

Friends of Etherow Lodge Park

Chair's Report to end of March 2013.

This year has been another busy one for the Friends of the Park. Our main goals were the same as last year to increase awareness of the park and to increase conservation work in the park to enable our vision to be achieved.

The focus of our work this year has been to continue and to increase activities in the park involving more people in having fun, exploring the outdoors as well as planting and maintenance.

Overview

2012/13 has been an enjoyable year with the Friends group involved in planning new developments as well as maintaining existing work and consolidating relationships with local groups. It is good to see an increased number of individuals, families and groups using the park. Groups using the park include local Scout groups for Orienteering sessions, Sports groups from neighbouring areas, Hollingworth Brownies, Sunday school children from local Churches, local day nurseries, walking groups, Day Nurseries, Walking groups and Hollingworth Primary school also continue to use and support the work in the park

Chronology of Events.

This year has been another very busy one for the Friends group, as a group we have worked hard, tried new ventures made 'new friends' and had fun!

We have been successful this year in securing grants in the park to the sum of £15,967.00 £11,967.00 to be used over an 18 month period and paid quarterly.

In April we made an application to 5 ways for well being grant funding from Tameside and Glossop Primary Care Trust, this was NHS funding and was a major application for the group to the tune of £11,967.00.

During April we also heard that our bid to win a consultancy for the park was successful. We gained the support free of charge from Ramboll's international to do a feasibility study of the pond area to see what would be needed to get the water flow running again. As well as the work of an engineer we also gained the knowledge and expertise of an Ecologist to check the pond life of the pond to see whether flowing water would adversely affect animal and plant life. The study is a

substantial report and will be used by the Friends group to inform future funding bids to reinstate water flow into the, pond, and improve drainage in areas of the park.

In May we heard that our application had been successful, being such a large grant there were conditions to the grant, we have had to do quarterly monitoring returns and attend meetings with the funders and Community Voluntary Action Tameside. The whole process of this grant has led to a major learning curve for our group and has enabled us to expand and develop both as a group and in terms of the work that we do.

The grant was for the training of volunteers to facilitate Green gym or practical activity sessions in the park, develop a sculpted picnic area, facilitate events and activity/ Green gym sessions in the park.

In May we were also approached by Greater Manchester Ecology unit to see if the Friends group wished to be involved in their work on logging Wildlife in Greater Manchester. The group met with the Ecology Officer and following this a programme of Wildlife and Tree identification sessions was drawn up using the park as one of the locations.

June and July we had two visits from Nurses from Singapore made possible through our contact with the University of Manchester who co-ordinate the exchange programme. The Nurses were a delight to work with and even though the weather was very wet, they still did so much maintenance work, cutting down Balsam, mulching around fruit trees and through the Willow archway. As a group we felt privileged to work with them.



Showing off their arbour shaping.

Nurses having fun after all the work



Nurses working in the rain.



The Group also had an event planned for July 08 to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee, unfortunately the heavy rains leading up the event and on the day led to the event being cancelled due to poor ground conditions. This was sad after all the work which had gone into the preparation and planning for the event.

At the end of July members of the group took part in a bag packing and promotional session in the Tesco store Hattersley accompanied by children of one of the board members at the time.

The session was lucrative in raising some funds, this was welcome as the Group had lost some finance on the cancelled event and the Portaloo for example had to be paid for even though it was cancelled on the day. The session also served to raise the profile of the group with wider communities.

September



Installation of the Nature trail :Pond board.

Board showing the former Etherow House.



Routed Nature trail post.



The Map Board

During September the Nature trail was installed, following months of work to plan and develop the trail. The Committee were supported by members of the wider Friends group in this work.

Dab Graphics were very professional and also donated a board and stand for the 'House' information, this was originally not included as it was outside our budget. For the Nature trail to be effective, Quiz sheets were devised to enable individuals, families, groups and schools to go around the course answering questions, this has been used as an activity at our events. Local shops have also displayed Quiz sheets for people to take. Quiz sheets can now be downloaded from the Friends Website, which one of our members has developed for us, and now manages.

September Event:



Start of the Dog Show



Families enjoying Beat the Goalie



Tug of war time.

September Event



Making Origami boats



Sailing the boats on Hollingworth Brook during the boat race.

