

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE FRIENDS OF GEDLING
COUNTRY PARK HELD ON MONDAY 23rd JANUARY 2017 AT 8.00 PM IN THE
MAPPERLEY SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB, PLAINS ROAD, NOTTINGHAM**

The record of attendance showed that 34 members were present at the Annual General Meeting. See Appendix I

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

Terry welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked Gedling Borough Council, their staff and Councillors for their support over the year.

Apologies were received from: Mel Gutheridge and Jean Taylor.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (25th January 2016)

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 25th January 2016 were passed as a true record.

Proposed: Rick Wilson

Seconded: Lynne Taylor

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

3.1 Ratification of Constitution

The new constitution had been adopted and we had successfully applied to the Charity Commission to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

We are registered with HMRC and registered for Gift Aid and VAT relief.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

See Appendix II

Terry brought attention to the Memorial Garden and the need for funding. He asked everyone to take some posters (available from the table at the entrance) and put them up where members of the public would see them.

L'Oréal have indicated that they want to come back this year to do some more voluntary work on the park.

The container which North Midland Construction donated to the Friends of Gedling Country Park has been a great asset and thanks must be given to GBC for providing the fence and surfacing the area enclosed by it.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT

See Appendix III

Nick gave details of what a difference becoming a Registered Charity had made.

It is now possible to donate and join the Friends of Gedling Country Park on our website and we have a portable card reader which we can use at events.

Councillor Collis asked how many members the Friends of Gedling Country had. Lynne replied that there are 46 Individual and 40 Family Members. Terry reported that we had over 1500 friends on Face-Book.

6. ENVIRONMENT REPORT

See Appendix IV

Brien explained that we are still playing 'softly, softly' as we are not sure of what is growing/living in the park. We have a working Environmental Subcommittee and are keen to involve youngster/schools in projects at the Park.

Projects for 2017: Native Nottinghamshire Apple Trees (Brian has found 11); Using willow to build various structures in the park; Purchase native wildflower seed and get Junior Schools to propagate and plant in the Autumn; Day Flying Moths – adapting to change; Moth Trap Nights; Apply for Local Nature Reserve Status.

We have purchased some native willows, including special willows which are beneficial to the bees. These will be planted on the next Volunteer Days.

Magpie Brewery gave us £250.00 for bird boxes. Volunteers needed to build them.

Brian is collating all the environment reports and they will be published annually.

Work is taking place on introducing a Volunteers Charter.

7. ELECTION OF TRUSTEES

No one new has come forward to stand as a Trustee but If there is anyone who would like to become a Trustee please let us know.

Jenny explained that according to our Constitution each year four of the Trustees should stand down, they are eligible to stand for re-election for a period of three years. The Trustees standing down at this AGM are: Nick Benedek; Charlotte Harris; Terry Lock; Brian Osborne.

They have all been nominated to stand again:

| | | |
|------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Nick Benedek | Proposed: Terry Lock | Seconded: Rod Fillingham |
| Charlotte Harris | Proposed: Jenny Fillingham | Seconded: Lynne Taylor |
| Terry Lock | Proposed: Brian Osborne | Seconded: Rod Fillingham |
| Brian Osborne | Proposed: Terry Lock | Seconded: Rod Fillingham |

It was proposed that they should be reappointed.

Proposed: Jenny Fillingham

Seconded: Graham Tavner

Carried Unanimously

This marks the end of the formal AGM

8. GEDLING BOROUGH COUNCIL – PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Jane Richardson, Parks Development Officer, was here this evening and if anyone has any questions please ask. No questions were asked.

9. FRIENDS – PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Volunteers – We need more volunteers to help with work which the 'Friends' are involved with in the Park.

Park Run – We gave them a small storage hut to keep their equipment in. It is attached to our small container.

Donations/Sponsorship – It is important that we keep funds coming in.

Memorial – A local artist, Richard James, was working on this memorial for the Memorial Garden.

Beacon Lighting – The Beacon had been lit twice this year: Queens 90th Birthday; 25th Anniversary of Gedling Colliery Closing. We would like to do something similar each year on the Anniversary of the colliery closing to include the Gedling Village Memorial too.

