired.
9. All the fish from the bog pond were alleged to have been stolen by men netting the pond. No evidence was forthcoming.

b. Litter

1. Regular litter picks around the park have been performed by members of the group.
2. A liaison has been formed with KFC and DMBC's Enforcement team leader to combat takeaway litter in the park and surrounding areas. Several meetings have taken place.
3. Several people were reported for littering, evidenced with photographs by FoSP, and sent letters or fines by DMBC.
4. A new Superbin was installed, courtesy of a trial by Keep Britain Tidy. It was the first of it's kind in the world and the only one installed in the UK. It contains a comprehensive kit for volunteers to use.

2. Events¹

1. A 'Get Doncaster Walking' health walk took place with FoSP members and the Safer Communities Team.
2. Our 'World Championship' Hook a Duck competition again raised funds for The Friends of Sandall Park, with the addition of a tombola and an Easter Egg Hunt which was sponsored by Ready Steady Store, and which was free to enter. Each entrant received a free chocolate egg.
The Neighbourhood Team as always did a marvellous job in organising the competition itself and the staff from Ready Steady Store provided a good workforce in administering the Egg Hunt.
It is an extremely popular holiday event, especially when two princesses from the film Frozen, and Mickey and Minnie Mouse attended.
3. The seventh annual Fake Festival took place in May and was another huge triumph for the park and for Doncaster.

¹ All conducted with the invaluable assistance of the Safer Communities Neighbourhood Team, and the Grounds Team.

4. The Big Lunch was again organised by the Halifax Bank in Doncaster and was assisted by FoSP and the Neighbourhood Team on the day. It was a great event for children and families and raised funds for Bluebell Wood Hospice.
5. The Music in the Park
 - Was held on the grass slope near cafe (mainly due to there being no sound system available - but proved to be a popular venue).
 - The Doncaster Concert Band, and the Doncaster Senior Brass Group provided an afternoon of free musical entertainment for the community. They put on a tremendous performance, which was well received by the open air audience.
 - FoSP organised a raffle and topped up the amount to donate £500 to the Doncaster Concert Band.
 - Volunteers on the day were lacking in numbers this year, and this needs to be addressed for 2016. There is too much work for just a handful of workers.
6. A presentation evening at the Mansion House saw FoSP receive a Doncaster in Bloom Gold Award and overall winner in the Community Group category. The Unusual Container (Afternoon Tea) achieved a Gold standard, and the Sustainable Garden received a Silver Gilt award.
7. The Santa Dash:
 - This year was fully funded by Keepmoat Stadium; St Leger Homes; Weldricks Chemist; Hill House School; Taylor Bracewell Solicitors; St Leger Rotary Club and FoSP. Which meant we were able to give the nine charities all the entry fees from their supporters entries.
 - The event was entertained by the Danum Scouts Marching Band.
 - Two FoSP volunteers worked tremendously hard pulling this together yet again, made even more difficult due to the increase in numbers.
 - The St Leger Rotary Club worked hard on the day organising the sound system, judging the Competitions and assisting with the organisation.
 - Our thanks to The Neighbourhood Team 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 – including the Deputy Civic Mayor and his wife who put on a marvellous performance in engaging the public.
 - Our appreciation was extended to the staff of Ready Steady Store for taking entries and distributing Santa Suits since September; helping on the day: bringing their gazebo and all the Santa suits, and donating bottles of water.
8. The Great War on Tour paid a visit to the park with their display and activities for children.
9. The Fake Festival sold itself without much need for advertising and around 1200 people attended.
10. FoSP members attended and presented at the Civic Office for the LGC (Local Government) Awards when DMBC were applying for a most improved council award. A banner was designed to represent FoSP, which the group were allowed to retain.
11. FoSP members also attended Harrogate's LGA conference at the request of DMBC, representing the Third sector groups of Doncaster, and with a request to put questions to the panel. The questions that had been formulated related to the importance of Green Spaces, but unfortunately were not selected for airing.
12. The Doncaster GreenSpace Network (DGSN):
 - Founded by FoSP has not flourished as was hoped. It was felt by the organisers that there wasn't the support for the network with only a small amount of groups participating and it was detracting from their time dealing with Sandall Park, they were of a mind to let it lapse. A council director appointed staff to take over the organisation and co-ordination of the

meetings and the Countryside Ranger team have now taken over the organisation of it with a view to ensuring its viability.

