



Annual Report 2021





The Friends of Sandall Park

Annual Report January 2021– December 2021 Trustees' Annual Report



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Introduction

2021 has not been without its difficulties and hurdles, it has been extremely challenging in terms of volunteering. Not only due to Covid but two of our dear friends and founding members of the group sadly passed away leaving a big gap in our ranks and hearts.

Many members have been ill or suffered with physical problems but have battled on through their ailments such is their commitment to the group and park. Our secretary, and founder member of the group retired from his post due to ill health.

FoSP has continued to function regardless and maintained a high morale.

A great deal of the year's meetings was conducted online, including the AGM, and at least those who couldn't normally attend meetings were able to do so. Even a member of IFoSP¹ joined us from America.

A great deal of work has been undertaken and completed by a wonderful team. This is what 2021 saw:

Volunteers

Sustainability is key to any group, and we continue to strive to attract new members. We do need people who can spend the time in the park to maintain the excellent facility that it is now, they are fundamental to the success of FoSP. The volunteers keep an eye on things – they are in the park daily, report things that need addressing, keep the public informed and ensure the park is developed and nurtured to a high standard.

The group has been boosted by the addition of two new Elected Ward Councillors who take an active role in the group and its activities and within a noticeably short time have played a key role in achieving some of our objectives.

Additionally, we have several local residents who visit the park regularly and inform us of anything that requires attention. They too take remedial action where required. We have the added advantage of many members of the public becoming involved by doing litter picks and reporting issues. So, in addition to our group members, we have 'unofficial' volunteers and supporters.

The Friends of Sandall Park work includes:

- Admin: writing reports; minutes of meetings; letters; emails; dealing with telephone/Facebook/website enquiries
- Reporting remedial work required to council
- Litter picks
- Gardening/planting
- Clearance, planting, maintenance, and development of the lake by the Angling Club member
- General volunteering in the park
- Liaising with other groups and organisations, particularly in relation to health and wellbeing
- Dealing with ASB, crime, offenders, and reparation of damage
- Keeping Facebook pages (FoSP; FoSP Volunteering Group/Suppawters Group); Websites, Instagram and Twitter updated

¹ See Appendix A

- Treasurer's book-keeping and enquiries
- Printing articles to keep all three noticeboards in the park updated
- Working towards retaining the Green Flag Award
- Putting together funding bids
- Strategic Planning for the park
- Research/communications with organisations for related issues (health; green space; exercise/mental health)

Meetings

- Attending meetings/online meetings re the future development of the park: Management Plan and Future Parks
- Potential new volunteers
- Numerous about Sandall Park Café: with the private investor
- DMBC Assets Dept. re plans for the park
- Doncaster Green Space Network (latterly via Microsoft Team Meetings)
- Visitor Economy Group (face to face and via MS Teams)
- Think Tanks and Workshops on Doncaster's Future Strategy in relation to Outdoors, Sports, Health, Fitness, the Arts. (Face to face and via MS Teams)
- GreenSpace Officer and other council officials re plans for the park

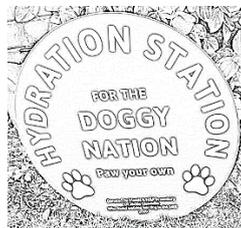
The Junior Rangers

- The introduction of the Junior Ranger Scheme, bringing with it the families of Rangers, has assisted greatly in the upkeep of the park.
- Our 15yrs old Head Junior Ranger Emma and her sister Katie, a Lead Ranger, in conjunction with the Safer Communities team organise the planning and running of events. They have done a tremendous job again this year, taking it forward.
- There were numerous crafting and exploring adventures for the children and there was even a Christmas craft making event on the 23rd of December.
- The sisters have both done a great deal of PR work for the group, being filmed on several occasions for publicity material for Visit Doncaster and Welcome to Yorkshire: promotional videos of Doncaster and South Yorkshire. They have increased the Ranger membership through their enthusiasm and verve.
- Emma was nominated for the national Green Flag Young Volunteer of the Year Award and won it! The group are immensely proud of her.

