



Welcome to all members of our park community – local residents, dogwalkers, bowlers, volunteers, and visitors. It's been a little while since our last newsletter and there's lots to report! Please join us at our Open Public Forum on 24th May (see below for details) to hear more, and at our Summer Fair on 25th June for a community celebration!

THE POND

Thanks to all the 11 wonderful volunteers who turned out for the Pond Action Day on 27th February and made tremendous progress with creating a 'dead hedge' and filling in the gaps in the existing hedge. Since then a local volunteer and a group of Aviva employees have continued the work, including the ongoing task of planting up the pond with aquatic plants. Contractors have also installed a new fence and gate around two sides of the pond – the aim being to balance people's need to access the pond, with nonhuman creatures' need for a bit of quiet. As well as pond plants, Friends funds have been used to purchase a water butt for the purposes of replenishing the pond when its level falls – rainwater being much more ecologically suitable for this purpose than tapwater.



Unfortunately the pond has been the target of some anti-social behaviour lately, but PCSOs



are engaging with those involved, and we know many community members keep a weather eye out – so hopefully these incidents will decrease.

Abundant thanks as ever to CYC's Kristina Davey for coordinating all this work and transforming the pond back into a much-valued habitat for wildlife. You'll have noticed a very healthy frog population taking advantage of it lately!

Kristina also plans to instal an information sign, using artwork by a young local artist.

Keep your eyes peeled on our Facebook page for further volunteering action days and contact Kristina.davey@york.gov.uk if you'd like to get involved.

14 NEW LANE UPDATE

We can update that the 14 New Lane site has now been made safe. The planned demolition has now been postponed because the Council's Ecology team have observed signs that bats are roosting on the site. The Friends and Bowling Association remain in conversation with local councillors about the best future for the site, based on local consultation.

A POLITE REQUEST

Composting, as we all know, is a very good thing – but creating an informal compost heap for your kitchen scraps among the trees in the park is not. Please, if you know the household that (probably with excellent intentions) is doing this, have a quiet word!

LITTLE FRIENDS UPDATE



The Little Friends of Westbank Park have been out in all weathers this winter from cold -3 to soggy rain. Sessions in extreme weather we have enjoyed: games where we have to run around, ceilidh dancing near Burns Night and plenty of action songs. We have roughly followed a mini space theme this half term looking at rockets, stars and moon and for world book Day had an interactive story telling session of the Smeds and the Smoos.

Sessions currently run on Tuesday mornings from 10am

- 11am, though we find that sessions gradually get longer as the weather improves. New carers with their little ones under five are always welcome but booking is essential, you find us on Facebook or Eventbrite for the most up to date information.



FRUIT TREE CARE IN THE PARK

The Friends maintain various fruit-growing spaces around the park – do keep an eye out for fruit to harvest when it's ripe!

The 'old' orchard, beside the pond, is looking its best following its early spring pruning. The now increasingly robust young trees in the new orchard near the 14 New Lane site, as well as a pruning, have benefited from the removal of the cages that were protecting them while they were young. Tree guards have been installed instead to protect them without constricting them. Finally, while walking down the path through the Rose Garden, look up and check out the grapevine which should bear abundant fruit this early autumn.

AN APPEAL TO THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

The Friends of West Bank Park is a group of community volunteers that work both together and with other interested parties in order to maintain and improve this much-loved recreational space. During the last decade we have fundraised to improve playground facilities; successfully applied for ward funding to secure the park at night; organised community events and facilitated groups of volunteers from those first in every morning opening the gates, to those knee-deep in pondweed enhancing the habitat for our local aquatic friends.

As in the park, however, seasons change and time moves on: many of our core group joined when our children were very tiny and we spent days on end peering into the pond or rotating a roundabout. We all still want to maintain our involvement in 'park-life' (and have many park-related projects we want to pursue), but we would love to engage new and enthusiastic people from the local community who have views about the way in which we can enhance and protect West Bank Park.

We warmly invite anyone to attend our open public meeting on Weds 24th May, 8pm at Holgate Methodist Church. It'll be a chance to catch up on everything that's happening in the park. Come along whether you'd like to get involved with anything in the park, or you just want to enjoy some tea, cake and park news!

SUMMER FAIR!



The West Bank Park Summer Fair will be on Sunday 25 June 2023 from 1-4pm. There's a wide range of activities planned with around 40 community and charity stalls, ice creams, bouncy castle, have-a-go bowling and lots more. Music and entertainment will be in abundance with the Golden Rail Brass Band and performances from local choirs and dance groups. Come along and join in the fun!



OTHER WAYS TO KEEP IN TOUCH

Email enquiries to: friendsofwestbankpark@gmail.com

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