- The recent areas for discussion have been Public Space Protection Orders.
 - The meeting of the DGSN at Cusworth Hall was well attended and had an extremely useful presentation on meadows. All the groups gleaned much from this meeting.
 - A meeting hosted by the Friends of Hyde Park Cemetery focused on Heritage Lottery funding, and was followed by a tour of the historical Cemetery.
 - Despite setting up the DGSN, requests are still received to give talks to other groups. One such presentation was made to the gardening club at Hatfield Woodhouse, which resulted in them then coming for a tour of the park. They made a donation to FoSP funds in thanks.
 - West Park, Goole visited having seen our work on the web site and Facebook. They seemed genuinely interested and took a lot of information away with them. They have subsequently been in touch on a regular basis via Facebook and Twitter. They put on their first Santa Dash this year.
 - Awick park visited for a tour, and in fact as a result joined the DGSN and have attended meetings.
 - Two FoSP members attended the National Parks and Green Spaces Forum in Birmingham in January.
13. The Sandall Park Rangers JFC held an Easter Camp football tournament which was attended by many other teams and leagues. They are going from strength to strength.
14. The parkrun, now in it's third year is still going strong and encouraging more and more people to take up exercise.
15. The bird feeders have been repaired and replaced, trees shored up, lots of reparation work has taken place - benches painted etc. A work in progress.
16. A 'Common Purpose' (a training company) full morning visit was made by leading Council and Health Officials to the park, as part of a four day training course. A presentation by FoSP impressed the delegates and they were enthralled by our Business Plan. The report later received was that they had returned to base "buzzing and inspired".
17. A Seeing is Believing tour was requested by the Keep Britain Tidy Group:
- A contingent from various voluntary groups, councillors and officials from Barnsley spent most of the day in discussions with group members and received a FoSP presentation followed by a tour of the park.
 - A lovely buffet was prepared by FoSP members.
 - The Group were presented with a Love Parks plaque, the first of its kind to be awarded. This is now displayed on a planter in the park.
18. The Lions Fun Day, whilst not our event was attended by our volunteers who put on a tombola raising vital funds. It is an excellent event for the park and the participants who come from within and beyond the borough.

3. Projects/Work Undertaken

1. Planting:

- Bulb planting, tending the rockery and planting new plants, tending Marshall's Garden; the Jubilee Garden and the new planters. around the park continues on an annual basis by FOSP volunteers on numerous days. Numerous shrubs which have been donated by volunteers and their neighbours, have also been planted.
- 5,000 crocus bulbs were donated by St Leger Rotary Club to promote awareness of their End Polio campaign. They brought volunteers to help FoSP members plant the bulbs.

