



The Friends of Debdale Park

Annual Report 2021-2022



**The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service**

Registered Charity Number 1154238

Debdale Park, 1075 Hyde Road, Gorton,
Manchester M18 7LJ

friendsofdebdalepark.co.uk

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Report compiled and produced by Paul Kirkham & Vicki Kennedy

1. Overview

For the Friends of Debdale Park, the past year has been very fragmentary as we attempted to reconcile our activities with the many and ever changing requirements related to the pandemic.

It has been difficult to arrange meetings or organise activities which made the coordination and development of projects very difficult. Also, it has meant promotion and fund raising have not been as significant as in previous years.

Despite this, where possible, activities have continued and much has been achieved as the Friends have sought to fulfil their Charitable Aim of providing *a welcoming, healthy, accessible, safe and high quality park which meets a diverse range of needs and aspirations on a sustainable basis.*

The main purpose of this report is to give an overview of what has been achieved over the last year.

The listing of projects and activities in the report is arbitrary and does not seek to prioritise any particular ones, as all form a coordinated synergy of effort of all the Friends.



2. Projects

Cycling for Health

The cycling provision has continued on a weekly basis, attracting a regular core of interest. The Monday morning cycle ride provides a welcome outing for about a dozen people. Bicycles can be provided and rides are related to capability. The activity is free though donations of £1 are requested where possible to provide for the maintenance of the bikes.

During the year the project was promoted as a candidate for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in the Community.



Volunteer Gardening Project - Debdale Diggers

The Diggers help to keep the park flower beds looking tidy. The activity is flexible in that individuals or groups can work as convenient, though the main session is on Wednesday mornings.

The meeting point is the park lodge Visitor Centre and tools are provided. Individual beds have been allocated to different volunteers to create a sense of ongoing upkeep.



Debdale Bowling and Social Club



During the year the Bowling Pavilion has undergone extensive refurbishment to provide an attractive social space. This is now host to a wide range of social activities, including line dancing, Spanish lessons, computing and curling. All of which draw a significant number of participants.

The club has also taken on responsibility for the maintenance of the lower bowling green and acquired a lawn mower to facilitate this. Members have also done significant work over the year maintaining and improving the

appearance of the grounds.

The club is actively promoting membership across the community, seeking new members with a greater diversity.



Debdale Nature Centre

The Nature Centre is now just over a year old and has been proving to be a great focus of interest from a wide range of people, with well over 1000 followers on Facebook and Instagram.

As well as providing a wide range of activities and workshops for adults and children related to conservation, education and biodiversity, there is now a live camera streaming from the Wildlife Garden which is attracting viewers from as far away as Canada and Australia.

During the summer there was an official opening of the Centre by local MP Afzal Khan and MYP Alex Kennedy. The project boasts a Visitors Centre and Wildlife Garden and its primary aim is to educate people about the huge range of biodiversity on their doorstep.



Men's Shed - Debdale

The activities in the Shed have been severely restricted by the pandemic with the regular Friday sessions curtailed. However there has been progress on the refurbishment of the second shed as a Craft Workshop. It is hoped that this additional facility will be able to open in summer 2022.

A few regular members have been attending and helping with a variety of tasks around the Growing Gorton area.



Green Finger Debdale

As with the Shed, this gardening provision for adults with additional needs has been severely restricted with the numbers it has been able to provide for, though there has been ongoing activity by volunteers on the allotment beds and the Growing Gorton polytunnel area which now provides a Wellbeing Hub for a range of activities.



Hammer & Nails

As with the Green Fingers project, this project, also for adults with additional needs, has continued on a restricted basis, meeting each Wednesday and Thursday for work recycling furniture, general woodwork and most recently music sessions.

Gorton Pagan Moot

The Moot is a safe space for Pagans of all denominations to meet together, socialise, share knowledge and relax. They meet eight times a year, around the Sabbats and are family friendly, with activities for adults and children alike.

They enjoy a fairly large following on Social Media but like most things have suffered because of the pandemic. Things are picking up again now though, and it is hoped that the Moot will continue to grow.