The end of September event was a great success with many people participating on the day and joining in the fun. We were able to launch the newly installed Nature trail at this event by having a Nature trail quiz competition as part of the event. We had many attractions including Martin's Wildlife stand with beautiful Barn Owls, Circus skills, Crafts Olympic and Jubilee quizzes, Origami Boat Making and sailing, Crafts, Woodturning, Corn Dolly Making, Orienteering competition, Ornithology stand, Spinning demonstrations, Laurel Green school of Dance, Tao of Steve Band and Flower arranging and demonstrating.

The preparations for the event also necessitated that we contact the Environment Agency for permission to use Hollingworth Brook, the Agency were very supportive to our work and ensured the clearance of debris from the Brook in time for the event.

In October we applied for You Choose funding unfortunately we did not get the funding. We were however very fortunate to receive funding from Tameside, Longdendale and Hattersley District Assembly which we were able to match with a grant from Community First administered by the Greater Manchester Community Development agency.

These two grants together enabled us to purchase a huge Oak log to be placed by the river for carving into a bench. The group were also able to commission a Welcome board from Dab Graphics to be placed near the Printer's Park entrance to the park.

Finance from these funding sources have also supported events and helped with our insurance costs.

During October the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit hosted a 'Trees in Autumn' identification session in the park which was well attended and popular. One of our volunteers trained with the Ecology Unit in logging Trees and Wildlife for their survey.

In October we also held our first planning session for the Green Gym work, as we hoped to start delivering sessions in the November. We were very fortunate to recruit new volunteers for this work 3 of whom had trained or were training in Horticulture with the RHS.

In November we held our Coffee morning at St. Mary's Church and as well as our own displays were able to do a presentation of old photos of Hollingworth which attracted much interest.

We also held 2 volunteer days in November and worked with local volunteers, a Staff member and Students from the University of Manchester to plant a Jubilee wood. The trees were donated by the Woodland Trust. We also worked with local volunteers to and clear out the pond in the park.



Volunteers with Students



A very Green Pond

In November we started our Green Gym sessions, these carried through to December and with an extra session being offered in March. As a group we decided to work initially with Hollingworth Primary School as we felt it important for children to be involved as activity levels in recent years have decreased amongst children.



Wendy from Faraway Forest school setting up camp



Children listening to Wendy.



The camp in the woods



Making an `Alien Den`

As well as the Forestry work with the school, the children were engaged in planting Daffodils, and making Willow door wreaths for Christmas. Some activities we did in the school or school grounds as the weather was becoming very cold and at times very frosty. The Trust for Conservation Volunteers led the wreath making session.

Between January and the end of March the group held a volunteer session



Volunteers and students relaxing



Newly installed bird box.



Installing a bird box.



Volunteers and Students get stuck in!

During this period we also commissioned and designed the Welcome board to go at the Printer's park entrance and commissioned the log to go by the river and the logs that were to make the picnic benches.



Hoola Hoola aliens in their dens and their transport for home! During March session with the school.

During **February** the group applied for Green Flag status, this was a fair bit of work involving the development of a Management and Maintenance plan, which has proved very useful and will be easy to update annually, it also involved Tameside MBC in doing a Maintenance plan and looking at Health and Safety issues in the park.

During March 4 Volunteers took part in Green Gym training in Doncaster facilitated by the Trust for Conservation Volunteers, the training provided a manual and good proformas for registration, health and safety and well being.

Between December and the end of March the group also planted bulbs for the Spring and had the new Welcome Board at Printer's Park installed and the old one which was both an eyesore and a safety hazard removed.



Old board with broken covering and rusting post.



The new board following installation



New backing for the notice board



Winter at the pond!

To conclude.

This has been a very exciting and extremely busy year for the group, we have made many new friends and the park is being used much more than ever before. The work with the University has enabled us to do much more maintenance in the park and the physical improvements provided by the Welcome board has enabled people to see what is available in the park and the Nature trail has added a further interest and activity for people to do. The Bird boxes have benefitted wildlife and also made the park appear more `cared for`.

The NHS grant has led to regular income for the group and has enabled us to reach out to more people, recruit more volunteers take part in training and grow and develop as a group.

The Website, Flickr and Facebook pages have raised the profile of the group and enabled people to get in touch with us electronically and have given us a useful vehicle for publicity and promotion.

The group also had time for a social organised by members for everyone involved with our work, we held this at Mama Mias in March with over 30 people attending.

