



Friends of Eastfield Park

Chair's Report - 20th February 2017

Activities & Achievements during 2016

Organisation & Administration:

- New 'Lone Worker Policy' agreed at the 2016 AGM and implemented during year.
- New FoEP Website created. It will continue to include regular monthly news updates from Jan. 2017 onwards. Former news items currently kept in an archive on old site but will be gradually transferred to the new site.
- No progress with website about Eastfield Park itself but this too will be transferred to a new site, enabling improved developments.
- Frequent posts on *Facebook* including monthly pictures of wildlife. 301 'likes' at end of 2016 (202 in 2015).
- Continuing posts on *Streetlife*, *Litter Action* and *Love Parks* websites and regular articles for *NN3* magazine.
- Active contributions to the Eastfield Park Management Committee including Park inspections and updated Action Plan.
- Successful public consultation regarding provision of new pathways for the Park (133 responses).
- Conservation management of Park discussed with Matt Johnson (Living Landscape Manager at the The Wildlife Trust) during a site visit to Eastfield Park in January.
- Reports submitted to EPMC: *State of the Park* (January); *Reflections on the Conservation Management of Eastfield Park* (February); *ALL-WEATHER PATHWAYS FOR EASTFIELD PARK Consultation Report & Recommendations* (June); *Drainage Issues* (September); *EASTFIELD PARK MEADOWS Including a Report on the 2016 'Set-aside' Area* (November). Principal recommendations contained in these reports accepted by EPMC and NBC.
- Four possible routes for all-season paths proposed in the pathways consultation prioritised by FoEP Committee. Top priority: pathway from Booth Lane entrance to Skiddaw Walk entrance.
- FoEP Chair, Vic Smith, gave a talk to Northampton College students about the Park and the work of the FoEP.
- FoEP Treasurer, John Baxter, continues to organise insurance for FoEP and Northampton 'Friends of Forum'. Insurance transferred to new provider in December.
- Funding received from Cllr Anna King's community fund (£300) to support 'Easter@Eastfield' and opening of new play area.
- Minor funding obtained from Lloyds Bank and Nationwide volunteers for work in the Park.
- Unsuccessful applications to Veolia Environmental Trust and Tesco Bags of Help scheme for additional funding for play area.
- Five new litter bins purchased using funds already received for this. (Installed in Jan, 2017).
- New gardening tools (including a second wheelbarrow) purchased to help with park maintenance; old tools repaired by 'Tools for Self Reliance' free of charge.
- Guidelines for park users leaflet (produced by NBC) being distributed by FoEP members.
- Park Ranger Kevin Skerry left NBC; replaced by Dean Byrne.
- Silver Award in the 2016 *Northampton in Bloom* campaign and 'Thriving' Award in the RHS *It's Your Neighbourhood* campaign. FoEP Chair, Vic Smith, received a Community Award in the *Pride in Northamptonshire Awards 2016*.

Park Improvements:

- New Junior Play Area (£106 funding) constructed by Wicksteed Playscapes and opened by Michael Ellis MP at a public ceremony on 16th July.
- Volunteers from Nationwide Building Society cleared informal pathways, created a hibernaculum (refuge for animals) and a log wall (habitat for insects) and weeded and planted part of the Crescent Rock Garden.
- Volunteers from Lloyds Bank filled in holes on the 'Monster' play mound, extended the cleared area in front of the ha-ha and weeded and planted another part of the rock garden.
- Volunteers from Central Vineyard Church carried out a litter pick on 24th July: 18 bags of litter plus other rubbish (including a duvet, seat frame and decorating debris) removed.
- A team from Broadmead Baptist Church planted an area on the 'back' of the Crescent Rock Garden with daffodil bulbs (adjacent to the area already planted with dwarf daffodils).
- Students from Northampton College removed ten bags of litter from the Park and carried out bush trimming and other minor tasks.
- Community 'Spring Clean' (as 'Clean for Queen' campaign) on 5th & 6th March, *ad hoc* litter picking event on 14th June, and 'Autumn Enhancement' on 15th October: 27 sacks of litter collected in March, five sacks in June and 16 in October. Other larger items of rubbish (e.g. seats, shopping trolleys, toy trampoline) removed on all occasions. Eleonore House Insect-friendly Border also weeded, dug, fertilised and replanted during Autumn Enhancement.
- 'Set aside' area of grassland in species-rich area within parkland left unmown until August: eight grass and nineteen wildflower species identified by Wildlife Trust staff.
- Work started on preparing site for an artificial meadow north of Eleonore House.
- Area between lake and set-aside area cleared of weed trees and unwanted bushes; similar improvements to the 'back' of the Crescent Rock Garden.
- FoEP volunteer, Chris Freeman, trimmed trees and bushes along Apple Tree Walk and informal pathways in Lakeview Spinney.
- Tree surgeons from the Acorn Environmental Management Group (based in Peterborough and sub contracted by Amey) carried out major work on the trees in the Park including some felling, pollarding and removal of dangerous branches.
- Amey/Enterprise (under contract to NBC) continued to carry out grass cutting, litter picking and emptying of dog and litter bins to an acceptable standard (although litter and fly-tipping continue to be major problems, particularly in the wooded areas).

Heritage & Wildlife

- Research continues on Park's history and biodiversity. Regular posting of wildlife pictures on Fb.
- Students from Arbours Primary School, Northampton College and the University of Northampton used the Park for study purposes.

Events:

- 'Easter@Eastfield' on Easter Sunday, 2016, organised with help from Guide Dogs for the Blind, Broadmead Baptist Church and St Alban's Anglican Church.
- Poster display at the Eastfield Academy Summer Fete on Saturday 18th June, mainly about the new play area but also concerning the pathway consultation and aspects of the Park's history.
- Participated in 'Carols by the Park' with Broadmead Baptist and St Alban's Anglican Churches on 19th December, ending with refreshments in Eleonore House.

Vic Smith (FoEP Chair, February 2017)