

Friends of Whirlow Brook Park (FoWP) Newsletter

Issue 7 - March 2022



Message from the Chair

Spring is never early at Whirlow Brook because of our height above sea level. But the witch hazel in the young children's play area has been flowering for weeks, the early rhododendrons are still flowering and the hellebores and snowdrops in the Su3a Commemorative Garden are in full bloom. The bulbs we planted last autumn on the drive side are poking through but the scillas on the top lawn appear to have a touch of stage fright!



The necessary felling of the larch trees removed the protection afforded to other trees behind the house, at least one of which was a victim to the recent sudden storm. A few of the older rhododendrons lost branches: otherwise the park escaped serious damage. The felling is now completed and the logs are being removed. Some flood alleviation measures are being planned and then the area is to be replanted with native species next winter. There will be paths and glades for picnicking - and it will be fascinating to be able to monitor how quickly an ancient woodland floor regenerates itself.

Thanks are due to Ecclesall councillors who approved a grant of £500 towards a composting project. This will be sited by the screen fence opposite the lower pond so that it can be easily used by those tending the commemorative garden. We hope to be able to demonstrate the science of composting later in the year. For now the main thrust has to be the replanting of the

'sunken' garden. This is due to start on 21 March when I hope the two octagonal beds will be planted. The rest of the sunken garden will be completed in April and May as funds allow.

We are also looking to replace the rotten wooden animal sculptures in the play area. Donations and help with fund-raising activities are always very welcome! We have a busy season ahead with the climate action project. There will be lots of opportunities to be involved in an 'eco-audit' of the park and adjoining woodland. This work will give us a base-line against which we can monitor the effect of climate action and biodiversity measures. It will help us produce a master plan to guide our work for the next 10-20 years. Exciting times are ahead! April May and June are wonderful months in the park - do come and enjoy it.

Shelagh Woolliscroft, Chair of FoWP

Our next volunteer days

Volunteer sessions run from 9.45am-12.15pm meeting at the grass square just below the top car park. No need to book - just turn up! There will be a sign-in sheet and health and safety information for new volunteers. We will also ask for an emergency contact number for a partner, friend or neighbour. (Under GDPR, we don't keep this data and it is shredded after each session).

Please wear sturdy shoes and bring gloves. There are a variety of gardening tools to use but you are welcome to bring your own. Bring a drink and hand sanitiser.

Dates:

Saturday 2 April, Monday 11 April, Saturday 7 May, Monday 16 May, Saturday 4 June, Monday 20 June Saturday 2 July

Volunteers should still continue to wear masks in the gardener's store. And please don't come to the sessions if you feel unwell or have got a positive LFT/PCR result.

Climate Change Project Event

Our Climate Change Action Project started with a bang on Saturday 12 March at Whirlow Brook Hall, with the opening address by Olivia Blake MP, Shadow Minister for Climate Change.

Around 70 people attended to hear Professor Ian Rotherham, from the South Yorkshire Biodiversity Research Group (SYBRG) speak about the climate emergency and the importance of local responses. Other speakers from the Wildlife Trust and Sheffield Hallam University, focused on flood alleviation in the Limb Valley and the impact of soil erosion. Councillor Colin Ross chaired the event, with Councillors Barbara Masters and Brian Halshaw also attending.



Olivia Blake MP

The Project is being funded by the National Lottery Community Fund after a successful bid was launched by the Friends Group for a grant of £8,450. To begin with, the project will involve both the Friends, SYBRG and the local community to take part in 'Citizen Science' activities which will include:

- Training
- Surveying/auditing
- Developing an implementation plan
- Monitoring of rainfall

- Monitoring of stream-flow
- Monitoring of soil erosion from steeply sloping ancient woodland
- Monitoring ecological recovery in grasslands areas
- Monitoring of ponds - for selected species and especially damselflies & dragonflies
- Monitoring of bumblebees & butterflies in garden areas
- Education & communication - for Friends and the wider audience

There will be dedicated fieldwork days to support this and a celebratory event with on-line materials.