Site of Colliery Sign Replacement – Thanks were given to Chameleon for replacing the sign which had been stolen from the gates to the site of the colliery. This was a stronger sign and would be put up once a suitable site had been found.

Dedicate a Tree: Memorial Avenue – We need to be rigid about what is planted. They must be only native trees.

Clearing Glades – Encouraged more butterflies.

Woodland Crafts – Hope to do these in the future.

Photo Competition – Charlotte gave details about the competition. The closing date has been extended to 28th February 2017.

Communications Work – We need a volunteer to come forward to take on the communications work for the Friends.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members asked the following questions:

Face-Book – What are we doing about the question re planting Christmas trees in the park. We are advising people to plant them in their own gardens.

Container Security – The container is properly secured when we leave and we have insurance to cover the contents.

Glades/Woodland Walks – Are we going to produce a map? Brian explained that we are not actively encouraging people to walk in these areas in Winter it gets very wet and muddy in Summer the area is ok.

Diversify the Park – People who come and talk to us when we are working in the Park give us ideas of how to keep and improve the Park. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please let us know.

Future of Southern Boundary – All the work is being done on the Northern side of the Park and the Southern Boundary is being neglected. The Gedling Access Road will be built on this side of the Park and until it is completed we cannot do a lot. Once the road is finished there will be new entrances to the Park from Gedling and Mapperley. There will be a new car park and work will be done on the bottom Lagoons. The Central Lagoon needs work doing on it now.

Thanks – Brian would especially like to thank the help he has received from: Nick Crouch, Nottinghamshire County Council, Senior Practitioner Nature Conservation; Councillors and Staff Gedling Borough Council; Rob Hoare, Notts Birders; Neil Smith and James Jackson, Brackenhurst; Nottingham Trent University; Bob Douglas, Magpie Brewery; Ian & Jason Rockley, help with grazing and grass cutting; Tom Mosely, ANESCO; Bill Bacon for advice on butterfly conservation; Regular Volunteers: Peter & Linda Wood; Elaine Shelton; Mrs Douglas; Jason Pound; Alex and Marian Staniforth.

Heritage Centre – Jane Richardson explained that GBC were looking into the Borough's heritage/mining history and would like to attach a Heritage Centre to the Visitor's Centre. Looking at obtaining funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. A Group would be starting up shortly to look at this.

Mining Memorabilia – Graham gave members details about the mining heritage and what he would like to see in the Heritage Centre. He has accumulated a lot of items which could be displayed.

11. DATE OF NEXT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The next Annual General Meeting would be held on Monday 22nd January 2018.
Venue to be announced.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm.

APPENDIX I

FRIENDS OF GEDLING COUNTRY PARK ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MONDAY 23rd JANUARY 2017

ATTENDANCE LIST

| | | | |
|------------------|---------|-------------------|---------|
| Nick Benedek | Trustee | Brian Osborne | Trustee |
| Jenny Fillingham | Trustee | Francis Rodrigues | Trustee |
| Rod Fillingham | Trustee | Graham Tavner | Trustee |
| Charlotte Harris | Trustee | Lynne Taylor | Trustee |
| Tony Keyworth | Trustee | Rick Wilson | Trustee |
| Terry Lock | Trustee | | |

Councillor Bob Collis
Councillor Bexon*

Jane Richardson* Gedling Borough Council

David Colyer
Nick Halaburda
D E Marson
Diane Moore
Peter Moore
Philip Orme
Chris Parr
Jason Pound
Mladen Pupavac*
Vanessa Pupavac*
Elaine Shelton
Joyce Smith
Peter Smith
Alex Staniforth
Marian Staniforth
George Sullivan
Ivan Sullivan
Mark Tyler
Linda Wood
Peter Wood

*Non-members

APPENDIX II

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT December 2016

Another year has passed and we have seen some significant changes taking place on the park. It hardly seems any time at all since the formal opening, but in March 2017 we will be two years old.

Although it took longer than planned, the children's play area has exceeded all our expectations in popularity. Since opening at half term in October it has been busy every weekend and also at times during the day, proving itself popular with children and parents alike.