- Four new square planters have been donated by the Grounds Team which are now planted up and tended by a volunteer.
 - To celebrate Le Tour de Yorkshire inaugural event, a decorated cycle bedecked with flowers, representing the Tour, was mounted on the fence and which remained there all summer.
2. Pongy corner was dredged again, though it could do with much more being taken out - the silt is still forming a barrier for rubbish to collect in, making it difficult for volunteers to reach it.
 3. Community Clear Up Day (A Govt initiative) was productive and removed lots of rubbish from the hedgerows and lakes. Rosie Winterton MP attended to show her support. FoSP members, other volunteer groups and Sandall Park Angling club provided an effective work force that made a difference.
 4. Running of the toilet facilities:
 - Eight volunteers (teams of two) have undertaken to keep the toilets clean and tidy as a supplement to the cleaning performed by the council.
 - The Radar toilet is cleaned throughout the winter for the parkrun.
 - The supply of all the items for the toilets has proved expensive but has provided the park visitors with a commendable facility.
 - Due to council staff shortages, the cafe staff closed the toilets during the summer period. This in fact enabled them to remain open longer during the light evenings. The staff were sent a letter of thanks.
 5. Memorial benches are being requested more frequently. Two wooden ones have been installed, more have been requested. One of those installed was for the 5 local teenagers who were killed in a car crash. This was funded by the Red Tomato and their staff/customers.
 6. The cricket pitch was levelled by DMBC having had a request from a local cricket club to adopt the park as it's ground. The club subsequently reneged on the arrangement after the work had been completed.
 7. Numerous holes in the car park have been filled in, having been deemed a hazard and reported via customer services.
 8. A tour of park was undertaken for the Yorkshire in Bloom judge. A FoSP member subsequently attended the presentation in York and received a Platinum Award on behalf of the group.
 9. Much preparation work took place for the Doncaster in Bloom Award, including the tour of the park with the judging team.
 10. FoSP signed up to the Yorkshire Post campaign against litter - Clean Up Yorkshire. The paper sent out a journalist who wrote an article about our involvement and took a video of the volunteers working in the park. This was posted on their web site.
 11. The Big Tidy Up provided another PR opportunity as well as giving the park a facelift.
 12. KBT contacted us with the offer of trialling a 'superbin' the first of its kind in the UK and in fact the world! This is now sited on the picnic area and is being used by the volunteers. It contains all manor of equipment for litter picking.
 13. Extensive repairs were carried out by DMBC to defective footpaths, at our request - and the repairs have made a huge difference.
 14. The DMBC did a marvellous job in taking the hedgerow down on Barnby Dun road and leaving the site neat and tidy.
 - The new fencing was erected as soon as the hedge was being taken down, leaving an open view across the park.
 - Disruption and negative comments were minimal
 - More people seem to use the proper entrances now.
 - Both DMBC and Darfen are to be commended on their work - both worked extremely efficiently.

- The cost of the new fence was split between St Leger Rotary and FoSP.
 - A litter pick was conducted along the new fence line
 - Paths were put in down the slopes by the Grounds Team.
15. The idea of a Mint Garden was born, and numerous different types of mints have been planted in the Jubilee Garden. Once established, plaques will be erected outlining what they are and inviting the visitors to take a cutting (not the plant!)
 16. The 'garden birds' feeders on the sensory trail are filled up on a regular basis..
 17. Apples and quince were taken by The Real Junk Food Project Doncaster, and made into produce that they could use in their community cafe. This was as a result of an article we published on Facebook. It will assist the park greatly as next year they will remove the unusually red apples from the bog garden before they have chance to fall and contaminate the bog pond. An interesting and 'fruitful' partnership has been forged.
 18. It was identified by a FoSP member that there were inadequate benches for elderly grandparents in the children's play area. A new bench was requested and installed by the Playground Team.
 19. Whilst it hasn't been obvious, there has been much work going on in the background towards the development of the new cafe building project. And although FoSP have never been formally invited into the negotiations, FoSP members have spent the last 9 months as go-betweens with the council and the developers. They have performed the role of mediators whilst at the same time ensuring that what is best for the park and its visitors is taken into consideration - the main aspect being the availability of free and accessible toilets within a new building without the obligation of being cafe patrons. It has been a tense year for the process to go through council.
 20. The Woodland Adventure Park/ash car park rejuvenation/Barnby Dun Road fence replacement was mooted and several discussions/meetings took place with DMBC's Programmes Team. It was decided it should be delayed until the cafe project got under way to hopefully use that project towards some match funding. The fence/hedgerow was in fact replaced by a small mesh fence which opened up the area entirely, in readiness for the major play project.

4. Funds

1. The 100 Club continues to raise funds on a monthly basis.
2. Easyfundraising and EasySearch continue to add to the funds albeit only small amounts.
3. The World Championships Hook a Duck day is the only event where we raise funds for the group/park. All other events are fundraisers for other charities or the Doncaster Concert Band.
4. BT MyDonate as a means of donating on-line has proved useful, particularly with the addition of the Gift Aid facility.
5. Full report from Treasurer.

5. Grants applied for – unsuccessful

None so far - but a result is awaited in January for the grant application to Tesco for more fitness equipment.

6. Grants/donations received

1. Lloyds Foundation provided match funding for two FoSP members - their employees: for organising fund raising events
2. Lloyds Foundation also provide additional donations for the volunteer hours put in by those employees.
3. Cycles and camping gear were donated for sale by a FoSP member.

