



# Friends of Eastfield Park

## Chair's Report - 19<sup>th</sup> February 2019 Activities & Achievements during 2018

### Organisation & Administration:

- The 2018 AGM was held in the Eden Close Community Hub since the Broadmead Church site was undergoing redevelopment. No public talk was given preceding the AGM but an extended Chair's report was presented.
- All serving committee members were re-elected at the AGM and Cllr Paul Joyce was elected for the first time; the AGM agreed that the FoEP constitution should be reviewed during 2018.
- A new Complaints Policy and a revised Data Protection Policy were developed and approved by the FoEP committee.
- All FoEP members were requested to sign a new Consent Form affirming agreement with the FoEP aims and giving the FoEP permission to hold contact information in a secure password-protected data file.
- As a result of the new Policy a revised membership list was produced including 'full members' (with voting rights) and 'contact members' who wish to receive information from the FoEP without voting rights.
- A draft new Constitution was developed and approved by the FoEP committee and circulated to members by email for consideration at the AGM in February, 2019.
- The new FoEP Website ([foep.eastfieldpark.com](http://foep.eastfieldpark.com)) continues to be maintained with regular monthly news updates.
- There have been frequent posts on the FoEP Facebook page about activities in the Park. The page had 514 'likes' at end of 2018, compared to 412 in 2017. We now have 515 'Facebook followers'.
- We continue to post details of our events on *Nextdoor*, *Litter Action* and *Love Parks* websites.
- We have gained permission to display temporary notices advertising FoEP events on posts at park entrances.
- Vic Smith continues to write regular articles about the Park and related matters for the free magazine, *In & Around NN3: Parklands, Boothville & Westone*. Some of these have been published more widely.
- Vic also wrote a short piece about the Park for the updated St Alban's parish history.
- We continue to liaise with Matt Johnson (Wildlife Trust Living Landscape Manager) regarding the monitoring and management of park habitats, particularly the set-aside meadow areas.
- We established a working relationship with Will Heckford (Sports Development Officer at Northamptonshire Sport) and are beginning to work on joint projects.
- We continued to make active contributions to the work of the Eastfield Park Management Committee including facilitating Park inspections and producing updated Action Plans.
- Vic Smith produced reports about the Park that were submitted to the EPMC for consideration. These included a *State of the Park (Footpaths, Facilities & Ground Conditions)* report (January 2018) and a *State of the Park (Water Resources & Vegetation)* report (November 2018) The main recommendations in these reports were accepted by the EPMC.
- John Baxter (FoEP Treasurer) continues to organise third party insurance for the FoEP and other Parks and Open Spaces User Groups. He now regularly attends the PMC Chairs Forum.
- The FoEP received £2,700 from Cllr Paul Joyce's community fund and £1,000 jointly from Cllr Mike Hallam and Cllr Anna King's funds for improvements to the Park.
- The FoEP also received just over £250 from Cllrs Hallam, King and Hibbert for 'Easter@Eastfield'.
- An application was made to the Tesco's Bags of Help scheme for funding for park improvements. As of 1<sup>st</sup> January the FoEP had not been informed about the result of this application.
- No progress has yet been made regarding funding for additional all-weather pathways or pond restoration.
- Hooks and shelves were put up in the FoEP garage to make better use of space for the storage of equipment.
- The FoEP has been informed that we may have to move to a different garage in the near future.
- The FoEP were presented with a Gold Award in *Northampton in Bloom 2018* and a 'Thriving' Award in the RHS *It's Your Neighbourhood* campaign. The Friends also received a joint first community award from the Campaign to Protect Rural England's Northamptonshire Branch in December, 2018.
- Research continues into the Park's history and biodiversity with recent findings posted on Facebook or used in articles for *In & Around NN3*. (A good example was the article on the Weston Favel House gardens.)