The opening of the toilets has come as a relief (!!!) for everyone.

The addition of extra car parking has helped to ease the problems which arise at busy times and our thanks go out to all drivers for their patience when trying to park. The loss of some space as a result of construction work will unfortunately continue into early 2017.

But the big impact will be next year when the Visitor Centre opens. Work started as planned at the end of September and will continue into 2017. The Centre once completed will provide a huge focal point for visitors and will in the future form an essential part of the long-term development of Environmental and Heritage facilities also. In addition extra parking is being developed for coaches and a possible further extension of the existing car park is also planned.

Gaining Green Flag status was another major milestone and reflects the commitment of our members, volunteers and Gedling Council staff to ensure that this is a park for all.

This year also saw the arrival of one of our newest team of workers – local cows. These are being used to help manage the environments and have proved extremely popular with everyone. Hopefully we may see the sheep back again at some point but that is subject to further discussions. BUT – a plea to dog walkers – please DO NOT let your dogs into the fields where the cattle are. The vast majority of the park is available for dogs to enjoy, so please be sensible owners.

This year saw our first community work days and the support and work from *L'Oréal* saw several days of concentrated effort that allowed us to make major developments in the woodland groves area and our Celtic roundhouse grove. So a huge thank you goes out to them and hopefully next year we will see even more such community involvement from local businesses.

I must also give thanks to the hard work done by the Trustees organising Mini Xplorer trails for young children. This is an initiative supported by Sport England and we have organised far more than the required 6 events, all of which have been enjoyed by parents and children alike.

Our estimate, which will be covered in more details in the Environment report, is that we have had several thousand hours of volunteer work during the year and this has enabled us to have work sessions almost every weekend and also during the week.

This has been greatly helped by the very generous support from North Midland Construction who provided us with a small container to allow us to store tools and other materials on site. This has enabled us to work far better since we no longer have to use peoples cars to bring items onto site every time we need them. Gedling Council are also providing a fence around it. We, the Friends, have also provided a storage area at the side for use by Parkrun to store their equipment.

However I must make an appeal to all members, your membership helps provide us with a solid financial base for our activities, Insurance, general items such as protective gloves, all these have to be renewed and are an annual ongoing cost. The cost of a family membership is £10 and an individual one is £5, very little by today's standards, but a vital source of funds for us. But it also allows us to reach a wider audience with updates on our activities. So why not try and encourage you friends, neighbours and others to help support us by joining.

Gedling Council have also provided a pathway up to our beehives and this will allow us to hold more sessions with children and interested members of the public about the importance of bees to the environment. Sadly this year has not been kind to the bees and we made a trustees decision that any honey available should be

held back to help our hard-working flying friends survive the unfriendly conditions. Hopefully they will reward us with their efforts in 2017.

Work has started on a Memorial Garden to commemorate the history of the Colliery and those who gave their lives during its operation and after its closure. The rings, purchased by the Friends, are now in place, as are the outline paths. We have started a major fundraising drive to help raise the money necessary to complete this area and our thanks go out to those councillors and public who have already donated funds.

This year also saw the ceremony on November 7th to remember the closure, 25 years ago of the pit and it was attended by over 200 former workers. We have already discussed some long-term ideas for future activities to link the Gedling Village Memorial (the Miners' Lamp) and the Memorial Garden together.

Around the park we have seen the continued development by Bloor, which should be completed by 2019. Keepmoat have started some initial work on the old colliery site and Chase Farm fields and we all await work on the GAR with baited breath!!

Fundraising is a necessary fact if we are to be able to continue our work and activities on the park and so I make a plea to everyone – if you know of any local companies, groups or teams who want to help in the development of this fantastic park – please let us know.

We also started work on raising funds to support our activities and for future developments. As you will see from the Treasurer's report I feel that we have been extremely successful in this – but this is just the start of our efforts in raising funds to allow the development of the park. At this point I should like to express the thanks of the Trustees and Friends to all those organisations and businesses who have helped us both financially and materially.

VOLUNTEERS - YES PLEASE We need people to help out even more in 2017, especially when the visitor centre opens and we will have a presence there to talk to people about our work. So if you think you can help out for a few hours, especially at weekends, please let us know.

