

Friends of Whirlow Brook Park (FoWP) Newsletter

Issue 6 - January 2022



Message from the Chair

A rather belated Happy New Year to all our volunteers, friends and supporters. It was good to see so many people enjoying the park over Christmas. Families were queuing up to exchange presents in the new shelter. But horticulturally speaking, much of the park is asleep. There are a couple of early flowering rhododendrons but overall there is a shortage of winter colour apart from the banks of cornus. These haven't been pruned recently so will be cut back to ground level in February, allowing fresh, vibrant red shoots to grow up in time for next winter.

Volunteers were hard at work this month, clearing ivy roots along the fence in readiness for planting a new beech hedge. The construction team have undertaken an audit of the stone work resulting in a list of repairs needed. The history team have been perusing the 1921 census; and had a very useful meeting with Dorne Coggins, the archivist of Dore Village Society and Glynn Burgin, a member of the 'Time Travellers' archeological group which undertook research at Whirlow two years ago.

The management committee has been equally busy. Just before Christmas we heard that we have been successful in our bid to run a community project on action for climate change. We are waiting to hear the outcome of bids to the Local Area Committee for funds to support both a composting project and a tree trail. And we are starting to look at how we can reduce silt levels and congestion in the ponds.

Following the recent misleading public notice, local councillors met with the head of 'Better Parks' to discuss the proposals for both the cafe and the area adjacent to the top car park. (See note from SCC on page 4) We were able to stress the importance of having all agencies working cooperatively towards a single aim - that of making the park an attractive and useful community asset.

Shelagh Woolliscroft
FoWP Chair

Volunteers wanted!

Well we've had a very busy year since we started in March last year and have achieved a lot. 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 below 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 below) 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.

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

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

Our next volunteer days

All volunteer sessions start at 9.45am, 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.

Saturday 5 February
Monday 21 February
Saturday 5 March
Monday 21 March
Saturday 2 April
Monday 11 April

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 been 'pinged' by the NHS App.



Trees in area B on the steep slopes to the north of Limb Brook will be felled by hand and left on the ground to decompose naturally. This removes the risk of the disease spreading as the trees will no longer be producing needles from which spores and fungus spread. This will restore the area to a native woodland landscape while slowing the spread of the disease. The new mix of native woodland trees will provide greater resilience to climate change and future pests and diseases. Trees that are felled and left to decompose will help insects and animals.

Update on Larch Tree Felling

We know that a lot of you will have seen the larch felling and have commented to us about it. SCC have informed us that all the felling work has finished in the Rough Standhills (Area A), apart from the clearance of logs which is due to finish around the beginning of March. The work north of the brook (Area B) will go ahead, but any tree felling works will be delayed now until after the nesting and breeding period, (September onwards). There will not be a blanket closure of the paths to do this work. These estimates of timing are weather dependent. The trees removed from area A will be sent to licensed sawmills that comply with plant health regulations. Affected trees will be processed into usable timber products for construction and joinery work. Bark and branches will remain on the woodland floor to decompose and help protect the ground during the works.

More information, including a map and a six-page document provided by the Council, can be found on the News and Archives page of our website. www.friendsofwhirlowbrookpark.org.uk



Climate Action - we won the lottery!



Most people who attended the consultation event last May wanted to address the issue of climate change as it affects the park and woodland. A grant from the National Lottery fund 'Together for Our Planet' will allow us to do just that. Environmentalist Professor Ian Rotherham is helping to manage the project. The Friends and others in the community will be invited to survey the park and woodland to establish a base line against which interventions can be measured. We will be trained in mapping and monitoring techniques, and encouraged to monitor wildlife, water flow and soil erosion. There will be a series of events throughout the year and a community action plan will be developed.

The project will be launched on the afternoon of **Saturday 12th March** in the Hall and all Friends will be welcome to attend. You will receive an invitation nearer the time but do put the date in your diary!



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/friendsofwhirlbrookpark>



Twitter

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

Easter Eggscursion

We are planning to organise an Easter Egg Trail in the Park on **Saturday 16th April**. If you can spare an hour or two to help between 1-4 p.m. on the day we would love to hear from you. Please contact Shelagh on 0114 255 8948 or Maggie on 0114 236 5699.



Volunteer Update

Since our last update in November, we have had fewer volunteer sessions because of Christmas and New Year. We did some muck spreading to prepare the sunken garden ready for planting and spent a snowy morning digging out the ivy roots around the new fence. Following a successful bid to the Tree Council, we are due to receive a grant towards a beech hedge which will run inside the new fence by the upper car park. We will be planting this in February. We have complained about the dangerous hole in the upper car park. This has been identified as a faulty land-drain and it is being repaired and filled in.



Working in Partnership - a note from Sheffield Parks and Countryside Service

Sheffield Parks and Countryside Service is committed to enhancing access and encouraging community use of the City's amazing green spaces. Friends of Whirlow Brook Park have been working closely with them to develop new opportunities in the Park. Together we have identified the under-utilised compound (located to the right of the upper car park, behind Whirlow Brook Hall) as a viable site for enhancement. Our intention for 2022, is to re-develop this area of the park into a thriving community and educational hub aimed at encouraging greater sustainable use of this wonderful park, while increasing access into the adjoining woodland, round walk and beyond. The plans include:

- Community-focused food and plant growing and horticultural improvements.
- Training and development opportunities.
- Small-scale retail outlet to sell produce from the site.
- Public access to the space along with seating.
- Community space.
- Access to public toilets.
- Improved access into the Woodland behind the site.

This project also offers a collaborative and forward-thinking opportunity as it will see the coordination of three organisations all working together in the same space: Sheffield City Council, Whirlow Brook Park's Friends of Group, and a supporting third party. We hope that by coordinating our efforts, this unique project will not only enhance this underused space, but also support greater use of the whole park and woodland.

This project falls under the Sheffield City Council's Better Parks' initiative. This programme aims to develop partnerships with community groups and civic-minded businesses, to explore new and exciting opportunities for both financial and social investment. Therefore, the opportunity to work in partnership with Better Parks and FoWP will be taken out to market later in 2022. While Sheffield City Council will remain landowners, the successful partner will be offered an agreement for the space (subject to

full planning permission) and will be required to adhere to our cross-partnership aims, goals, and methods of practice.

As plans develop and timescales are agreed SCC will share further updates and means of consultation via online platforms together with the Friends. If you have any questions about this project or any other Better Parks initiatives, please get in touch.

Email: parksandcountryside@sheffield.gov.uk / betterparks@sheffield.gov.uk

Tel: 0114 250 0500



Music in the Park 2022

Those who attended our trial music in the park event last year were keen for it to continue. So we are planning to organise five more events 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.

And finally...

A notice from SCC that will be appearing in Parks and Green spaces,



Caution - Avian flu

- There have been confirmed cases in Sheffield and surrounding areas
- Please **DO NOT** approach, touch or feed birds including ducks, geese, swans etc. in this area
- Follow good hygiene practices including washing hands regularly

If you find dead or diseased birds in our Parks please contact Parks and Countryside on 250 0500. For other locations please call the DEFRA helpline on 03459 335577

Email: parksandcountryside@sheffield.gov.uk

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