Projects/Work Undertaken

- General maintenance undertaken throughout the year including lectern posts replaced, North Bank nature reserve fencing repaired several times.
- Steps taken to have the no cycling byelaw in the park rescinded. This has hit a blockage within the council, but enquiries are ongoing.
- Bulb planting, tending the rockery and planting new plants; tending Marshall's Garden; the Topiary Garden; and the planters around the park is continuous.
- Shrubs, plants, and trees which have been donated by volunteers and members of the community have been planted.
- The Quiet Garden, for those people who want to sit and reflect or just have a quiet moment is continually being developed and had a magnificent show of wildflowers this year. Its promotion of Mental Health Wellbeing has proved invaluable for people during the lockdowns and continues to be so.
- Projects promoting health, well-being, and Mental Health.
- More purple crocus were donated by Rotary Club St Leger (to promote their eradication of polio in children campaign) and were planted, along with other seeds and bulbs.

- Jubilee Garden reconstructed by the Junior Rangers
- Benches painted
- More bird boxes painted and put up along sensory trail
- A volunteer again used the recycled plastic bottles litter-picked from the park and transformed into poppies, to create a Poppy display on the topiary garden. Knitted poppies were also reused from previous years.
- A stall at the Roger Tuby Fair raised funds for the Changing Place.
- Doncaster Mumblers displayed a pirate's trail round the park.
- A supporter set up an online Dog Recall course to raise funds for the Paws Park. When the project was rejected by DMBC the funds raised were donated to the Changing Place.
- Sainsbury's mosaic (a fish created from recycled bottle tops) was installed on the Boat Garden.
- The 'garden birds' feeders on the sensory trail, and in the Quiet Garden are filled up on a regular basis by volunteers.
- A plant sale took place in the park to raise funds for CP.
- Caring Hands: The major work was completed by January 2021. The 'Official Launch' on 29th March 2021 saw the NHS in attendance and other park visitors. A poem (which can be found on our website <https://www.sandallpark.org.uk/2021/03/>) was read out by our Head Ranger, and the ribbon was cut by the young lady who had been putting coloured ribbons along the fences at the park and at DRI.
- The Great British Spring Clean took place with scout groups participating.
- The Doggy Fountain was created – another masterpiece of engineering genius.
- More memorial trees were planted (paid for with donations, planted by DMBC).
- A new nature trail was created.
- More bug hotels and hedgehog retreats created.
- A great deal of time and work was spent on plans for a Paws Park (safe, enclosed area for dogs to run loose, with agility equipment) – 3 years in fact – but when it came down to it, it was rejected by DMBC's Legal and Insurance Department. The project was shelved.
- Magnet dragging of the lake has been of huge interest and certainly rid the lake of dangerous debris! Weapons and remains from the old boat house in particular.
- A Successful application to Community Investment Fund reaped £13,250.00 for health events and will provide for us to engage professionals to conduct health sessions and guided walks in the park and Quiet Garden. Projects for 2022 include concrete table tennis and chess tables.. This will be an ongoing project.
- We have secured the services of an artist to complete a series of works for us in the park in 2022.



Events

- Princess, Pirates; and Superheroes events were all successful, well attended and professionally organised by our Resident Inflatables Zone.
- The RSPCA Dog Show attracted a good crowd.
- The Doncaster Santa Dash, organised by Curly's Athletes, was a really good fun day with families participating and raising funds towards the Changing Place.

- Crafts and a Chat was organised at Sandalwood Communal Hall (thanks to St Leger Homes for the use of the hall) and was well received by all who attended. The money raised there was donated into the Changing Place Fund.
- Doncaster Litter Picking Championships had its inaugural showing and was enjoyed by those who attended. Funds raised were put towards the Changing Place appeal.