Education, 2016 saw us hold school activity days on the park and the addition of the coach parking areas will make it far easier for school trips to the park in 2017 - teachers please note and get in touch with us.

Our team of Volunteers, have worked with the Council and on our own organised events, on the continuing work developing areas for future use. Removing rubbish, removing tree guards, planting new trees and bushes and starting areas such as the Butterfly walk.

But we do have a MAJOR issue, as do many users also, and this is inconsiderate dog owners who do not clear up after their pets. Dog fouling is increasingly becoming a problem. So if you see offenders please report it to the Council.

We have made good use of social media to help promote and publicise the park and our website and face book pages are regularly used by the public and members seeking information. Our activities are also supported by the Gedling Borough Council's websites.

The acceptance of the new constitution allowed us to register for Charity status and thus enable future trustees to better react to future opportunities.

So to bring this report to a close I should like to offer my personal thanks to all our members, our hard-working volunteers, my fellow trustees and most importantly of all the staff and councillors of Gedling Borough Council

Oh yes – lots more volunteers please.....

Terry Lock, Chairman, Friends of Gedling Country Park

APPENDIX III

TREASURER'S REPORT December 2016

The Friends of Gedling Country Park was formed on 29th September 2014 and this report is for its second financial year for the period from 1st January 2016 to 31st December 2016.

Key Events

The group successfully registered in May 2016 with the Charity Commission as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and has the registered charity number of 1167205.

In September 2016, the group registered with HMRC as a recognised charity and can now claim back gift aid on memberships and donations – and the online and paper forms have been amended to include a gift aid declaration.

It also registered with PayPal in September 2016 and can now receive donations and membership fees electronically via our web site (<http://www.gedlingcountrypark.org.uk/donate-or-join.html>) and via a portable card reader for use at fund raising events.

Trustee Thanks

This online method of receiving funds has resulted in some generous donations and many memberships completed and paid. For these, the Trustees are grateful and would like to thank those involved – as well as all of the other people and organisations who have contributed towards the success of the Friends group.

Income Received

The opening balance at the bank account held at Unity Trust was £2,486 on 1st January 2016.

The income received for the period from January 2016 to December 2016 (including the aforementioned donations and memberships) was as follows:

| Category | Amount | Description |
|----------------------------|---------------|--|
| Grants | £5,336 | £3,675 grants from Gedling Borough Council, £961 from Veolia to fund a honey bee extractor purchase, £400 from Magpie Brewery for butterfly walk improvements, £300 from Councillor Payne of Nottinghamshire County Council. |
| Donations | £729 | Donations from various individuals, the Embroiderers' Guild Nottinghamshire Branch and £42.80 in cash collection buckets. A storage container was also donated by North Midland Construction. |
| Membership Fees | £580 | Membership fees taken for individual and family membership. |
| Fund Raising Events | £143 | Monies raised from various fund raising activities, including multiple Xplorer Family Orienteering Events and attendance at the Arnold Carnival, Gedling Show and Gedling Gala. |
| Sale of Honey | £95 | Sale of honey from FGCP bee hives. |
| TOTAL | £6,883 | |

Of the above income received, there was £35 of membership cheques not yet banked as of 31st December 2016.

Expenditure

For the same period, expenditure was as follows:

| | Amount | Description |
|--|---------------|---|
| Equipment | £2,953 | The purchase of bee keeping equipment including extractor, trolley, storage cabinet for use by parkrun, moth trap and nets, gardening equipment, night cameras and sat nav with OS maps, equipment for donated storage container. |
| Marketing, Communications and Web | £500 | Web site hosting and domain charge, stamps and printing costs for membership forms, history booklets & posters, gift vouchers for school activity day. |
| Grounds Maintenance/Development | £256 | Brush cutting and mowing of butterfly walk and replacement of volunteer spade. |
| Fund Raising and Volunteer Days | £162 | Costs associated with the fund raising events and volunteer days, including refreshments, litter bags and generator petrol. |
| Insurance | £143 | Provision of public liability and personal accident insurance. |
| Plants/Trees/Seeds | £136 | Mixed shrubs and seeds on behalf of Magpie Brewery grant for butterfly walk improvements, wild flower seeds, pots and compost. |
| Honey Making Costs | £108 | Honey jars & labels and bee hive maintenance. |
| Travel/Delivery Costs | £79 | Delivery costs for purchased equipment, travel mileage for trustees and volunteers. |
| Forums & Event Attendance | £47 | Attendance at Gedling Gala and Notts BigBag Annual Forum and membership of The Friends of Greenwood Community Forum. |
| Finance Charges | £46 | Bank service charges from Unity Bank and transaction fees from PayPal. |
| TOTAL | £4,430 | |

