

FRIENDS OF PRINCE OF WALES PARK

Chairman's report April 2019

Another year has gone by with a variety of activities, events and of course weather conditions! Being blessed with a glorious summer highlighted the challenge of maintaining growth in relative newly planted bushes, shrubs and flowers as well as even looking after established vegetation. There always has been the problem of water being in the wrong place – at the bottom of the park and this is particularly frustrating when the springs are in full flow. Then of course heavy rain adds to the volume and gale force winds create destruction in the woodland. It was remarkable that, even with the hot dry summer, our supply from the spring into the Lodge Garden bath ran continuously. Heavy work in the summer was still ongoing, with the recovery of the former bridleway beside the tarmac footpath in the trees. It would be wonderful if the Council imposed a strict rule to prevent riders taking their horses all over the park, into the quarry/event/play area, crossing the heath and using so many paths. Credit to Jon Ackroyd, David Heseltine and Andrew Fenton to move the Tea Room project a little further, helped by Chippindale plant hire and both dry stone and mortar building processes. Planted areas have been enhanced and protected by our 'withying duo' who have added another lovely rustic feature in building those woven fences. Some new paths have been made, others regaining their proper widths and being given stone edging.

All the work in maintaining grassy areas, pruning and clipping bushes and hedges has fallen wholly to members of the Friends and is rightly commented upon by visitors. We have participated in the local Town Council Green and Clean meetings, through which we receive seasonal flowers to plant and general advice. In recent weeks a major operation was launched to vastly reduce the holly and laurel border backing on to Park Drive. It is envisaged this area will be planted with native deciduous saplings free from the Woodland Trust, as advised by our Council woodland adviser.

Attracting more use of the park is always high on the agenda and we have welcomed. To that end we now embrace modern technology by using both Facebook and our website to encourage more visitors. So Forest Schools, organised walking groups and the annual calendar of events (with the recent addition of a Halloween Trail – great fun in the dark!) attract attention. So too do the Easter Egg Hunt, Geology Walk, Butterfly Walk and Talk, Bat Walk, and a

Horticultural Tour. It was children who particularly enjoyed another new experience – searching for fungi. An astounding 17 varieties were discovered, to the delight of our invited mycologist. We never thought the leaf bins we created would harbour such interesting species of fungi.

There is some uncertainty about our working relationship with the Council since our principal manager and head of department, Ian Wood is to retire and Mel Smith is to have a watching brief as he takes a step back. We have been impressed with Andrew Cutts who joined Council's woodland management team and has been quite proactive. So, with all these departmental and staffing issues at Bradford Council, due to budget cuts becoming an issue a Yorkshire phrase comes to mind.

“ If tha wonts owt doin then doit thissen.”

We will carry on, always hoping to swell our numbers by encouraging others, not just to do their ‘ community bit’ but to enjoy the company of some admirable people who turn out in all weathers. They clear drains, build walls, discover lost features, sweep up trillions of leaves, retrieve all the toppings swept off drives and surfaces by downpours, and enhance the beauty of the park with planting programmes. Thanks to all the team and I asked our man of maths to total the man, (sorry!) people hours we have totalled so far since 2013. Calculating with those hours and minimum wage rates, the amount of money we have saved the Council comes to £200.000!

Gratitude must be given to those fund providers from whom we have been able to obtain grants, to individuals from the public who have lent skills to reduce our workload and to accomplish tasks beyond our capability. Special thank also to park visitors who give private financial gifts, either for specific events or just, as they say,” thank you for all you do”. A white envelope is always welcome!

What better reward can we have from receiving such thanks and donations, from people loving visiting the park and from children in particular having lots of fun. Roll on another year and more of the same!

ALLAN MIRFIELD

16/04/19