

Friends of Whirlow Brook Park (FoWP)

Operating Plan 2025 -26 – Committee Planning Document – Spring 2025

This annual operating plan is based on the ten-year strategic plan produced in 2023 plus actions undertaken in the 2024/25 operating plan, its review and other contingency issues

Operational activities 2025 -26	Review of 2025-26 activities – due Autumn (September/ October 2025) and Spring 2026 (March/ April 2026) for AGM 2026
1. Visitor infrastructure facilities (A1) - Improve visitor information – continue and extend liaison with SCC and other business users via ‘Park Users Group’ eg. signage on A625; notice boards and leaflets; dogs in park; traffic & parking managements; repairs & maintenance... - Liaise with Roots & Blooms and SCC about compound development plans/ options, including FoWP options if no progress by R & B. - Develop a Planned Maintenance Programme (PMP) in partnership with SCC for gardening activities, repairs and improvements, including fixed and mobile structures and general maintenance. - ‘Maintenance’ Project activities to include: top car park fence / hedge; lower car park hand rail; Orchard project gates/ fences; park gates; path edges & surfaces; toilet refurbishment; millpond fence & planting; renewal of wooden benches; maintaining/ repairing / creating old & new dead hedges; ...	
2. Restoration and conservation of heritage landscape (A2) (A6) - Continue historical research and promotion of the park as a heritage asset. - Develop footpath routes and publish route maps - Full tree survey of park to be commissioned and completed. - Commission an ecological survey of the adjacent woodland belt – liaise with SCC	-

- Promote and develop tree sponsorship scheme, linked to survey	
3. Support the education, health and wellbeing of children and adults (A3) - Extend the Tree Trail (Target 50 trees); linked to tree survey (above) - Review options for next stages of Family Trail and other child friendly areas eg. play areas, maze sculptures - Liaise with others to review 'green prescribing' options - Encourage use of park and woodland for adult and child health activities, including partnership with the café to develop social and health events - Review options for further volunteering activities for young people in collaboration with Sheffield Youth Service	-
4. Enhance natural biodiversity and ecological habitats (A4) (B1) (B3) (B4) - Develop projects to support biodiversity within the park eg. Orchard Project, Dead hedges, Living wildlife hedges. - Complete Community Orchard Project Stages 1 and 2; eg. maintain ground – clear laurel, prune fruit trees (as advised); develop entrance gateway and paths; plant 'step over' fruit trees and soft fruit; review herb and physic garden options; remove and replace remaining border (Cupressus) hedge (replace with native hedge); bid for fencing grant support; and review/ develop wild play areas. - Maintain, extend and monitor 'no mow' areas. Including in partnership with SCC introducing and recording meadow/ wildflower areas. - Monitor policy, in partnership with SCC, on the use of chemical herbicides/ pesticides and single use plastic materials within the park.	

- Support SCC and SRWT in Water Restoration Fund bid plans for Rough Standhills Plantation area to control flooding & enhance ecological corridors.	
5. Range and numbers of park users and volunteers. (A5) (B5) - Monitor, evaluate and plan continued public events. Targets: 10 general events; 4 children's events; 3 nature surveys (including bird and owl box monitoring); - 'Engagement Survey' results to be reviewed for future planning work - Work with 'corporate'/ student/ young people volunteer groups in park improvements.; Target 5 corporate day events ... - Increase number of household memberships of FoWP from 120 to 140 - Continue partnership work with other Friends groups to share good practice eg. SCC Green Spaces Forum (& Laura Alson)	-
6. Water management and flood controls (B2) - Liaise with SCC/ Henry Boot/ SRWT on drainage survey to monitor, evaluate and remedy flood problems within the park and woodland areas, including flows, risks and water quality (link to Water Restoration Fund project) - Submit National Heritage Fund bid for flood alleviation (attenuation ponds/ scrapes/ woodland relandscaping/ ponds management; in partnership with SCC/ SRWT/ Henry Boot/ U3A. - Review current bunds, swales and French drains in liaison with SCC, and extend as required - Annual drain/ waterway clearance as part of PMP – bi-annual pond margin work - Review, monitor and maintain the two ponds, mill pond and cascades water features in support of SCC/ SRWT Water Restoration Fund Project	-

NB. Funding bid partnerships essential	
7. Restoration of formal gardens and woodland belt/ margins to increase biodiversity (B4) - continue twice monthly (minimum) routine volunteer gardening sessions (three in summer months) plus 'Blitz sessions' - Planting to assess nectar/pollen benefits in all plans; establish baseline survey for butterfly and bee populations - Liaise with SCC about planned gardens planting management as part of PMP (Planned Maintenance Programme). - Continue to liaise with Vine for planters, hanging baskets and new climbers for hall (ask Gripple to aid wiring systems) - Liaise with Roots & Bloom (compound lease) to develop shared planting activities and use of the compound. - Review planting options in recently flooded (wet) areas; eg. concert lawn garden, horseshoe bed... - Remove invasive species eg Himalayan balsam, ? avias?? - Review options for new areas for herbs and physic garden - Liaise with local stables to obtain horse manure to improve soil quality - Rebuild dead hedge near bird copse	-
8. Development of recording systems/ records (B6) - Review 2024-25 data and actions to further develop wildlife observation and recording from baseline initiative; encourage park users to contribute data information - Liaise with wider groups eg. SR Wildlife Trust to maintain recording data	-
9. FoWP operating arrangements - Develop varied funding sources and contacts to support routine activities and specific projects	-

- Clarify & strengthen volunteer management systems, including recording hours, and team leader structures for decision making - Appoint safeguarding lead, facilitate DBS checks and review safeguarding (and other) policy documents - Improve communication within FoWP: Maintain and enhance options for group emails for volunteers, website developments and newsletters - Ensure charity status requirements are maintained (Trustees)	
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This is a working document for the use of the FoWP management committee to review the 2025-26 Operating Plan. The right hand column allow review in the Autumn (September 2025) and Spring prior to the AGM reporting needs (March 2026)

'Updates' and amendments required for some items – SW and RO to update/ comment/ adapt asap