FoSP Volunteer Hours worked included:

1. One Member of Angling Club:
 - For FoSP 'on site' hours: 200; FoSP off site: 100 (research/design etc).
 - For Angling Club: 120 on site
2. Volunteer gardener/maintenance: 450
3. Chairman: 847
4. Treasurer: 40
5. Additional hours by Comms Manager; Secretary; other volunteers, Junior Rangers and volunteering at events and parkrun have not been calculated.

Publicity/Communications/Networking

- The notice boards remain popular and a useful source of information for park users.
- Suppawters page – a Facebook page for all the dog lovers who come to the park.
- Instagram account set up and is well used, it has proved a valuable media outlet.
- 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.
- Trip Advisor received more comments and 5* ratings: Certificate of Excellence received – 4 stars again.
- Our events and meetings are advertised on the DMBC web site and newsletters and the SCT e-newsletters as well as local media.
- 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 continues to be extremely useful in sharing ideas and work undertaken.
- Photos of the park are sent in via Facebook and Instagram by park users.
- The Doncaster Greenspace Network – DGSN – (Founded by FoSP) has now been taken over by Trust for Conservation Volunteers, their remit is still in its infancy and is part of the Future Parks Strategy.
- We continue to be members of Welcome to Yorkshire.
- The international group IFoSP remain good friends and allies.
- The Head Junior Ranger and Lead Junior Ranger did photo shoots and videos for Yorkshire Television; Welcome to Yorkshire and Visit Doncaster.

Press releases

Have been much reduced this year due to a lack of events but included items such as: Gates for the park; promotional videos by Junior Rangers for tourism, vandalism, the bid for a Changing Place in the park, and events.

Our social media outlets provide a vital platform for informing the public of life in the park.

In publications/outlets:

- Doncaster Free Press (online and printed)
- Posters in park; café and locales
- DMBC publications and web site
- Facebook
- Twitter

- FoSP web site
- Sine FM

Sandall Park Angling Club

- We haven't had any contact with the Angling Club this year, other than one member who sits on the FoSP Group (who has now resigned from the Angling Club) and participates in all aspects of FoSP work.
- He has designed and supervised the construction of our major projects: Caring Hands, Dog Drinking Station.
- Erected new fishing signs at the Pegs
- Maintained the fountain, and maintained the lake area, including planting swathes of water plants in cages to shore up the lake edging.

Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

In the greater scheme of things Sandall Park suffers minor crime and ASB in comparison to other areas, but it is always acted upon immediately when it occurs. Our volunteers address any instances of damage and where necessary inform DMBC who complete repairs that the volunteers cannot undertake. All incidents and crimes are reported to the police and the council.

FoSP uniquely has its own Crime Reduction Strategy, based on the targeting of all our resources on the three main elements of crime and Anti-Social behaviour: protecting locations, informing victims, and targeting offenders. This strategy is not new to us and has been the backbone of all our work for 17 years.

The presence of our volunteers and members of the public who are willing to challenge unacceptable behaviour goes a long way to preventing offending in the park we believe. The visitors themselves police the park. Our volunteers always wear Hi Viz vests which shows a presence.

On 3rd May the Doghorn Campaign was signed up to. This originated from the comments on social media that people were afraid to walk their dogs on the golf course in case dog thieves were operating in the area.

We joined the national campaign, purchased, and sold the Doghorn kits (lanyards, whistles, information on how to stay safe) and our volunteers patrolled the park wearing the hi viz and highly visible lanyards and whistles. Other park users stepped up too and pre-arranged dog walking sessions were organised. Doghorn signs – 'dog thieves not welcome' message, were fixed to every entrance to the park. Within a short space of time the fear of theft was abated, and normal service resumed.

This is the known crime and anti-social behaviour for this year:

- Dog fouling remains a problem throughout the park.
- Six Graffiti attacks.
- Criminal Damage to trees and supporting posts on the golf course.
- Criminal damage to the bug hotels on six occasions.
- Burglary of storage container: A great deal of time and effort had gone into sawing the steel door off the container, having cropped the bolt off the gate. There was nothing of value to steal and so the thieves had wasted a lot of time and effort.
- Attempt arson of the Playbuilder tower: disposable lighters and toilet rolls used to light a fire under the tower.