Speakers, Councillors, SYBRG and Members of the Committee at the launch.

You can sign up for any of the workshops via the 'Bookwhen' booking system (click on the icon below.) More information on our website. We hope you will join us in this very exciting and important project.

<https://friendsofwhirlowbrookpark.org.uk/climate-change/>



Easter Eggcursion

Come and join in the fun at our exciting Easter Egg Trail in the Park on **Saturday 16th April**. There will be a trail to follow to find the clues to win your Easter Egg at the finish! Fun for all the family. Come along anytime **between 1-4pm**.



FoWP Contact Information

If you wish to volunteer and/or join the friends please contact us at:

Website:

www.friendsofwhirlowbrookpark.org.uk

Email:

friendsofwhirlowbrookpark@gmail.com

Facebook@friendsofwhirlowbrookpark

Twitter @FriendsBrook

Telephone: 0114 255 8948

'Sounds of Summer' 2022

We are organising some more music in the park concerts this year, to be held from 5-7.30pm on the last Sunday in May, June, July, August and September. These will not be widely publicised because we don't as yet have a decent toilet, but you are welcome to bring your family and friends. More details to come. If there are any bands or solo singers out there that are interested in playing please let us know. Contact Maggie on 07592 029165.



Volunteer Update

With the weather warming up a little since our last update, there has been lots of work going on in the Park. We've planted the beech hedge by the fence in the top car park. The sunken garden has been mulched and dug over ready for planting this month. The walls in the sunken garden have also been rebuilt after the conifer roots were taken out. And we have attacked and pruned the cornus (dogwood) which has been neglected for many years. It looks a bit sparse at the moment but it will soon regrow. At the session on 5 March, we had our best turnout yet, with 26 enthusiastic volunteers, including six students from the University.



Rebuilding the wall in the sunken garden

Soroptimists donate trees

Hallamshire Soroptimists planted the first of five trees to be planted in the sunken garden to celebrate 50 years since the club was chartered in 1971 and also 100 years since the International Organisation was formed. The tree, Acer Palmatum Red Emperor, was paid for by Hallamshire Soroptimists and planted by their President Angela Karck, along with gardener Jack Leach from SCC.



Soroptimist President, Angela Karck

Tool Sharpening 2 April

After a very successful tool sharpening event last October, our tool sharpening guru, Geoff, will be back to work his magic on Saturday 2 April between 9.30am and 11.30am by the top car park. He will sharpen your secateurs, shears, edging shears etc in return for a small donation to FoWP. Do come along!



Follow us on Facebook

Please follow us on Facebook - the more likes and followers we get the more exposure we will have to spread the word about our lovely park and recruit more volunteers! Search for <https://www.facebook.com/friendsofwhirlowbrookpark>



Twitter

We are also now on Twitter! Please follow us @FriendsBrook <https://twitter.com/FriendsBrook>

Volunteers wanted!

We're a year old this March! We started this time last year and have achieved a lot with some very keen volunteers. The Friends' group has gained momentum with a volunteer workforce on average of around 15 - 25 volunteers each session. But we'd love to have more of you! Please contact us on any of the contact details in the box on page 3 or just turn up at 9.45am on the green by the top car park on the First Saturday of the month and/or the third Monday of the month. (Details of sessions on front page). You will be made very welcome. We are a friendly bunch and you will learn loads about gardening!

We are also looking for people to join the management committee. We need more help with fund-raising, organising events, and volunteer management. If you're interested and feel you could make a contribution, please contact Shelagh on 0114 255 8948 or Maggie on 07592 029165.

More details on our website at [Volunteering - Friends of Whirlow Brook Park](#)

Ice Cream

We are considering serving ice cream in the park on Sunday afternoons in the summer between 2-4pm with donations to FoWP. This would be done by helpers on a rota basis. If anyone is interested in serving ice cream, please contact Shelagh on 0114 255 8948 or send us an email at friendsofwhirlowbrookpark@gmail.com