

## **Friends of Whirlow Brook Park Operating Plan 2023-24**

This annual operating plan is based on a ten year strategic plan produced in 2023. The work will be undertaken by FoWP volunteers and funded from FoWP resources except where indicated in italics.

### **1. Visitor infrastructure Facilities.**

- Support the cafe build and encourage its use once open. Help with landscaping and planting as requested.
- Put up bird feeders near the cafe as a visitor attraction whilst also encouraging wildlife. (*Grant obtained.*)
- Improve visitor information/interpretation through notice boards, trail maps and other signage. Agree and adopt FoWP house style. (*Two new notice boards are in place, funded by the Local Area Committee*)
- Monitor new road safety features. Continue to press for parking lines in upper car park and for a ban on heavy vehicles. Consider the need for bicycle racks.
- Use social media to raise awareness and promote specific events.
- Review first-aid facilities and make recommendations to SCC.
- Be involved in the tender process for the 'compound'.
- Repair and re-coat benches. (*SCC to provide paint*).
- Alert SCC to the need for major repairs and safety features, e.g. gutter repairs, hand-rails, land-drains.

### **2. Fund-Raising Events**

- Aim to deliver 10 enjoyable public events which raise funds for the children's trail.
- Deliver at least four events specifically for young children.
- Widen publicity for events via social media when cafe and toilet facilities are in place.

### **3. Activities to Support Education, Health and Well-being of Children and Adults**

- Launch the tree trail: produce a trail map plus website information. (*Funded by grant from the Local Area Committee*)
- Collaborate with SCC in developing a young children's trail, to include natural environment features. (*Funded via a number of grants plus match funding from FoWP*).
- Monitor the development of 'green prescribing' (using the power of nature as treatment) to determine its appropriateness.
- Encourage the use of the Park and woodlands for mindfulness, yoga and similar activities.

### **4. Increasing the Range and Number of Park Users and Volunteers**

- Survey current users and develop a marketing strategy to increase footfall throughout the year.
- Research good practice in other Friends of Parks groups.
- Press for signage on Ecclesall Road South/Hathersage Road.
- Maintain links with universities and agencies organising corporate volunteer sessions.
- Raise awareness of volunteering opportunities: encourage people to try it out.

### **5. Restoration and Conservation of the Heritage Landscape**

- Continue historical research and promotion of the park as a heritage asset of regional importance.
- Reassess safety of stone walls and paths: undertake minor, no-cost repairs.
- Seek ranger support to reopen the footpath between the sunken garden and the stone bridge. (*Fund steps etc via bid to Local Area Committee*).
- Obtain cost estimates to remove silt from the lower (duck) pond: liaise with Su3a re the future of both ponds: explore funding sources in preparation for this being a future major project, possibly as part of a broader heritage restoration project.

## **6. Restoration of Formal Gardens and Woodland Belt to Increase Biodiversity**

- Continue twice monthly volunteer gardening sessions plus twice yearly joint 'blitz sessions' with Su3a and Abbeydale Rotary. *Planting will be donated or funded via FoWP budget, replacement plants funded by SCC.*
- In consultation with Area Parks Manager, replant the former rose garden ( - aka 'the concert lawn') with plants for pollinators
- Dig out former herbaceous borders near the main door of the house and plant with shrubs for pollinators. Organise hanging baskets and planters: maintain planting in vicinity of the house. (*Funded by Vine donation*)
- Clear the belt of woodland between the house and the former plantation, replant, including with nut and berry trees. (*Grant application to e.g. Tree Council*)

## **7. Enhancement of Natural Ecological Habitats**

- Maintain brush piles, create dead hedges
- Create a no-mow area between the central path and the woodland adjoining the Limb Brook. Record species, add yellow rattle and other meadow flowers.
- Plant oxygenators in the silt traps above the lower pond.
- Monitor the health of the Limb Brook and the effects of recent interventions uphill of the Park (Slowing the Flow; Replanting of the former larch plantation)
- Introduce oxygenators to the silt trap of lower pond.
- Discontinue use of peat, herbicides and pesticides and single use plastic: use home-made compost and leaf mould for soil improvement.
- Conduct feasibility study of a composting toilet.

## **8. Introduction of Recording Systems**

- Find a permanent home for the weather station and start recording.
- Establish a baseline of wildlife observation and recording.
- Choose the most appropriate recording system.
- Build a recording group.
- Encourage park users to contribute information.

## **9. FoWP Operating Arrangements**

- Improve internal accounting systems
- Maintain website and quarterly newsletters
- Leaflet the local area, aim to increase membership by 20%
- Obtain charitable status
- Spread the load: encourage more people to take on tasks/areas of responsibility.

FoWP, May 2023