- Anti-social behaviour by teenagers: entering the derelict depot as trespassers and causing further damage; threatening volunteers and interfering with their work. (Detailed enquiries by Safer Community Team with the schools identified the culprits and they were dealt with by SCT).
- An unlawful encampment of travellers caused litter and damage to the old golf course (repaired by DMBC) and ASB with the dangerous driving of vehicles around the park.

Litter

- Regular litter picks around the park have been performed by
- Members of the group
- A member of the Angling Club
- Carers and their charges
- Cub scouts
- Visitors to the park – of their own volition
- Junior Rangers – independent of the group and with the group
- A team of staff from Ardagh Glass, who also donated to the Changing Place campaign.
- The Superbin (which contains all the equipment volunteers need to litter pick in the park, contained in a coded accessible cupboard) has proved to be invaluable for our volunteers and others.
- Continued problems with overflowing bins in the picnic area has hopefully been rectified by the installation of larger bins. Thanks to DMBC for listening to our feedback.

The principal areas for regular litter were the car parks where night-time visitors drop their litter from their cars, including nitrous dioxide gas bottles. This has been alleviated by the installation of the gates to the car parks. Several meetings took place between us, Prosec UK and the council and an agreement to this end reached. The council installed the gate and repaired the existing one at no cost to us.

Prosec UK, who follow our group, have a keen interest in assisting with the park and the volunteers and liaise with us on a regular basis. They noted that we were having problems with the night-time ASB. and now lock the gates at night – opening them again in the morning – to prevent this behaviour. A vast reduction in ASB resulted and the night-time litter has ceased.

Prosec UK offered to purchase, install, and monitor CCTV in the area, this is still ongoing. The entire process has been laborious, taken two years to get through DMBC processes and is still not finalised though it should be installed by April.

Covid: the impact

Covid has had an impact on events - we couldn't hold our annual Easter Eggstravaganza, our biggest fundraiser. Other events were also cancelled including the Lions Fun Day and Fake Festival.

Our meetings were all online until July, all communication having been done by email or on our Facebook Volunteers Group.

Several members had to isolate due to the Covid virus, and others were ill with it.

Despite all the uncertainty, lockdowns, and isolations our volunteers managed to maintain a presence in the park and continued to work, albeit with a much-reduced workforce and time spent.

The Management Plan

The Management Plan was developed four years ago in partnership with the Green Space Officer and Safer Communities Team to facilitate an application for Green Flag status. It sets the parameters for the maintenance and development of the park by both DMBC and FoSP and

is a living document - designed to ensure that the park reaches its full potential and is sustainable for the future. Both FoSP and DMBC have signed up to it, and all our plans for the park are developed in line with this. The Plan is currently undergoing a major overhaul to go online.

Our own Business Plan is a living document which aims to take the park forward over the course of the ensuing five years, it is revisited every year and was updated in December 2021.

The park was again awarded Green Flag Status – a proud moment for DMBC staff, FoSP and all the park visitors. The Green Flag Award ceremony could not take place again this year, instead the Flag was presented at the park.

Café Development

Unfortunately, there's still a blockage within DMBC which is preventing the progress of the development, it is certainly frustrating for all concerned. We sincerely hope that it will be resolved in the near future, that the council can resolve their issues and that the work can begin. It is critical to the future of the park.

Toilet Facilities

When the café closed for lockdown for the second time, the closing of the toilets was also taken over by the council. They continue to be cleaned by DMBC.

Changing Place²

In July 2021 we were approached by Rise Adaptations (a local company) regarding our plan for a Changing Place for the park, and the campaign was given new vigour. The campaign was launched on 19th July – World Changing Places Day. The amount of severely disabled people who visit the park and would benefit from such a facility is not in dispute. Surveys have been conducted and support this need.