4. Ready Steady Store have again donated a large amount of capital: storage space at their facility for all our equipment; provided bottled water for the charity events; sponsored the Hook a Duck Championship and donated prizes.
5. 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.
6. Purple Penguin donated in-kind by doing work on the web site including the PayPal facility for the Doncaster Santa Dash
7. Other gifts received were:
8. Raffle prizes from: FakeFestivals (concert tickets); Red Tomato Pizza Takeaway, who also donated vouchers for the Best Decorated Buggy and Best Dressed Dog Competitions for the Doncaster Santa Dash, as did Astrabound, Sandall Park cafe and KFC.

7 Publicity/Communications/Networking

1. The notice boards remain very popular and a good source of information for park users.
2. We again purchased calendars and Christmas cards to send to our business partners, sponsors and funders.
3. A5 double sided flyers are printed for music events and distributed locally and via the Tourist Information Office in Doncaster and Best Bar None organisers.
4. 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.
5. Trip Advisor receives some comments, mostly good this year! And generally 5* ratings. The only adverse one was from a female who had been asked (nicely) to put her dog on a lead as it was causing mayhem.
6. Advertising of FoSP and the Santa Dash is in the programmes at Aurora events.
7. Our events and meetings are advertised on CVS E-News; the DMBC web site and newsletters and the SNT e-newsletters as well as local media.
8. Several radio interviews were given by 3 FoSP members, on general issues to do with the park, at the Santa Dash and parkrun; and about gardening projects in the park. Some of the interviews were live.
9. Having a tour of the park by (KBT/Love Parks) 'Seeing is Believing'; and information regarding the development of the park and the group were advertised on KBT's web site.
10. Lots of photos of the park are sent in to us via Facebook, some exceptional ones of landscapes and a Harris Hawk which has taken up residence.

8. Press releases

Included items such as:

- Fake Festival
- World Hook a Duck Championship/Easter Egg Hunt
- Music in the park
- The Big Lunch (organised by a business but assisted by FoSP)
- Doncaster in Bloom awards
- Doncaster Santa Dash
- Arranging of networking events for voluntary/community groups involved in regenerating green spaces (DGSN)
- Volunteering days
- Cafe project

In several publications on numerous occasions:

- Doncaster Free Press
- Doncaster Star

- CVS E-news
- Hatfield & Wheatley Flyer
- Posters in park; café and locales
- DMBC publications and web site.
- Facebook
- Twitter
- BBC Radio Sheffield, Sine FM and Trax FM

9. Meetings

- With DMBC Programmes Team re funding for major projects.
- Numerous with Neighbourhood team (about all projects and plans).
- Fake Festivals, Community Parks and SNT staff regarding FakeFest.
- Live Lounge UK re new Music Festival
- Keep Britain Tidy Group officials (Love Parks initiative), including tours of the park on separate occasions.
- 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.
- Sandall Park Rangers/SNT/Pedal Ready re container facilities.
- Doncaster GreenSpace Network, several meetings and tours of the park
- Organisers of Pedal Ready/Cycle Boost re their scheme for the park
- Organisers of Doncaster parkrun
- Supervisory staff from Remedi (reparation work with young offenders) regarding work that could be undertaken by offenders in the park.
- Anglers new angling club and the future of angling in the park
- Sandall Park Cafe and private investor re Sandall Park café and future plans for the park
- KFC and Enforcement Team re KFC litter in the park
- With electrician regarding upgrade of toilet facilities
- With Friends of Grove Gardens re their interest in regenerating their group and memorial benches
- Dawson & Burgess solicitors acting on behalf of council re insurance claims against the council
- Various council officials for tours of the park

10. Angling Club (Sandall Park Angling Club)

1. FoSP were approached by some anglers early in 2015, who were totally unhappy with the way the angling club (Anglers of Sandall Park) was being run:
 - None of the fees taken were going back into the lake or the club;
 - There was disaffection and bitterness forming within the angling fraternity
 - A group wished to take over the running and had approached the organiser who was in agreement.
 - A new procedure was introduced by DMBC and all angling clubs had to submit a document applying for the lease. A bid had to be submitted in March. FoSP worked closely with the new regime to submit a viable document.
 - Three months of negotiations and meetings took place to put a sustainable structure in place
 - It was not without its teething problems - resentment and a financial deficit which was left by the previous club simmered through the year until the new club became established and created it's own good reputation