We are now looking forward to hearing the results of our Green Flag application and seeing our work to plan and develop the picnic area and bench come to fruition, Andy Burgess has been recruited again to do the carving and Richard Wyatt to supply the timber.

Further work with the Trust for Conservation Volunteers has been planned they are to train volunteers to build steps in the park, close to handrails which were installed last year.

The planning group for Adult Green Gym sessions are also to meet soon to develop adult sessions in the park.

We are also looking forward to being part of the Hollingworth Carnival in May.

For those of us involved in park business it has been a very busy and very rewarding year.

All that remains now is to thank everyone that has supported our work during this period,

Our Thanks

We wish to thank all our volunteers, participants, Rambolls international, our contractors Andy Burgess and Wyatts, Our Funders, Tameside and Glossop Primary Care Trust, Community First, Longdendale and Hattersley District Assembly. We also wish to thank the support agencies, Community Voluntary Action Tameside, Greater Manchester Community Development Foundation.

Our Local Councillors

Tameside Council Officers and Parks maintenance staff.

Children and staff of Hollingworth Primary school have worked with us on designs the Green Gym sessions.

Hollingworth Scouts and Explorers.

We wish also to thank the following individuals, businesses and organisations:

Martin Turner	Wildlife Facilitator
Nicola Marshall	British Red Cross
Mama Mia's Hollingworth	Green Flag Officer for Tameside (<i>at the time of the report</i>)
Wickes Store Glossop	Local Business (Donation of 2 vouchers for meals to the value of £10.00 each as raffle prize for October Event)
National Lottery Board	Raffle Prize donation October Event
St. Mary's Church Hollingworth	Big Lottery Board for continued advice and support and funding. Final report accepted during this period.
Hollingworth Primary School	Providing the group with a venue for meetings.
Paul Booth Local Gardener	Practical support with planting flowers and bulbs
Co-op Glossop	For loan of Generator for October and sponsorship
Mayor of High Peak.	Providing raffle prizes for October event.
	Attending the September event and assisting with prize giving and judging of competitions.

Alan Graham	District Assembly, practical support and co-ordinating the maintenance team
Kevin Garside Members of the local community. Annette Swindells Tameside MBC Maintenance team Roy and Annette	Advice and Support, District Assembly Office. All who have helped with the practical work. Ongoing help and support and clearing litter For all their practical help, advice and support For keeping an eye on the park, litter picking and support with planting.
Mick Spinkiss	Gardening support.
The Cutting Hollingworth Wood Turner	Raffle Prize donation October Event Alan.
One Call Hollingworth	Donation of printing services for the September event and selling Orienteering maps on our behalf.
Greater Manchester Orienteering Association	Advice and Support a special thanks to Jim Nightingale from GMOA.
The Willow Man	Support at the September event.
Barbara Bohan	Support at the September event
Tesco Stores Glossop	Raffle prize for the September event.
Tameside MBC Community Chest	Grant aid for the September event and other work.
Firbank Motors	Special thanks for sponsoring our programmes for the September event.
The Bulls Head Tintwistle	Raffle prize for the September event.
Tulip foods	Food for coffee morning

Tao of Steve	Playing at September event
Laurel Green school of Dance	Dancing at the September event
The Trust for Conservation Volunteers	Providing advice and training
Green Gym Volunteers	At the time of this report this was: Margaret Hoerty, Pip Billings, Monica Walker and Sophie Bromley
The University of Manchester	Leadership Challenge Programme
Wendy Smith	Faraway Forest School

Thank you to everyone who has supported our activities over this period, and a grateful thanks to anyone we may have inadvertently left out.

A special thank you to both Volunteers and Committee officers and members who have turned out in all weathers to make the work a success demonstrating fantastic team work, and giving freely of their time and skills, and to those delivering leaflets on our behalf or displaying notices.

This has been my second year as Chair and it has been a pleasure to work with such a motivated Committee, friends and volunteers, it is also encouraging to see so many young people now becoming involved in our work, and also see the expansion of our volunteer base.

We have also had donations in kind for Mettricks Glossop, Mc.Donalds and Costco and personal donations from people supporting our work.

As a group we are overwhelmed by the goodwill and support we are attracting and we hope we can continue to make improvements to the park and look after it with support from our friends, funders and Tameside MBC for the benefit of everyone who wishes to enjoy this green space.

A very big thank you to everyone.

Maria Roberts: Chair.