Some of the members have been undergoing chaplaincy training as part of *Greater Manchester Pagan and Witches Chaplaincy*. This training will allow them to conduct Pagan funerals and other services. Planning is back on track for the very first **Gorton Pagan Pride** event, which the moot hopes to host in the Autumn in collaboration with *Manchester Witches & Pagans Community*. The event will be open to the whole community and its aim is to dispel some of the myths around this often misunderstood



Debdale Ramblers

The Ramblers meet regularly on Thursday mornings for a walk in the park and surrounding area. Visits further afield have also been ongoing to places of interest.



Run Social Debdale Park

This free, timed weekly run, every Sunday morning was suspended for much of the past year but has now recommenced, providing 2km and 5km circuits. It is marshalled by volunteers and is inclusive to all members of the community.

Gorton House

There is now a designated group with links to Manchester University that is drawing up a detailed proposal for the restoration of the house. It hopes to have a report ready later this year.

3. New Developments

Coffee in the Park



This adventurous new project has been a tremendous success, providing hot and cold drinks and snacks and a meeting point in the park. It is open Friday, Saturday and Sunday at present, though it is hoped that more days and times may be added.

It is based in a refurbished cabin next to the Nature Centre and was opened the same weekend by local MP Afzal Khan and MYP Alex Kennedy.

It is also proving to be a great signposting tool with members of the community able to find out about events and activities in the park and wider community.

The Wellbeing Hub

This multipurpose space is based in and around the Growing Gorton polytunnels, and is designed with health and wellbeing at its heart. Facilities now include an outdoor kitchen, a garden overlooking the reservoir and the newly paved polytunnel which create a perfect space for meetings, activities and workshops.

Though the Hub is still under development, there are already Yoga and Home Education sessions now taking place. Other sessions have included Crystal Healing, a memorial for a bereaved family and several meetings.



Wheels for All

This project is being revived after a lapse of several years due to the inadequate facilities for disabled people. The bikes have been taken for reconditioning, and a suitable cycling circuit is being planned together with new storage facilities for the bikes and the refurbishment of the disabled toilet.

New Tennis Courts

Three new tennis courts and basketball hoops have now been installed in the completely refurbished tennis court area. A program is now in place to promote the use of the courts with coaching sessions.



Website

A local IT company has kindly offered to perform a comprehensive upgrade of our website to make it more user friendly, and to be better used as a fundraising and promotional tool. This should be ready by early this summer.



4. Activities

Volunteer Work Groups

Over the year, despite the pandemic, a number of work groups have continued to visit the park from private companies.

Sometimes visiting for half a day, sometimes a full day, these groups have worked on the various flower, rose and shrub beds, and have been of great help in maintaining the appearance of the park. In early summer, one of these groups undertook a complete revamp of the herb garden, another group built the outdoor kitchen in the Wellbeing Hub from pallets.

In particular we are indebted to the Co-op Bank for allowing their staff to carry out this work on various occasions.



Children's School Holiday Activities

Due to the pandemic it has not been possible to provide as many activities as we normally would during the school holidays. However, the Nature Centre has provided some activities and during the February half term assisted with two days of activities organised by the Park Ranger Team. These included building large bug hotels and making bird boxes and feeders.

Gorton Youth Forum started providing regular children's activities every Sunday afternoon from March.



Gorton Heritage Trail

The Trail follows the path of the Gore Brook between Sunnybrow Park and Debdale Park and has it's own dedicated committee responsible for its maintenance. This is now being run in conjunction with Debdale Nature Centre. A highlight of the last year was the re-opening of the redesigned Butterfly Garden following major road works on Hyde Road. The Lord Mayor, Councillor Tommy Judge did the honours and cut the ribbon, with local MP Afzal Khan, MYP Alex Kennedy and Councillors Reid, Hughes and Kamal all in attendance.

The replanting, enhancement and maintenance of this garden is ongoing, together with the rest of the Trail.