- People had made payments to the previous club, received no receipt and then had their membership cancelled when the lease expired. There was much anger which the new club had the fall-out from.
 - Night fishing had been unofficially agreed between FoSP, the Neighbourhood Team and the anglers, but the new tendering document specifically forbade it. A FoSP member took up the cudgel and got an official agreement for night fishing to be allowed. The new club then set up a Facebook page just for night fishing bookings so at any one time, both the angling committee, FoSP or the council should be able to see who was night angling, with a restriction on numbers.
 - After months of hard work the new club began to flourish.
 - The SNT Team Leader played an important role in facilitating the new club taking over the reins, his assistance was invaluable for paving the way forward.
2. The club offered to (and now do) empty bins near the lake when they became overflowing at weekends and bank holidays, prevented it all blowing into the lake
 3. They have donated new trees for the new fence line
 4. Throughout the year did regular litter picks of the lake and north bank.
 5. They have compiled a complete database of fish - markings both sides; weight etc. This has been of great help to DMBC who were requested by DEFRA to provide that same information.
 6. A Survey of the lake was commissioned and paid for by the club, and the water quality tested
 7. The night anglers have prevented several instances of crime by their mere presence (damage attempts, off road motor vehicles/drug dealing)
 8. They are now registered with DEFRA, CIFA and licensed through Environment Agency, at their own expense.

11. Park Future

The park is continually developed in line with the components of the Business Plan, and in consultation with DMBC. There are major plans in the pipeline for the coming two years to take the park to a higher level and which will change it's appearance substantially.

We continue to strive for more - and younger - members to ensure sustainability and for the group to progress and develop.

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	-	£ 90
Printing cartridges	-	£101
Photo paper for notice boards	-	£140
Insurance	-	£196
Postage	-	£ 27
Gaming Licence renewal	-	£ 20
Phone cards for mobile phone	-	£ 20
TCV membership	-	£ 35
Toilet facilities: sundries	-	£460
Total:	-	£1089

13. In Conclusion: A statement from the Chairman

Volunteering is the backbone of any community, it is the involvement of local people providing a service within their own communities. None more so than in these times of financial difficulties for the local authority and our thanks must go to DMBC who have fulfilled all our requests for additional work and attention in the park. They are working with restricted departmental budgets and I suspect we have been a drain on their resources, albeit FoSP contributes where possible.

The Friends of Sandall Park play a huge part in ensuring that Sandall Park is fit for purpose. The volunteers, drawn from the local neighbourhood, work hard for the benefit not only of local people, but visitors who travel from beyond the District and County.

This is a challenge we have undertaken and will continue to strive towards - there is no end date. There will always be maintenance needs, aspirations to fulfil, development to plan and take to fruition, perfection to be attained

We, working with Doncaster Council, have created a park that has achieved a 'must visit' status and we must now ensure that this reputation is sustainable. When the park appears on the literature of Doncaster's Tourist Information Office - we will know that we have made it! Not before.

There is lots to be done, and 2016 will see many changes for the better. Thank you all for making this happen.

Sandra Crabtree

Sandra Crabtree, Chairman 2014 – 2015

20.01.16

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

Current FoSP Committee Members:

Sandra Crabtree (chairman)*	Moira Hood	Carol Burton
Ron Ketley (secretary)*	Jean Ketley	Carolyne Burton
Neil Gethin (treasurer)*	Will Gethin	Barbara Senior
Wendy Barclay (vice-chair)*	Alex Barclay	Marshall Barclay
Sarah Stokes*	Derrick Bewell	Mairaid Smith
Don Crabtree*	Marianne Downing	Roxy Ishrat
Lee Stanley-Gonsales (SPAC)	Scott Holland (SPAC)	Eva Hughes (cllr)
Neil Marshall (SNT)	Jane Kidd (cllr)	Mick Wainwright (SNT)

* = Trustees