



The Friends of Debdale Park Annual Report 2023-2024



Registered Charity Number 1154238

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

friendsofdebdalepark.co.uk

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The new Aviary Mural - January 2024



1. Overview

Over the past year 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 prioritize any particular ones as all form a coordinated synergy of effort of all the Friends.



Volunteers from Coop Bank working on the refurbishment of the Heritage Garden



2. Projects

Cycling for Health

The cycling provision has continued on a weekly basis attracting a regular and increasing level of interest. The Monday morning cycle ride provides a welcome outing for about two dozen people.



Bicycles are 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.

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 is 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.

Bowling and Social Club

The Bowling Pavilion is now host to a wide range of social activities including line dancing, Spanish lesson, computing and curling, all of which draw significant numbers 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 Social Club

In addition to the Bowling Club activities there also the Debdale Social Club that provides a further range of social activities. These include the Debdale Ramblers

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

Debdale Nature Centre

Sadly the Nature Centre closed in May 2023 for a number of reasons. However, after many discussions the project is going to return to it's previous home at Gorton Reservoir Allotments. The project will continue to work under the umbrella of Gorton Heritage Trail, in partnership with Gorton Horticultural Society and as an ally to the Friends of Debdale Park.

The cabins which formally housed the project in the park will become available for use as a meeting point and base.

Hammer and Nails

This project for adults with additional needs has continued meeting each Wednesday and Thursday for recycling furniture and woodwork. Also there are music therapy sessions



3. New Developments

Wheels for All

This project has now been restarted after a lapse of several years. The bikes have been taken for reconditioning and a new cycling circuit created.

The project meets each Tuesday.

Men's Shed

The work space has now been relocated to the Aviary where the former art studio has been laid out as a workshop. There have been ongoing discussions about the possibility of reopening the project which had been temporarily suspended during the Covid lockdown. Keith Norton and Fred Taylor are planning to publicise and promote a new group.

Potting Herbs with Gale

This new project is being started in the park by a volunteer group under the direction of Gale Whitby. The polytunnel has been refurbished to make it more easily accessible for groups in the project and the Herb garden is being replanted.



Growing plants in the polytunnel.



4. Activities

Volunteer Work Groups

Groups have worked on the various flower, rose and shrub beds and have been of great help in maintaining the appearance of the park.

A number of work groups have continued to visit the park from private companies. Notably Auto Traders, the Co-op Bank and Kellogg's.



Volunteers from Auto Traders February 2023

Heritage Dye Garden

The restoration of this garden area at the centre of the park has now been completed thanks to a grant of £4,000 from We Love Manchester.



Volunteers from the Co-op working on the Heritage Garden

Plants were grown ready for replanting the beds and a planting programme prepared. Unfortunately due to a lack of volunteers the original planting programme had to be abandoned as being too ambitious. Instead the project funds were used to buy a wide selection of perennials that were planted by visiting volunteer work groups from the Co-op Bank and Kelloggs.



Replanted beds in the Heritage Garden - August 2023

Outdoor Gym

An additional exercise frame has been added to the exercise area.



Heroes Wood

This distinctive area of the park continues to be maintained and a flag pole has been purchased for the memorial circle.

Playschemes

A number of events were planned over the year to provide activities in the park for young people during the school holidays.



Gorton Carnival

Planning is already underway for this year's Carnival, which will be held this year on Sunday 14th July. The Carnival is organized by Gorton Events Committee in collaboration with the Friends of Debdale Park and Manchester City Council and attracts around 8000 visitors if the weather is kind.

It is a fantastic day and a highlight in the community calendar.

Gorton House

The Action Group that was formed to promote the restoration of the house had not been able to make progress and has now terminated.



5. Park Staff

The friends continue to work closely with Manchester City Council, local councilors 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 Karl Beckett and new park ranger Monika Sayed who worked with enthusiasm to make Debdale a better park.

The new Park Ranger is Richard Martin.



After the Storm - volunteers clearing up



6. Governance

The Friends of Debdale Park CIO Trustees

1. Allan Grafton MBE JP – Chair
2. Olwyn Taylor – Social Club and Debdale Diggers
3. Fred Taylor – Debdale Ramblers
4. Kim Stevenson – Nursery in the Park
5. Doreen Grafton – Wheels for All

Patron

Hon. Afzal Khan, MP

Chair: Allan Grafton, MBE JP

Vice Chair: Peter Rees

Secretary: Paul Kirkham

Treasurer: Chris Kennedy

Committee

Peter Rees (Cycling for Health)

Olwyn Taylor (Debdale Social Club & Volunteer Gardening)

Irene Hargreaves (Bowling Club)

Kim Stevenson (Nursery in the Park)

Doreen Grafton (Wheels for All)

Fred Taylor (Debdale Ramblers)

Keith Norton (Men's Shed)

Gale Whitby (Growing Herbs)



7. Contact Us



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Chris Kennedy – Treasurer
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Frederick Taylor – Trustee &
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Olwyn Taylor – Trustee &
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Debdale Ramblers
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8. Accounts



Friends of Debdale Park Accounts 2024 - 2025

Bank:

	Date	Item	Amount	
Brought forward:				
	1/4/2024			£5,525.67
Income:				Running total
	30/4/2024	MCC NIF Grant - Men's Talking Circle at The Monastery	£584.99	£584.99
	17/7/2024	MCC NIF Grant - Men's Shed Debdale	£1,000.00	£1,584.99
Total Income:				£1,584.99
Expenditure:				
	10/4/2024	Zurich Insurance	£16.83	£16.83
	23/4/2024	(112) - FoDP Web Hosting	£59.99	£76.82
	1/5/2024	(111) - MSD Key cutting	£20.00	£96.82
	10/5/2024	Zurich Insurance	£16.83	£113.65
	15/5/2024	(116) - DNC banners	£75.00	£188.65
	17/5/2024	(114) - W4A Transfer of funds	£200.00	£388.65
	17/5/2024	(115) - W4A Transfer of funds	£250.00	£638.65
	3/6/2024	(113) - Irene Roses	£12.00	£650.65
	10/6/2024	Zurich Insurance	£16.83	£667.48
	10/6/2024	(117) - Transfer of NIF to The Monastery	£584.99	£1,252.47
	28/6/2024	(118) - W4A Transfer of funds	£350.00	£1,602.47
	4/7/2024	(119) - Tools from GHS	£100.50	£1,702.97
	4/7/2024	(120) - Nature Centre Uniform	£42.09	£1,745.06
	10/7/2024	Zurich Insurance	£16.83	£1,761.89
	18/7/2024	(121) - Aviary Cleaning Supplies	£43.00	£1,804.89
	7/8/2024	(122) - Transfer of Men's Shed funds to Debdale Social	£2,388.51	£4,193.40
	9/8/2024	(123) - Cleaning supplies for The Aviary	£130.85	£4,324.25
	12/8/2024	Zurich Insurance	£16.83	£4,341.08
	10/9/2024	Zurich Insurance	£16.83	£4,357.91
	13/9/2024	(128) - Transfer of Nature Centre funds to GHT	£331.14	£4,689.05
	13/9/2024	(127) - Transfer of Youth Forum funds to GHT	£592.00	£5,281.05
	30/9/2024	(126) - Transfer of W4A funds to Doreen Grafton	£559.20	£5,840.25
	10/10/2024	Zurich Insurance	£16.83	£5,857.08
	11/11/2024	Zurich Insurance	£16.83	£5,873.91
Total Expenditure:				£5,873.91
			Total:	£1,236.75