Heroes Wood

This distinctive area of the park continues to be maintained and developed in conjunction with veterans and volunteers of Walking with the Wounded. In October, there was a very successful work day, that removed six dead trees and restored the tree guards. Also over 1000 daffodil and bluebell bulbs were planted. New trees are to be planted to replace the ones removed.

Every year, Heroes Wood hosts an annual Remembrance Service for local people of all faiths and none, who wish pay their respects.



Aviary Community Rooms

During the last year, the Community Rooms have not been in use due to the pandemic. Also there was damage to the building from vandalism that has now been repaired by the Friends with funds from a Police grant.

The toilet area has been plastered and painted ready for use after water damage from the previously leaking roof.

During the year Gorton Visual Arts vacated it's studio for a new premises, however another local artist has made a request to use the studio which is currently being considered.



Gorton Youth Forum

Gorton Youth Forum is run by Alex Kennedy, who was the Member of Youth Parliament for Manchester Central from 2020-2022. She is now too old for that role but is continuing her work with young people, particularly from Gorton and surrounding areas.

Since the beginning of March 2022, she has been running weekly sessions in the park with a particular focus on conservation and biodiversity.

Gorton Youth Forum is primarily aimed at giving young people a space to have their voices heard about the issues that affect them.

Heritage Dye Garden

This garden area at the centre of the park, consisting of 10 beds, has been a problem for some years and difficult to maintain. However, a new group has now been convened to plan for a comprehensive refurbishment and replanting of the garden. This will also include an educational and craft dimension with exciting plans to provide dyeing workshops in conjunction with Manchester University.



Gorton Carnival and Car Show

After much uncertainty, the Gorton Carnival eventually went ahead in September and attracted a large attendance of several thousand people. Planning is already underway for this years Carnival which has been pencilled in for July.

For the last few years, the Carnival has incorporated a Classic Car Show, which is immensely popular, with people coming from all over the country to display their cars. The event also comprises a fun fair, market stalls, live entertainment on the stage, live music around the park and a number of other activities. It is always a great day out.



5. Park Staff

The Friends continue to work closely with Manchester City Council, local Councillors and park staff to improve the park facilities.

Over the last year there have been a number of changes to park staff and we were sorry to lose the services of Estate Maintenance worker Paul Baxter who retired after 40 years service in the parks. Also we lost Park Ranger Rob Gorvett and Central Area Parks Lead Catherine Hall.

Fortunately these loses have now been replaced by a new Estate Assistant Karl Beckett, new Park Ranger Monika Sayed and new Central Area Parks Lead Jennifer McAndrew, who have already got to work with enthusiasm in facing the challenges of making a better park.



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL

6. Governance

The Friends of Debdale Park CIO Trustees

1. Allan Grafton MBE JP - Chair
2. Peter Rees - Vice Chair
3. Chris Kennedy - Treasurer
4. Paul Kirkham - Secretary
5. Olwyn Taylor - Debdale Bowling and Social Club
6. Vicki Kennedy - Debdale Nature Centre
7. Kim Stevenson - The Nursery in the Park
8. Andrew Parsons - Green Fingers Debdale
9. Doreen Grafton - Wheels for All
10. Marion Ballard - Gorton Heritage Trail



Patron

Hon. Afzal Khan MP

Executive Committee

Chair - Allan Grafton MBE, JP

Vice Chair - Peter Rees

Secretary - Paul Kirkham

Treasurer - Chris Kennedy

Committee

Olwyn Taylor (*Debdale Bowling & Social Club, Debdale Diggers, Debdale Ramblers*)

Kim Stevenson (*The Nursery in the Park*)

Andrew Parsons (*Green Fingers Debdale, Coffee in the Park, Growing Gorton, Men's Shed - Debdale*)

Doreen Grafton (*Wheels for All*)

Vicki Kennedy (*Debdale Nature Centre, Gorton Pagan Moot, Gorton Heritage Trail, Men's Shed - Debdale, Growing Gorton*)

Marion Ballard (*Gorton Heritage Trail*)

Advisors

Monika Sayed (Park Ranger)

Karl Beckett (Estate Maintenance)

7. Awards

Volunteers and projects in the park have enjoyed considerable recognition for their hard work over the last twelve months.

