

Friends of Whirlow Brook Park (FoWP)

Operating Plan 2026 -27 – Committee Review Document (Final)

For submission to 2026 AGM

This annual operating plan is based on the ten-year strategic plan produced in 2023 plus actions undertaken in the 2025 - 26 operating plan, its review and other contingency issues.

The two key aims (Strategic Plan) of FoWP continue to be:

- **‘to improve visitor facilities, whilst conserving the natural and heritage landscape’**
- **‘to enhance the local landscape and ecosystems to be resilient to change’**

Operational activities 2026-27	Review of 2026-27 activities – Due Autumn 2026 & Spring 2027
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; health & safety (annual audit); repairs & maintenance... - Liaise with Roots & Blooms and SCC about compound development plans/ options, including a review of FoWP options eg. Erection of polytunnel & leaf compost bins, storage areas for mulch & waste.... - Develop/ extend PMP (Planned Maintenance Programme) in partnership with SCC for gardening activities, repairs / improvements, including fixed & mobile structures and general maintenance. Report all Health & Safety issues to the Area Parks Manager. (Andy Mumford) - ‘Maintenance’ Project activities to be proactive & reactive - to include: boundary fences, hedges and gates (incl. mill pond); upgrade of Cascades area footpaths; lower car park space markings and extra hand rail; Orchard project stage 3 work; renewal programme for wooden benches; rebuild of dead hedges; maintaining/ repairing stonework & paths...	

- Reactive maintenance & repair in partnership with SCC. Some cost contributions may be required. Eg. water management issues, woodland management project behind hall	
2. Restoration and conservation of heritage landscape (A2) (A6) - Apply for Historic England for 'national listing' - Continue historical research and promotion of the park as a heritage asset. Liaise with new SCC Heritage Officer (Laura Alston) - Develop footpath routes and publish route maps - Complete tree survey of park, including an ecological survey of the adjacent woodland belt (SCC) to develop action plan/ options. Review & refine tree replacements/ sponsorship scheme in consultation with SCC based on survey work - Participate in 'Heritage Open Weeks' – local & national	
3. Support the education, health and wellbeing of children and adults (A3) - Extend the Tree Trail (Target 50 trees); linked to tree survey (see above) - Continue to review options for next stages of Family Trail and other 'natural environment' child friendly areas eg. play areas, picnic benches... - Encourage use of park and woodland for adult and child health activities, including extending partnership with the café to develop social and health events - Extend links with youth organisations and encourage supervised volunteering by young people (Ensure adequate DBS registrations) - Respond positively to requests for volunteering options for vulnerable adults supported by their carers (DBS registration needs)	

4. Enhance natural biodiversity and ecological habitats (A4) (B1) (B3) (B4) - Continue to develop projects to support biodiversity within the park eg. Orchard Project, Dead hedges, Living wildlife hedges, habitat zones, bird feeders, wild flower areas... - Install wildlife camera, review and monitor footage - Complete Community Orchard Project Stage 3; eg. maintain grounds – clear brambles & laurel, prune fruit trees (as advised); plant herbs & healing plants; install seating; create Mediterranean herb bed; complete Stumpery; maintain fences, gates and paths; review herb and physic garden options; review/ develop wild play areas. - Re-plan, maintain and monitor ‘no mow’ areas in partnership with SCC (ecologists & park staff), introducing and recording meadow/ wildflower growth. - Monitor policy, in partnership with SCC, on the use of chemical herbicides/ pesticides & single use plastic materials within the park. - Support SCC and SRWT in ‘Connecting Limbs’ project & Water Restoration Fund plans for Rough Standhills Plantation area to control flooding, protect areas of ancient woodland & enhance ecological corridors. Further costings/ bids may be required - Develop a land-use map of the park to support planning & management - Continue weather recording and analysis	
5. Range and numbers of park users and volunteers. (A5) (B5) - Monitor, evaluate and plan continued public events. Targets: 10 general events; 2 children’s events; 4 nature surveys (including bird and owl box monitoring)	

- Work with 'corporate'/ student/ young people volunteer groups in park improvements; Target 5 corporate day events ... - Continue current pattern of member volunteer activity - Increase number of household memberships of FoWP from 140 to 160 - Continue partnership work with other Friends groups and local interest groups to share good practice eg. SCC Green Spaces Forum, Nature Recovery Sheffield...	
6. Water management and flood controls (B2) (B4) - Contribute to a joint venture partnership with SCC & others in order to manage the woodland area behind the hall eg. remove fallen timber, install scrapes/ ponds/ bunds as advised. (link to Water Restoration Fund project as required) - Review current bunds, swales and French drains in liaison with SCC, and extend as required - Annual water channel clearance as part of PMP; clear drain grids monthly; bi-annual pond margin work (with Su3a) - Complete research into pond repair/ restoration/ controlled management options (excluding Mill Pond). Produce fully costed options for review & public consultation - Organise training for volunteers in 'safe working in/ near water' - Review options for natural water collection – for watering etc in 'drought' restrictions	
7. Restoration of formal gardens and woodland belt/ margins to increase biodiversity (B4) - Continue/ increase twice monthly (minimum) routine volunteer gardening sessions (three in summer months) plus 'Blitz sessions'. Record volunteer hours	

- Planting to assess nectar/pollen benefits in all plans; continue to survey & record butterfly and bee populations - Liaise with SCC about planned gardens planting management as part of PMP (Planned Maintenance Programme), including agreeing a programme of pruning for shrubs & climbers - Continue to liaise with Vine Hotels for planters, hanging baskets and new climbers for hall; Liaise on repairs/ maintenance needs - Liaise with Roots & Bloom (compound) to develop shared use of the compound. - Review planting options with SCC including new trees & shrubs in the area behind the hall - Remove invasive species eg Himalayan balsam, - Develop options for new areas for herbs & medicinal plants - Liaise with local stables to obtain horse manure to improve soil quality - Fully rebuild dead hedge near bird copse/ Blue Trail	
8. Development of recording systems/ records (B6) - Review 2024/ 25/26 data and actions to further develop wildlife observation and recording; encourage park users to contribute data information. At least 4 nature recoding activities as target - Liaise with wider groups eg. SR Wildlife Trust to maintain recording data - Improve planting records/ data	
9. FoWP operating arrangements - Develop varied funding sources and contacts to support routine activities and specific projects - Clarify & strengthen volunteer management systems including volunteer hours, induction processes, 'action group'...	

- Continue DBS checks and review of safeguarding via designated safeguarding lead - Review all policy documents in accordance with schedule - Improve communication within FoWP and with Su3a: Develop group emails for volunteers; maintain website & newsletters processes - Review & ensure charity status requirements are maintained (Trustees) - Liaise with SCC on reviewing this (FoWP) plan with a view towards developing a whole park area 'masterplan'	
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This is a working document which the management committee will review in Autumn 2026 & Spring 2027. The blank right-hand column allows the Autumn 2026 and Spring 2027 reviews to be recorded.

FoWP

Spring 2026