



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 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 because 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 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 people's cars to bring items onto site every time we need them. Gedling Council is 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. 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 has 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 trustee's 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 7th November 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.

On land to the north of the park we have seen the continued development of 150 new homes by Bloor Homes, which should be completed by 2019. Keepmoat has started some initial work on the old colliery site and Chase Farm fields and we all await work on the Gedling Access Road 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 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.



For 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 website.

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