This will be the biggest most impactful change to the park (alongside a new café), it's going to be a game changer. DMBC are now on board with it and we're hopeful it will come to fruition in 2022. A group has been formed by them to look at Changing Places across the Borough and the Government grant for Changing Places was applied for by DMBC in November 2021. A Go Fund Me fundraising campaign was set up by us and is gathering funds to contribute towards our CP.

The proposal for a Changing Place in the park was, initially, dependent on the new café being built. The intention being at that time to refurbish and redesign the gent's toilet into a Changing Place. Due to the café situation being delayed further and further, we developed the plan to install an independent pod instead – we had already been quoted for this as an alternative at the outset.

Finances

- We subscribed to Amazon Smile, and this contributes to our income.
- The 100 Club continues to raise funds on a monthly basis.
- Give as You Live on the website raised funds for us via donations and Gift Aid, but Virgin ceased providing this service in November 2021.

² Changing Places are purpose-built toilet and appropriate changing facilities for children and adults with disabilities.

Friends of Sandall Park Finance Report for Calendar Year 2021

	<i>Totals</i>
Opening Balance 01.01.2021	£6,987.15
Income	£6,251.67
Expenditure	£4,088.29
Closing balance 31.12.2021	£9,150.53

Details for Charity Commission Return

<i>A1 Fundraising Events (income)</i>	£2,016.88
<i>A1 Donations, Legacies and Grants (income)</i>	£4,234.79
<i>A3 Cost of Fundraising Events (Expenditure)</i>	£2,618.77
<i>A3 Cost of Repairs and Maintenance (Expenditure)</i>	£719.80
<i>A3 Management Costs (Expenditure)</i>	£255.17
<i>A3 Insurance (Expenditure)</i>	£257.60
<i>A3 Printing, Postage, Stationer and Computer Supplies (Expenditure)</i>	£236.95

Completed by K Rawson. 16.01.2022

The Charity's Policy on Reserves

The annual running costs for the charity are as shown and this amount should remain ringfenced for the charity to be able to continue its current activities throughout the year:

Insurance	300
Marketing/stationery/computer	600
Management/organisational	600
Gardening/repairs	1,300
Total	£2.800

Grants/donations received

1. RSS provide in-kind donation of storage space at their facility for all our equipment.
2. Donation from resident ice cream man
3. Donation from resident Inflatable Zone man
4. Donations received as a result of Santa Dash
5. Donations from Group Members
6. Many donations of plants trees and shrubs: all planted by our volunteers.
7. Donation of a signed copy of his book from our Patron Ben Parkinson MBE to raise funds for the Changing Place.
8. 50 copies of the 2 Very Rare Bear books from Gillian of Access4AllUK to raise funds for the Changing Place.

Park Future

Doncaster Council and FoSP work together to ensure the viability of the park, working within the Management Plan devised to ensure its sustainability and appropriate development.

There are two crucial issues that need addressing that affect the future of the park for its visitors.

The first issue is the development of a new café facility. A new café is paramount to the success of the park: "A loo, a brew, a view and something to do" being the watchwords. Hindrances within council continue to delay the development and unfortunately there's still a blockage that is preventing progress. We live in the hope that it will be resolved soon and that the work can

begin. It is certainly frustrating for all concerned and will be a devastating blow to the park if it is blocked entirely.

The second issue is the addition of a Changing Place. It is the way forward for all our disabled and special needs visitors – of which there are many. This is currently letting the park down on accessibility provision and offering a service for the families who cannot travel for the day without those facilities. Having a Changing Place would make Sandall Park **the** place to go to for a day out for families with disabilities.

We are keen to promote the development of Fitness areas across the whole park and have embarked on a massive project to have paths installed around the inside perimeter to benefit parkrun, walkers, and wheelchair users. This will be a long-term project collaborating with the council to deliver it, if approved.

