

Annual Report 2013

Committee

At the 2012 AGM the Committee was elected as follows: Chair: Helen Mitchell, Treasurer: Alan Collett, Vice Chair: Judith Lubbock, Secretary: Anne Balls, other members: Glenys Banks, Liz Davies (Eaton Park Community Association and Community Centre representative), Janet Duckett, Cynthia Gooda and Monty Fairfoot as membership secretary. Also: joint web managers: John King and Christine Wilson.

Fundraising

Fundraising this year has been through a combination of grant applications, donations and tombolas and stalls run by Glenis Banks and Cynthia Gooda. We have had our most successful year yet, and, in addition to a grant from Norwich City Council to support events, planting and on-going costs such as room hire, have raised sufficient funds to purchase and install a wooden bench and two outdoor table tennis tables.

We are currently liaising with Norwich City Council over installation of the table tennis tables and bench, both of which should be installed in good time for the spring.

Wildlife and gardening

We have undertaken two planting projects. Waitrose gave us six fruit trees as part of the John Lewis anniversary celebrations. Planted at the end of last winter's cold snap, these needed regular watering throughout the summer and are now well-established.

We completed our long-standing project of planting up the grassy bank beside the pitch and putt car park with crocus and tête a tête. Bulbs were bought with a grant from Norwich City Council, and we also received a very generous donation of bulbs from Friends of Norwich in Bloom.

We continue to maintain the bandstand flower beds, and the planters at the railway station and beside the community centre. We are also keen to see Eaton Park's developing meadow and the woodland beside it thrive. Paul Holley at Norwich City Council is advising us and we have ideas for this for 2014.

Events and activities

There was a packed programme of events in the park this year. Here is a list of those that we either ran or were involved with:

- Throughout the year - Norwich City Council promoted five bandstand concerts. These are organised by Brian Dermott. Glenis and Cynthia organised fundraising stalls on each occasion including: tombolas for children and adults; lucky dips for boys and girls, second hand book and jigsaw puzzle sales, rhubarb and plant sales
- April fruit tree planting alongside Waitrose volunteers
- May, tree walk with Richard Hobbs
- June, The Big Lunch. In addition to a band and National Submarine Day taking place, Halifax organised family activities. We helped promote the day which attracted large crowds especially in the afternoon
- June, we held our first Friends get-together in our new room
- July, Moth hunt with Peter Walton
- September, Norfolk Wildlife Trust drop in family event: a super selection of activities plus Christine Collett devised and ran a new family tree trail
- September, Heritage Open Days: Christine Wilson gave two guided walks

- October: Helen, Alan, Glenys, Christine, Bryant and Sue met Simon Meek and Maggie Finck of Norwich City Council for our annual information–sharing walkabout
- November: we held two bulb-planting sessions
- November: in a new development Christine Collett coordinated two bench cleaning sessions. She has undertaken an audit of benches in the park and, with help from Norwich City Council we plan to take on ensuring our park benches are clean and usable
- In November Christine took a party of Easton College students round the park.

Communications

Friends of Eaton Park continues to provide a voice and a channel of communication with users for Eaton Park. We receive regular enquiries and request for help through the website and on Facebook and Twitter, and are able to help most of the time.

Christine Collett has taken on the two park notice boards, which have been considerably smarter and more up to date this year. Anne Balls has obtained a steady stream of press coverage for the park throughout the year and the Chair is regularly asked to comment on park developments.

Our website, which was set up five years ago by Christine Wilson and John King has had 43,458 hits (30,700 last year). Website technology has moved on since the site was created and we aim to upgrade the site next year to make it simpler and easier to update.

We now have 870 Facebook fans (625 last year) and 852 followers on Twitter (190 last year). Together they allow us to reach out to many different individuals, groups and organisations, amongst them photographers and journalists. We are regularly re-tweeted by Norwich City Council, Visit Norwich and Visit Norfolk.

We have invested in a pop-up stand and banner using the new logo and corporate identity. These are for use in our room and on the rotunda pillars to flag up our fundraising stalls on event days.

Friends Room

This was the first year that we have been able to use our new room in the pavilion. Norwich City Council has refurbished the room beautifully for us and in June we held a well-attended social evening for members. The room has provided a perfect base for fundraising activities on band days and houses history displays and photographs of boaters and their boats that have been donated to the Friends by a local photographer Stuart Goodman. Norwich City Council has also installed water and a kitchen unit in our room and is arranging for it to be tested before we use it.

Membership

There are currently 54 members, with some outstanding renewals. All renewals are now in November, to coincide with the AGM. We were shocked and saddened that Monty Fairfoot, our membership secretary, fell ill suddenly and died this year. He was a supportive and active member, with a much-loved sense of humour and great affection for the park. He was also a devoted parkrunner. New member, Pat Garner stepped in to take on the role of membership secretary.

Other Park News

The new contractor, Norwich Norse (environmental) seems to have settled in well. Levels of litter are low and we have been impressed by the overall quality of their work, especially in the rose garden.

Rob Trown has gained planning permission to create a new crazy golf on some of the large area left vacant from the decommissioning of the bowling greens. Work has begun and already looks impressive. Rob hopes to have the new facility open for Easter 2014. He will also be creating a smaller putting green alongside the crazy golf.

The current lease on the cafe has expired. Norwich City Council is opposing a new lease on the same basis and the matter has been with its solicitors for several months. The situation may yet take a while to resolve.

Conclusion

During the first six months of the year Friends of Eaton Park did some 700 hours of voluntary work.

Our work includes cleaning benches, running events, raising funds, planting and gardening, helping spread the word about the park and all the good things that happen here, keeping in touch with people who love it, and working with Norwich City Council and others to *help Eaton Park thrive*.

Special thanks to our committee:

Judith Lubbock our vice chairperson, who was instrumental in raising the key grant towards the ping pong tables and coordinated our autumn bulb planting sessions; Anne Balls, Secretary, for her work on press, minutes and events; Alan Collett, Treasurer for keeping our accounts in order, leading on the fruit tree planting and providing valuable feedback to the city council on plant care; Glenys and Cynthia, whose fund-raising activities bring pleasure to park users as well as funds for new benches, and who bring colour to the park through their planting projects; Liz and Janet who look after us so well at the Community Centre; Christine Wilson for leading on the website and park history, and for her support with many events and activities, and Pat Garner for stepping in to take on the membership. Warm memories of Monty Fairfoot too.

Thanks also to our partners...

At Norwich City Council: a very big thank you to: Maggie Finck and Simon Meek, also to Paul Holley and Matt Griffiths. Staff at Norwich Norse (environmental) for their hard work and care of Eaton Park, PCSO Julie Sayer, PCSO for keeping us in touch with developments in the park; Brian Dermott for our wonderful band programme, and Ian Couzens for auditing our accounts free of charge.

...and to other members of the Friends:

Susan Yallop and Bryant Mickleburgh for their enthusiastic support with planting, watering and more; John King for being our webmaster, and Christine Ragan for devising and leading our new bench cleaning campaign and for the creativity and flair she brings to our events and activities such as the new tree trail.

Helen Mitchell, Chair, Friends of Eaton Park, November 2013



**Eaton Park Bandstand, tweeted by regular
Twitter correspondent Stuart Beard.
28 November 2013.**