Of the above expenditure, there was £359 of expenses not yet paid as of 31st December 2016.

The bank account is held at Unity Trust and the balance as of 31st December 2016, was £5,088.54 There was also £174.00 held with PayPal.

**Nick Benedek, Treasurer, Friends of Gedling Country Park
31st December 2016**

APPENDIX IV

ENVIRONMENT REPORT DECEMBER 2016

This is the first yearly report of The Friends Group to contain substantial details of data recorded by volunteers. This work is ongoing throughout the year and will continue into 2017 and further years.

The records are mainly from the first year of data collection and by default they will lay the initial base line for future comparative work and hopefully enable us to build a picture of the Parks development over the future years.

For ease of understanding and convenience for all, the report is divided in flora/fauna group data and uses local names for species where possible. Similarly the methodology used is not described in detail but is based on Ecological Census Techniques A Handbook by William J. Sutherland 2nd Edition (The full lists of species, methodology and data recorded will be available to all as soon as possible and before the AGM).

SPECIES OF CONSERVATION CONCERN –

Species listed as of conservation concern in the 2016 update of the Nottinghamshire's Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) are identified by (SoCC). This list includes species which are already rare but also commoner species which should be prevented from becoming rarer in the future, and which gives Nottinghamshire its own special character.

MAMMALS –

Data on the larger mammals within the Park comes mainly from reported sightings and except for Rabbits, Badgers and Stoats no film records have yet been obtained.

Rabbits exist throughout the Park with populations residing mainly in woodland edges and grazing the adjacent grassland. Rabbit grazing is an important asset for the environmental diversity of the wild flowers within the Park, keeping strong growing and invasive grasses, shrubs and herbs under control. They are also a food source for other mammals and birds. We have recorded two active badger sets within the Park and found one dead youngster near the Northern boundary this summer. Stoats have been seen in numbers with a family group observed 'dancing' around the seats near the Spring Lane Car Park notice boards.

Reports of Muntjac Deer (I have definitely heard them 'Barking' in the North-west Willow plantation), Fallow Deer and Roe Deer have been reported as being sighted within the Park. We have left cameras running overnight, but have as yet, no records of these species. Brown Hare (SoCC) and Fox have been sighted on many occasions walking across the grassland slopes, but as yet no Fox Den or Brown Hare Form has been identified. Grey Squirrels are resident in the Park mainly within the border woodlands. No records of Hedgehogs, Weasels, Rats, Mice, Voles, Shrews and Bats (excepting one sound record [Pipistrelle] whilst Moth trapping) Only licensed persons can trap and record most of these species and we are working hard to satisfy these criteria to enable a full mammal record, especially of the Bats, to be obtained for the Park.

BUTTERFLIES –

A transect of approximately 1.5 Kilometres running from the Eastern Spring Lane entrance to the Park, Westward along the 'Butterfly Walk', through the woodland ride, across and down the walk to the central lagoon northern seating, diagonally across the grassland to the zig-zag path half way up the path and right along to the Hawthorn wood below the Spring Lane Car Park.

Weather permitting recording took place weekly from April until September as, per methods for Butterfly Conservation UK.

In total 21 species were identified during the year, plus 1 unidentified 'Blue' and 1 unidentified 'Brown'.

Peak weeks for individual numbers of butterflies occurred in a four-week period in July w/c 4th 95, w/c 11th 112, w/c 18th 147, w/c 25th 187.

