

Chair's Report for 2024 AGM

June 2024

To all our members and supporters, I should like to thank you on behalf of the trustees for your continuing support over the past year. They have not been the best for activities, but we have persevered and have, we hope, achieved some good successes in leaving behind troubled times.

I would also like to welcome you all to our AGM at this fantastic venue – All-Hallows church and to give our grateful thanks to the church for allowing us to make use of it.

We have continued moving the AGM to what we hope is a more suitable time of the year and would hope that members can take advantage of the light evenings to enjoy the park before or after the AGM.

This report is briefer than I would have hoped but it still reflects our determination to support Gedling Country Park through the activities of the Friends.

We have still maintained contact with Gedling Council staff and have had regular meetings with them, via the Rangers, to help with suggestions as to what work could be done and to offer advice and support.

The work carried out by the Rangers, Rob and Michael has been successful, with our help, in maintaining the Park environment during the year.

Thanks, must also go to those volunteers who have helped not only on Sundays but also helped the rangers during the week. Without their help the park would be in a sorry state.

In August 2023 we held, with the support of Gedling Council, an Environment Day on the park and despite the weather forecast it proved highly successful. Sadly, the council have not followed our recommendation to make this a regular event but there is something planned for September.

During the year we had a major fundraising effort funded by donations raised through The Save Our Wild Isles Community Fund which is organised by World Wildlife Fund, the RSPB and Aviva Insurance. The Friends of Gedling Country Park was sent a certificate of thanks for “protecting and restoring nature in our area and helping to bring UK nature back to life” We think this is something that we can be very proud of. The Trustees extend their thanks to everyone who donated and with the help of our volunteers and the Park Rangers over one thousand trees have been planted to diversify the woodlands and other areas for generations to come. This initiative raised over £14,000 and approx. £10,000 has already been used to purchase new trees, bushes, ferns, and woodland flowers. The remainder will be used in the autumn to allow us to finish this major replenishment programme.

We have seen appalling weather over the last year and the central lagoon has seriously overflowed on several occasions. Thanks to the efforts of Tony Keyworth and

the Rangers we now appear to have resolved the problems and so should be better placed in the next winter.

We are seeing signs of a new growth in interest in supporting us, our Sunday sessions have shown a slight increase in numbers, we have had some successful corporate volunteers days So if you know of any company that would like to support us in this way please ask them to get in touch.

We now have an additional notice board, attached to the side of our container and we are using this for updating information about any events and volunteer sessions. Sadly, some people found it amusing to smash the plastic and this has now been replaced with a much stronger sheet. The other notice board, by the car park has also been damaged and we have managed to repair this.

To those members who have stayed loyally with us I offer my thanks and appreciation for your support. Please continue and encourage friends to join us.

My personal thanks go out to my fellow trustees who have put up with my emails and calls over the last year. We only managed to start normal monthly meetings in the Autumn. The Treasurer's Report contains details of those individuals, groups and companies who have supported us financially over the last year and I add my thanks for their support.

This year we will say farewell to Brian Osbourne, who is standing down as a trustee, but will still act as our main environmental lead. Brian is also the main contact for our bees and if anyone would like to become involved with bee keeping, please contact us.

This year we have four new members come forward to stand as trustees and their help is greatly appreciated. This helps to ease the load on our existing trustees, but we still need others, so if anyone is interested can they please email me on **FGCPCHAIR@GMAIL.COM**

We also reach a major milestone in the coming year. The friend's group will have been going for 10 years in September and the park will have been open for 10 years in March 2025.

Finally, a mention of thanks to the Gedling Lottery which through the purchase of tickets by users and by nominating us has helped by raising funds on a regular basis.

So, let's look forward to 2024/5 and see how the park continues to develop In the Meantime:
Take Care, Stay Well and Stay Safe.

Terry Lock
Chairman
Friends of Gedling Country Park



Treasurer's Report – December 2023

The Friends of Gedling Country Park was formed on 29th September 2014 and this report is for our ninth financial year for the period from 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023. We are a UK registered charity number: 1167205.

Key Events

The overall financial position of the charity is very good, with membership income more than doubling and the receipt of some significant donations, including via crowdfunding (more details below). Thanks must therefore be given to every member who has paid their fee this year and to every other person or organisation who has donated to us.

Each member who joins us or renews their membership has the option to confirm that they are a UK taxpayer, which enables us to claim gift aid on their membership fee. Many members have chosen to do so, and we hope that this continues and would encourage all others to do the same if they can please.

The new five year membership saves 20% compared to annual membership (costing just £20 per individual or £40 per family for up to two adults plus children under 16). This represents great value compared to the annual individual and family memberships of £5 and £10 respectively. More than half of our new members and renewals have chosen the five year membership option, resulting in a more than doubling of our membership fee income this year. This has the obvious benefit of providing a greater immediate income, but we also should recognise that this income must be spent wisely over multiple years to ensure that we cover our ongoing overheads.