Debdale Nature Centre - Britain in Bloom -
It's Your Neighbourhood Award - Level 5 Outstanding

Green Fingers Debdale - Britain in Bloom -
It's Your Neighbourhood Award - Level 5 Outstanding

Olwyn Taylor - Pride of Gorton Awards -
Nominee - Community Pride Award

Chris & Vicki Kennedy - Pride of Gorton Awards -
Winners - Community Pride Award

Alex Kennedy - Pride of Gorton Awards -
Winner - People's Champion Award

Chris & Vicki Kennedy - Pride of Gorton Awards -
Winners - The Sir Gerald Kaufman Lifetime Achievement Award

Chris & Vicki Kennedy -
The Be Proud Awards - Nominees

Gorton Pagan Moot has been nominated for a National Diversity Award. The Awards Ceremony will take place in September 2022.



7. Contact Us



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Paul Kirkham - Secretary
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Doreen Grafton - Wheels for All
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Marion Ballard -
 Gorton Heritage Trail
marionballard@icloud.com

8. Accounts

Friends of Debdale Park Accounts 2020 - 2021

Bank:

Registered Charity: 1154238

	Date	Item	Amount	
Brought forward:				
	8/4/2020			£8,239.34
Income:				Running total
	22/3/2021	CAF Voucher received	£60.00	£60.00
	7/4/2021	MCC Payment for Holiday Activities (2019)	£300.00	£360.00
	9/4/2021	MCC NIF for Nature Centre	£1,600.00	£1,960.00
	8/7/2021	Drone Donation	£200.00	£2,160.00
	6/8/2021	GVA Storage Donation (Aug-Feb)	£240.00	£2,400.00
	20/8/2021	GMCVO - Active Ageing Grant	£1,750.00	£4,150.00
	2/9/2021	Ladbrook Insurance overpayment payback	£5.00	£4,155.00
	16/9/2021	Bolton at Home donation	£200.00	£4,355.00
	22/9/2021	MCC Easter Activity	£200.00	£4,555.00
	14/10/2021	GMP ARIS Funding - Aviary	£1,000.00	£5,555.00
	15/10/2021	BUZZ Internet Funding	£690.00	£6,245.00
	20/10/2021	MCC NIF - DNC Activity Fund	£450.00	£6,695.00
	2/12/2021	CAF Voucher received	£50.00	£6,745.00
	13/12/2021	Amazon Smile Donation	£10.94	£6,755.94
	4/2/2022	GHT - MSD BFG Memorial Plaques	£50.00	£6,805.94
	4/2/2022	GHT - DNC BFG Goodie Bags	£50.00	£6,855.94
	14/2/2022	Paypal setup transaction	£0.01	£6,855.95
	17/2/2022	Mystery Payment from Travis Perkins	£0.06	£6,856.01
	23/2/2022	Amazon Smile Donation	£10.68	£6,866.69
	4/3/2022	GVA Storage Donation (Aug-Feb)	£80.00	£6,946.69
	14/3/2022	MCC PIP Payment (Coffee Kiosk) - GreenFingers	£2,000.00	£8,946.69
	29/3/2022	BUZZ payment for refreshments	£50.00	£8,996.69
	29/3/2022	BUZZ payment for community map	£150.00	£9,146.69
	1/4/2022	Travis Perkins building grant	£2,013.00	£11,159.69
	4/4/2022	CAF Voucher received	£50.00	£11,209.69
		Total Income:		£11,209.69