In Conclusion: A statement from the Chairman

Sandall Park is everyone's back garden. It is in constant use every day of the year by dog walkers, runners & walkers: for fitness; football; cycling; angling; mental health, playing; picnics and events. It's a great 'value for money' destination – and it's all free.

We continue to promote the park for fitness and mental health, to encourage people to make use of this facility on their doorstep. Our Quiet Garden has proved invaluable for peace, quiet and reflection, this has been evidenced by the feedback we've received

Inclusivity is the key to the success of everything we do and strive to achieve, and our vision is for a park for all to enjoy. FoSP will, as always, continue to work diligently, with energy and enthusiasm to ensure that Sandall Park thrives and grows for future generations to enjoy. We will continue to strive to develop the park for the benefit of all.

The residents of Doncaster and beyond, who are regular visitors to the park, have played a tremendous part in maintaining the park's upkeep and status quo. Never has the 'Friends of' group been so all encompassing to include park visitors. They have all contributed in one way or another to ensuring the park's cleanliness and upkeep. I hope this continues and grows, as I'm sure it will. Thank you!

It would be remiss of me not to thank all the volunteers of parkrun, who attend week in week out to provide the marvellous facility for free exercise. They do a marvellous job, often in dire weather, to provide for hundreds of people to avail themselves of this facility.

Our relationship with the Safer Communities and Street Scene Teams is evidence that partnerships work. So, to all the teams we work with at DMBC, and the Elected Ward Members – thank you very much. Your support and help is vital to the group's success.

The biggest thanks of all has to go to our core team of volunteers of course. Without them the FoSP wouldn't exist to provide the excellent service to the council and the community that they do. They are a close-knit community in themselves and have a great regard and care for each other. Such is their commitment to the group that they realised there was respite required and rallied together to send Don and myself (and our little dog!) away for a two-day break! We were both extremely touched and in awe of what they'd done. True friends indeed. A memory that will stay with me forever.

It's going to be a remarkably busy 2022 and we look forward to everyone's continued support and involvement. To quote a key Doncaster public figure: "Let's Crack on!"

Thank you!

Sandra Crabtree

Sandra Crabtree, Chairman 2021

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

Current FoSP Committee Members

Sandra Crabtree* (Chair)	Kristen Rawson* (Treasurer)
Carin Stoddart (Secretary)*	Victoria Stokoe (Vice-Chair) *
Don Crabtree*	Sarah Stokes*
Mairaid Smith*	Ron Ketley*
Barbara Senior*	Colwyn Pugh (SPAC)
Eva Hughes	Frank Woolley
Jane Kidd (Cllr)	Neil Marshall (SCT)
Matthew Pickering	Aimee Pickering
Emma Pickering	Katie Pickering
Margaret Richards	Daniel Barwell (Cllr)
Emma Muddiman-Rawlings (Cllr)	

Non committee FoSP members

Wendy Barclay	Les Jones
Derrick Bewell	Marianne Downing
Carol Burton	Bernadette Greenan
Brian Greathead	Archie Wright
Paul Atick	Jayne Atick
Peter Poppy	

International FoSP

Noelle Finn (Westville New Jersey, USA)
Ester Schrijent (The Netherlands)
Kimberley Van Cleve (Fort Lauderdale Florida USA)
Amanda Browning (Fredericksburg, Virginia USA)
Tabitha Fenton (Wagga Wagga, Australia)

*Trustees

SPAC = Sandall Park Angling Club

SCT = Safer Communities Team

Cllr = Councillor

Appendix A

International FoSP

Whilst not available to volunteer – we have an international branch of FoSP (IFoSP) with members in America, the Netherlands and Australia. We are followed on Twitter by them - a fan group of Louis Tomlinson. As a result, they follow 'all things Doncaster' and follow FoSP on social media.

They designed our Quiet Garden logo and have contributed financially and with material items such as decorated stones for our Covid Memorial, they have also sent donations to our Changing Place campaign.