



## Chairman's Report – December 2015

At the inaugural AGM, held in September 2014, I had the privilege to be elected as a Trustee and subsequently elected by my fellow Trustees as Chairman. I little realised what an incredible year it was going to turn out to be. In fact it is hard to believe that the park has not even been open for a full year yet.

At the start we faced a major obstacle with the application by Tamar to build an Anerobic Digester at the south end of the park, adjacent to the existing Methane extractor plant. Our energies were directed immediately to co-ordinating the objections by individuals and other organisations to the plans. When we started our battle we were aware of less than a dozen objections, by the time we had seen the plans completely and comprehensively rejected our campaign had seen over 700 objections. This effort took us from September until February 2015 and occupied the majority of our time.

From January onwards we started to work on the plans for the park. One of our first tasks was to create a logo that represented the park visually, I think we can say that we have certainly achieved that.

We also started work on raising funds to support our activities and for future use. As you will see from the Treasurers 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.

The Trustees worked to develop a design for a Memorial garden to commentate the history of the Colliery and those who gave their lives during its operation and after its closure. We have now identified what we feel to be the best site for this and our efforts continue to raise the necessary funds to allow us to complete this area of remembrance.

The garden will include items relevant to the mining history and a set of tunnel support rings, which have been obtained, will form a prominent feature.

On the weekend of March 28/29<sup>th</sup> 2015, the council formally opened the park and we were delighted to welcome all those who came along (approximately 3000), despite the appalling weather, to enjoy the park. Since then we have seen the growth of areas and the improvements in the natural environment which have been enjoyed by all during the 10 months since then.

Our team of Volunteers have worked with the council and on our own organised events to start the long task of preparing areas for future use. Removing dozens of sacks of rubbish, Tree guards, planting new trees and bushes and starting areas such as the Butterfly walk.

We have worked with the council on the development of the overall management plan for the park, this together with other maintenance plans will form part of the submission for Green Flag status.



The desire to maintain and support native species of trees and bushes has been a common theme in everything we have done and this has extended to working with developers who will be providing the new housing around the park and we have established a good relationship with Keepmoat, Bloor and are actively waiting for the final plans on the Gedling Access Road (GAR) to determine how it will impact on the Southern areas of the park.

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. These are actively supported by the Gedling Borough Council websites also.

In addition we have worked to set out the basis for a strong future for the Friends group in the years ahead. Part of this will be seen in the proposed new constitution which will allow us to register for Charity status and thus enable future trustees to better react to future opportunities.

All of this meant that we have delayed the AGM until we had this and other actions in place, hopefully for your approval.

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

Just remember that the best is yet to come with 2016 seeing children's play areas, a toilet block, our beehives in use on the solar farm and most importantly, studies commencing on the Visitors Centre

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

**Terry Lock, Chairman, Friends of Gedling Country Park**