

Chairman's Report – December 2019

It's hard to believe that we, the Friends of Gedling Country Park, were formally set up in September 2014 and in March 2015 the park was formally opened. So, on March 28th next year, appropriately on a Saturday, the park will be 5 years old.

The changes we have seen in the last years, not only to, the infrastructure but also to the environment have been astounding. By the time of the AGM we will have car parking capacity for approx. 200 cars – compared with the 50 spaces when we opened.

The children's play area continues to be as popular as expected and is always busy.

Café 1889 continues to be enjoyed by all and will soon be seeing changes in the outdoor area to provide shelter for those hardy outdoor souls and dog owners also.

We are delighted to be hosting this year's AGM there and thank them for their support, especially the 10% discount for members.

Green Flag status was awarded again, and we have had confirmation of the park being designated a Local nature Reserve.

Equally we, the Friends, continue with our policy of supporting the fact that no non-native species of plants are planted by us on the park. We would encourage other groups and the council to support similar initiatives to help protect our own native plants and trees.

The cows have been back again and have been enjoyed by all.

Thanks go to Gedling Borough Council, especially the Parks department, for their continued support. Over the past few weeks we have been working with the parks team (ably led by Michael Proctor) in planting lots of mature trees, around the Memorial garden and down toward the bottom end where we have been creating an avenue of Hornbeam trees.

A new ranger will be with us in January and we look forward to meeting and working with them to further promote the park.

This year saw us complete our planned work on the lower lagoons by raising the level in the Western lagoon to help clear the excessive reed growth and also repairing the damaged sill on the Eastern one and clearing reeds to create an island which has been enjoyed by wildlife and visitors.

We have also put in place floating and fixed nesting platforms for ducks and terns (Still available to rent – so if you know any Terns let them know!!)

Community workdays had working parties to work and help which allowed us to make significant inroads into some areas we were working on. So, a huge thank you goes out to them and hopefully next year we will see even more such community involvement from local businesses.

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 during the week.

At the end of 2018 we received a grant from the OneFamily foundation, and this allowed us to create the floating platforms and more importantly create a new site for the bees. Having lost them in the previous winter we needed to move to a more protected site and with GBC approval we have created a safe enclosed area for future development of colonies.

Our grateful thanks also go to our local Co-ops for the incredible support, over the past few years we have had support from the Gedling village store and the Mapperley area stores. But this year's donation was stunning. We have recently started work on new nature trails which will feature native British trees, explanation of why we do some of the work we do, further development around the Butterfly walk area and a book covering all aspects of the park environment. This work is funded by the donation from the Co-op.

Over the previous year the trustees, volunteers and others have done an incredible amount of work on the park and the following table shows the numbers of sessions worked and the total days involved. By any standards it represents an amazing contribution to the success and continued growth of the park.

	Sessions Worked	Days
Trustees	224	73
Volunteers	201	73
DofE	201	60
DofE Parents	73	57
Others	8	21
Total	707	283

The support and help from the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme (DOE) has contributed greatly to helping us in our work.

One member does deserve our thanks for his excellent work in recording the pictorial life and scenes of the park on a daily basis. Philip Orme has produced some stunning photos as it has to be said have many others, but I think Philip deserves a great round of thanks for his perseverance in covering the park so well.

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 – the usual plea!!
still need lots more volunteers please.....**

Terry Lock, Chairman, Friends of Gedling Country Park

Finally, a reminder of 2 of our best-known residents.