## Park Improvements:

- A new bench and a waste bin, paid for by the FoEP using funding provided by Cllr Paul Joyce, were installed near the ha-ha on the northern perimeter of the Park in October.
- The FoEP also used Cllr Joyce's funding to pay for the hollows in front of other park benches to be filled and covered with slabs. This work had not been carried out by the end of 2018 but it has been promised soon. (It was paid for last Easter but the FoEP have to work through NBC and the approved contractor.) The funding from Cllrs King and Hallam has deliberately been held back awaiting news concerning the Tesco application.
- A number of missing or damaged 'dragons teeth' around the park perimeter were replaced by NBC and bollards at park entrances were strengthened.
- Notices requesting people not to feed bread to waterfowl have been produced but are yet to be displayed.
- It was agreed that NBC would finance maintenance work on many of the trees along Apple Tree Walk but the work has yet to be carried out.
- The FoEP has been promised a new notice board to go near the Junior Play Area and an information board to go near the new bench and waste bin.
- Two groups of Northampton College students with special needs worked in the Park on several occasions during the first part of 2018, picking up litter, weeding, planting, trimming bushes and dealing with fallen trees.
- As part of the 'Loving Northampton – 10,000 hours project in June, volunteers from local churches (mainly Broadmead Baptist Church) removed litter and other rubbish from the Park. They also trimmed the hedges and cut the grass alongside the ramp down from the Booth Lane entrance and also gave free drinks to park users.
- A Community 'Spring Clean' was held on 21<sup>st</sup> April divided into morning and afternoon sessions: overall, 34 volunteers took part representing almost 70 hours of community effort. Fifty-six bags of litter were collected as well as numerous other items including a TV stand, a burnt-out motorcycle and a vacuum cleaner.
- The 'Autumn Enhancement' of the Park was divided into two short (2 hour) sessions on different days: 'Litter Picking' on 29<sup>th</sup> September and 'Gardening' on 27<sup>th</sup> October. Nineteen adults and five children took part on 29th September putting in over 34 hours of effort and collecting a staggering amount of rubbish: 32 bags of refuse plus some larger items including folding steps, a small folding table, a bicycle wheel and a car wheel. The 'Gardening Day' attracted only five volunteers contributing just 12 hours of effort, spent mainly spreading wood chippings on pathways and planting bulbs, though more rubbish was also collected.
- The Eleonore House Insect-friendly Herbaceous Border was developed as a 'Garden of Remembrance' for 2018 only, marking the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War One. The garden was maintained by the FoEP throughout the year, including new planting in spring, watering during a prolonged dry spell in spring and early summer, and the usual weeding throughout the year. *Allium* bulbs were added to the garden in December.
- The FoEP continue to maintain the 'Crescent Rock Garden' and extend the planted area facing the open parkland at the 'back' of this garden. More daffodil bulbs were planted in this area late in 2018.
- Two areas of grassland in the species-rich component of the parkland were again 'set aside' and left unmown until the autumn. It is intended that the same two areas should be set aside in 2019.
- Chicory dominated parts of the 'created meadow' north of Eleonore House obscuring the view of the Park from the House. Plans have been made to convert the meadow into a wildflower garden.
- The four tree whips planted in October 2017 were kept watered during the 2018 drought but suffered from vandalism during the year. Two had to be replaced and, at the end of 2018, only three survive.
- FoEP members added wood chippings to much of the informal pathway through Lakeview Spinney.
- Veolia is now responsible for the NBC environmental services contract with *idverde* subcontracted to look after grounds maintenance. Grass cutting has improved considerably since *idverde* took on this work.

## Events:

- 'Easter@Eastfield 2018' was held on Easter Saturday during very poor weather. Nevertheless, between 60 and 80 children took part in the Easter Trails and £176 was collected and shared between the FoEP and Guide Dogs.
- Another successful 'Kite Flying in Eastfield Park' event was organised on 18<sup>th</sup> July as part of 'Love Parks Week'.
- As usual, FoEP members joined in 'Carols by the Park' with Broadmead Baptist Church on 17<sup>th</sup> December, ending with refreshments in Eleonore House.

Vic Smith (FoEP Chair, January 2019)