The first species spotted were Brimstone, Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell in early April. It was also observed that Large and Small Whites were recorded before but not during June with a second brood appearing in July, similarly for Brown Argus and to a lesser degree Peacocks. The last species recorded flying was the Red Admiral at the end of the survey period in September.

Day flying Moths are also 'noted' during the butterfly survey and an interesting result, worthy of further study during 2017, was observed. Most literature reports Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet as flying June-July and the Six –spot Burnet as flying June-August. Our results show the last recorded sighting of the Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet as 13th July and first sightings of the Six-spot Burnet on 27th July a notable gap between species flying.

We would like more detailed surveys of these species during 2017 and desperately require volunteers for the work. It's easy to see and identify the two-moth species, they only fly on warm sunny days so all the work involves is a casual stroll across the grasslands for approx 1 hour on a summer day noting sightings and reporting back to us via email. You will also be helping in the conservation of UK's wildlife and all volunteers are acknowledged for their work in the yearly more detailed report.

Two other species the Dingy Skipper and the Green Hairstreak (both SoCC) were recorded on the Park's Southern boundary, this area requires further study during 2017 and we intend to set up another butterfly transect along the Park's Southern Boundary, this is also important as the Gedling Access Road construction will commence late summer 2017 – Again Volunteers are required for this project!

MOTHS –

A series of moth light trapping evenings were held during the year. Due to the time and difficulty involved with the, to me, bewildering array of the 1,627 micro moths of the UK and the necessity of collecting and dissecting under the microscope to enable some to be identified, we have decided to record only the Macro Moth species but we do include any easily identified Micro species.

We only commenced recording in July when we obtained a professional Robinson Trap and generator.

To date we have recorded over sixty species including seven SoCC listed.

During 2017 we will be inviting 'Friends' to moth nights between mid-May and early July when the larger more flamboyant Hawk Moths will be in flight (5 species recorded 2016). Also in 2017 we intend to run a trapping session monthly from outside our newly acquired Container Centre. Again anyone interested in volunteering for identification or assisting will be welcome.

DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES –

Recording commenced in Mid-summer of these species and to date nine species of Dragonflies(2xSoCC) and three of Damselflies have been recorded. It is extremely difficult to identify these insects on the wing and at least two more species of Dragonfly have been recorded flying over the lagoons. Of the Dragonflies five species have been recorded copulating and six species ovipositing. Of the Damselflies all three species have been recorded copulating and two ovipositing. There is obviously diverse and healthy populations of these insects within the Park and due to their importance as indicator species work has been planned for a research project monitoring the macro aquatic invertebrates in the Park water bodies. This project will also involve Water quality testing as well as Physical, Biological and Geographic attributes of these water bodies and will provide a strong base for future comparative work.

GRASSLAND VEGETATION SURVEY –

A vegetation survey of ten areas within the Park was carried out during 2016. The methodology was in line with that used by The National Trust when carrying out SSSI assessments with Natural England. The monitoring carried out provides data on both positive and negative indicator species, this data can be used to inform for present and future habitat management plans, helping to assess where best to target voluntary activity, conservation grazing or mechanical cutting etc. Some areas where wild flowers have established themselves quite early in succession means that grasses have, to some degree, been prevented from dominating those areas; however, there are also a number of areas which are almost entirely dominated by grasses and therefore a decision on habitat management needs to be considered. This work will be repeated annually and used to indicate the success or otherwise of the Parks Grassland Management Plans and enable us to implement changes if required.

During 2016 stock was introduced to some areas within the Park to environmentally graze off the invasive rank grasses, this will assist with an improvement of wildflower growth within these meadows. More details on the grassland areas of the Park will be considered within the full report to be published later.

TREES –

To date, very few formal surveys of the Parks tree population has been carried out. Starting Winter 2016 identification, numbers count and satellite positioning of the Parks tree population will commence. This will enable decision to be made as to thinning, replanting, coppicing and any required treatment of the trees. During the last two seasons approximately 1,000 trees have been planted around the Park's boundaries to act as shields from future development. This policy will continue during 2017 with 1,400 trees (order to be confirmed) due to be planted, especially along the Southern boundary to protect from noise and pollution from the new Gedling Access Road (planned start 2017).

