

Friends Of Somersall Park 2nd Newsletter

We have so much to tell you – it's hard to know where to start! We met at The Rose and Crown last Sunday for our second full meeting. We had a great attendance again and covered lots of ground. If you were unable to make it we would like you to be able to catch up on all the news so here goes!

The group is formally established now with a core committee, plus the facebook 'action group' and the larger main group (now over 400 members!). We have continued to raise the profile of the group online and in the S40 magazine – who are showing us tremendous support! We also still have the offer of a full website with blog and a place in the Lib Dem newsletter (more on that later – don't worry, we are not becoming a political group!).

A huge thank you to everyone in the face book group - for being so amazingly supportive and enthusiastic. It seems anything we post on there we find someone willing to help. There's a great feeling about this project - that we are really coming together as a community to make this happen! Please continue to use the group to share photos and keep in touch. We love to hear from you all!

We are still working to involve the whole community and are looking for representatives from all the local schools, churches, youth and community groups etc. We have some great links already with cubs, scouts, Brownies, Walton Church, St Thomas', The Air Cadets, S40, Lots for Tots magazine – the list goes on! Please get in touch if you can help!

We are working in conjunction with Brookfield and Westfield School – and are looking to find a contact at Old Hall School if anyone can help with that?

We had a litter pick with 3rd Brampton Cubs on the park and the dam, and have forged a link with The Friends of Walton Dam – a smaller but extremely hardworking and committed friends group.

We have a very exciting event planned – a lantern parade and carol sing song in the park led by the fabulous Aurora Ladies Choir. We are really keen to make this a success and hope it will just be the beginning for community events at Somersall. Please look out for more information on the facebook group. It's on Tuesday 16th December starting at 6.15 for the parade, with carols and mince pies in the main park at around 6.45. There will be prizes for the best lantern – Pookie Toys and The Candy Cabin have already confirmed that they will be providing some! Please get in touch if you would like to volunteer to help on the night – or to bake mince pies!!! And of course – please come along and help us to make the night fantastic!

In conjunction with the council we are also thrilled to tell you that we will have a tree planting – joined by the Westfield School Eco team on 25th November. We will be planting four trees by the Oakfield Avenue entrance and 2000 narcissus daffodil bulbs at their bases ready for a beautiful display next spring. We are looking to also involve other local schools in this as well. We understand we face a challenge regarding potential vandalism – but we are looking into some signage explaining that they were planted by Westfield School. They will also have protectors on them of course.

The meeting with Derbyshire Wildlife trust about the wildflower meadow was unfortunately delayed – but will be rearranged.

One of the main areas we need to improve is the outdated and somewhat dangerous/slippy play area, which is terrible at the moment with fallen leaves. It was suggested that maybe we could go out and sweep the leaves up – but having investigated I think that might actually make things worse – the ground is so slippy underneath! In order to overcome the issue with the overhanging trees, the tentative plan is that the play area might be completely renewed with exciting new equipment and moved to the other side of the river. This would require a HUGE cash injection – but we will be able shortly to start applying for large grants from companies such as Viridor and Biffa. This is the route by which other Friends Groups have achieved their goals, and there is no reason to think we won't be able to do the same. John Ramsey from the council is meeting with several play equipment companies to look at what to replace the existing play area with. He will get four proposals and then there would be a community consultation before any decision is made.

Local Lib Dem Councillor Keith Morgan attended the meeting and has been extremely helpful. In fact it seems he may be giving us some of his community budget to allow us to arrange our events in the park and to move forward on our objectives. Up to yet, everything we have needed has had to come from our own pockets, and so it will mean we are much less limited in what we can do!

We also have the support of Our Mayor Alexis Diouf – massively encouraging and supportive of what we are doing!

Another issue within the park is the youth shelter and the antisocial behaviour too. We are working hard to involve our local teenagers but would welcome any ideas about this? One idea has been to actually head down to the youth shelter at night and see if we can directly speak to the people using it. Make them aware that we are trying to improve the park for everybody – including them. The bin at the youth shelter is going to be replaced, and the lamp post hopefully fixed so that it will be well lit again. Local Police Officer PC Randall has been extremely helpful – and will be including this area on his beat. Please report any issues to him on the police nonemergency number.

Another idea is to refurbish the youth shelter in consultation with local teenagers and Urban Canvas (who did the wonderful buildings artwork on Chatsworth Road and many other places around town). We are also hoping to form a Clean Team for the Youth Shelter area and if you would like to get involved in a one off clean up operation please let us know! There are so many of us – if we each did it once a year it would make a massive difference! I have a team organised for October, but if you are available for following months please get in touch. For a team of three people I would imagine this will only be half an hour's job.

Regarding litter and dog fouling – the frequency of bin emptying is being looked at. We would like to form a monthly litter pick group in addition to the Youth Shelter Clean Team so again – let us know if you can spare an hour. If you find a particularly bad issue with dog fouling please let the Dog Warden know.

The next committee meeting will be on Thursday 30th October – and we will be looking to prioritise our goals and make a start then on funding applications.

We are wondering whether it might be possible to have a FOSP Geocache – so any keen geocachers get in touch!

As always – please contact us with any thoughts or comments. We are always thrilled to hear from you!