Expenditure:				
	9/2/2021	(15) C.Kennedy - PLI reimbursement	£109.31	£109.31
	13/4/2021	(16) C.Kennedy - Reimbursement + Plants (DNC)	£966.94	£1,076.25
	23/4/2021	(17) Web Hosting	£59.99	£1,136.24
	26/4/2021	(18) - Fencing Mart Ltd - Security fence	£2,261.08	£3,397.32
	10/5/2021	(19) C.Kennedy - Nature Centre	£500.00	£3,897.32
	23/6/2021	(22) C.Kennedy - GYF Transfer	£350.00	£4,247.32
	29/6/2021	(20) O.Taylor - Roses	£68.90	£4,316.22
	1/7/2021	(23) V.Kennedy - Herb Garden	£371.93	£4,688.15
	1/7/2021	(25) C.Kennedy - Picnic Bench & Coffee	£650.00	£5,338.15
	6/7/2021	(26) C.Kennedy - Coffee VAT & Fence posts	£117.32	£5,455.47
	6/7/2021	(21) Ladbroke - Men's Shed Insurance	£377.78	£5,833.25
	30/7/2021	(28) V.Kennedy - Opening Event Buffet	£200.00	£6,033.25
	6/8/2021	(29) FODP/MSD/DNC reimbursement - Chris	£285.33	£6,318.58
	6/8/2021	(30) DNC Petty Cash - V.Kennedy	£100.00	£6,418.58
	17/8/2021	(32) DNC Misc - V.Kennedy	£35.01	£6,453.59
	17/8/2021	(33) DNC/MSD reimbursement - C. Kennedy	£345.40	£6,798.99
	20/8/2021	(27) Ladbroke Insurance Underpayment	£25.00	£6,823.99
	24/8/2021	(34) MSD reimbursement	£173.00	£6,996.99
	24/8/2021	(35) DNC Bat Monitors	£550.00	£7,546.99
	1/9/2021	(36) DNC Moth Trap/Bat Book/Bug Pots	£214.03	£7,761.02
	21/9/2021	(37) GYF Transfer - A.Kennedy	£180.00	£7,941.02
	21/9/2021	(38) DNC Transfer (Wifi/cables/camera)	£500.00	£8,441.02
	28/9/2021	TalkTalk Broadband	£28.74	£8,469.76
	5/10/2021	(39) DNC Activity Fund (Halloween)	£200.00	£8,669.76
	19/10/2021	TalkTalk Broadband	£33.54	£8,703.30
	19/10/2021	(42) MSD/DNC Transfer wifi & Flooring (125/75)	£200.00	£8,903.30
	1/11/2021	(41) Aviary Repairs (P.Kirkham)	£153.73	£9,057.03
	19/11/2021	TalkTalk Broadband	£28.74	£9,085.77
	30/11/2021	(40) POGS donation (MSD DNC GF)	£95.00	£9,180.77
	21/12/2021	TalkTalk Broadband	£28.74	£9,209.51
	31/1/2022	TalkTalk Broadband	£28.74	£9,238.25
	9/2/2022	(44) Various MSD, DNC & FoDP expenditure	£595.03	£9,833.28
	15/2/2022	(45) Aviary Resources	£22.00	£9,855.28
	21/2/2022	TalkTalk Broadband	£28.74	£9,884.02
	4/3/2022	(46) Zurich Insurance	£129.51	£10,013.53
	15/3/2022	(47) Tools & Coffee (MSD)	£98.94	£10,112.47
	21/3/2022	TalkTalk Broadband	£28.74	£10,141.21
	22/3/2022	(50) GYF withdrawal for resources (GYF)	£150.00	£10,291.21
	25/3/2022	(48) Aviary resources	£91.95	£10,383.16
	28/3/2022	(49) PIP funding reimbursement to GF (Kiosk)	£1,190.00	£11,573.16
	8/4/2022	(52) Stamps, Hardware, Glue (MSD)	£51.69	£11,624.85
	8/4/2022	(51) Plastic boxes and Bird food (DNC)	£139.01	£11,763.86
	20/4/2022	(53) Mockridge Nurseries (DNC)	£40.00	£11,803.86
	20/4/2022	(54) FoDP Web Hosting	£59.99	£11,863.85
	20/4/2022	TalkTalk Broadband	£28.74	£11,892.59
		Total Expenditure:		£11,892.59
			Total:	£7,556.44