BIRDS –

We have been receiving records of bird life within the Park from numerous helpers and to date over 100 species have been identified with thirty- three being SoCC. At present we are working on the records to see if any indications of improvement or loss has occurred over the years since the public opening of the Park.

Certainly we have had no reports of the Cuckoo during 2016 but the Short-eared Owls are back (suspected to be roosting within the Solar Farm) and this year resulted in an excellent Green woodpecker breeding season with many reports of sightings of adults and young. Also it is generally agreed, though without definite proof, that there was an increase in the Skylark population during 2016 and at least one pair of Lapwings nested and produced chicks within the Solar Farm

We need to record any breeding populations observed within the Park and any assistance with this will be greatly appreciated.

AMPHIBIANS and REPTILES –

No definite records of sightings of any of the six recorded reptiles has been reported this year, although a report of what was thought to be a common lizard being eaten by a Carrion Crow has been mentioned. Both the Common Toad and the Common Frog have bred well this year and young of both species are being found all over. The Smooth or Common Newt has bred well in the southern boundary waterbodies both in and out of the Park. A very large Terrapin has been reported seen near the lower lagoons, this is a problem as this introduced species can be extremely destructive to native wildlife and needs to be found and removed from the Park.

BEEES –

Our six occupied beehives introduced in the winter 2015/6 successfully survived through to Spring 2016 when due to atrocious conditions we lost three of the colonies. We have managed to restock these hives.

During the year we provided demonstrations for schools and the public on the beekeeping and we plan to continue this activity during 2017. Gedling Borough Council has kindly created a dry standing area for people to view the beehives, thus you no longer need to stand in a swamp to view. A Top-loading (Third-world type) beehive has been introduced to the Apiary this year to enable demonstrations and compare efficiencies of various beekeeping methods. A decision has been made not to crop any honey stores this year so as to enable our colonies a better start to next year, when hopefully we can expand the whole project. Thanks must be made to Quintas Energy and Anesco for providing us with the apiary site and free access to work the bees. We are working hard to increase other bee species within the park and this will increase during 2017.

WORKING WOODLAND –

It has always been the aim of the Friends to involve the younger generation to become actively involved in the Park and with this in mind we have set in motion for an area of Alder woodland to be created into an adventure/learning area for all. Initially this woodland was of very little ecological value (1 birds nest, no Bats and very few tree species), however since clearing and some replanting, we have recorded an increase in butterflies (numbers and species) and this winter has seen an increase in birdlife throughout the wood. Glades and walkways have been created and log seats will be installed to enable picnics or meetings to be held. Bird boxes (Magpie Brewery has kindly donated funds to create over 100 bird boxes), feeders and hides will be created this winter. Craft skills such as willow weaving and wood whittling will hopefully be introduced during 2017. A woodland walk is planned to extend through to the North-eastern corner of the Park with bird hides in the wood and at the lagoon.

LAGOONS and WATERWAYS –

These are important habitats within the park and plans are being created to improve these areas for wildlife and peoples enjoyment. Unfortunately all the waters are infected with the highly undesirable, infectious and reportable New Zealand Pigmy Weed this can be spread easily by dogs, machinery and people and will readily infect any other waterways. We are required to control this weed and eradicate as much as possible and this is planned for action this winter. No work will be carried out on the lower lagoons until after the Gedling Access Road completion. Plans are afoot to expand the central lagoon to create a larger lake with bird hides and a Sand Martin Bank, this is a major project and will require much funding, but we are planning and costing the project during 2017 in case an opportunity for funding arises

Many thanks to all volunteers during the last year, you are invaluable and this work to conserve and to improve Gedling Country Park cannot take place without you. A volunteers credit list will be included in the full results report later.

To all the Park visitors please respect your environment and try to understand the needs of other users. Please try to keep dogs away from the stock, out of the waterways and remove dog waste to the bins provided.

We are always requiring volunteers, training, if required, will be provided. You will have some fun, meet new friends, learn a multitude of skills, and help in the conservation of the environment. Contact through our Website: <http://www.gedlingcountrypark.org.uk/contact-us.html>