The most significant activity for us in 2023 was our Woodland Diversification Project where we made successful applications to the Aviva Crowdfunding Project and the associated Save Our Wild Isles Community Fund (sponsored by the WWF, RSPB and Aviva). Our application was to plant over the next few years thousands of new native trees from many diverse species, to compliment and eventually replace the silver birch trees, which make up most of the woodland in the park, and which will eventually die. Hundreds of people generously donated to the crowdfund via the Neighbourly Fund along with Crowdfunder and Mangopay. This was supplemented with generous donations from Aviva and the Save Our Wild Isles Community Fund, giving us a total of £13,773. We committed expenditure of £9,450 in 2023 with hundreds of diverse trees now planted in various locations across the park (predominantly within or adjoining the existing woodland areas).

We were also successful in 2023 with our application to the Co-Op Local Community Fund for the installation of one or more benches in the Queen's Canopy woodland area. This funding will be donated to us in 2024, but in the meantime in 2023, Gedling Borough Council Councillors J Hollingsworth, L Pearson, D Brocklebank, M Payne, R Strong, R Allan and M Walsh, together donated £650 towards the Queen's Canopy, for which we are immensely grateful. In addition, Councillor M Payne also donated £250 to support further improvements in Gedling Country Park.

The Gedling Borough Council run 'Gedling Lotto' (<https://www.gedlinglotto.co.uk/>), continues to raise money for good causes, including for the Friends of Gedling Country Park and many other local community groups and charities. Those who play the Gedling Lotto can choose their good cause and a big thank you goes out to those who have chosen us. In 2023, we received donations totalling £760 which is a valuable contribution to our charity.



Seeds of Change via the Neighbourly Fund kindly awarded us a donation of £400 to contribute towards the creation of wildlife scrapes (as they did on 2022).

Cadent also via the Neighbourly Fund kindly awarded us a donation of £200 towards the installation of Woodpecker Nesting Boxes.

Following on from their kind donation in 2022, The Rotary Club of Mapperley and Arnold funded the planting of more Sorbus Acuparia 'Sheerwater Seedling' trees within the park (£400). Please see <https://www.rotary-mapperleyarnold.org.uk/> for a list of their activities and the good causes they support.

And following on from 2022, Netherfield and District WI kindly donated another £75 to plant additional trees in the WI area of the park. Their Facebook page provides a useful update on their many worthy activities: <https://www.facebook.com/NETHERFIELDWI/>

A donation was kindly provided by Carlton Rotary Club of £35 from the sale of their Christmas cards. Please see <https://carltonrotary.co.uk/> for a list of their activities and the good causes they support.

Here is the complete list of organisations who have generously supported the Group this year (in alphabetical order):

- Amazon Smile
- Aviva Crowdfunding Project and Save Our Wild Isles Community Fund (paid via Neighbourly Fund along with Crowdfunder and Mangopay)
- Cadent
- Carlton Rotary Club
- Gedling Borough Council and Councillors J Hollingsworth, L Pearson, D Brocklebank, M Payne, R Strong, R Allan and M Walsh
- Gedling Lotto
- Netherfield and District WI
- Nottingham City Council Catering Services (who operates Cafe 1899 in the park and offers a 10% discount for all FGCP members)
- Seeds of Change
- The Rotary Club of Mapperley and Arnold

Income Received

The income received for the period from January 2023 to December 2023 was as follows:

Category	Amount	Description
Donations	£16,574	Donations from the various organisations listed above.
Membership Fees	£1,661	Membership fees taken for individual and family memberships (£1,293 of five year memberships and £368 of annual).
Fund Raising Events	£66	Cash from Nature Walks and AGM 2022 Raffle.
TOTAL	£18,301	



Expenditure

For the same period, expenditure was as follows:

	Amount	Description
Plants/Trees/Seeds	£9,450	First tranche of the Woodland Diversification Project expenditure (paid to GBC to benefit from existing supplier agreements, with hundreds of diverse trees now planted). In addition, the direct purchase of 100x black poplar trees, 2x holly trees, wildflower seeds and primroses.
Marketing, Communications and Web	£1,206	Printing of tree trail leaflets (x1000), web site hosting, new membership cards, stamps, and printing costs for membership forms.
Grounds Maintenance/Development	£825	Installation of duck tubes and woodpecker boxes. Installation of Bentonite to seal Eastern Lagoon. New storage container lock and keys.
Insurance	£427	Provision of public liability and volunteer personal accident insurance (also providing trustee, finance, libel and slander protection).
Finance Charges	£160	Bank service charges from Unity Bank, transaction fees from PayPal and Information Commissioner's Office Data Protection Registration Annual Fee.
Fund Raising Costs	£76	Men-in-Sheds notice board and volunteer event drinks.
Forums and Event Attendance	£30	Annual membership to the Greenwood Forum.
Equipment	£10	Purchase of garden fork for volunteer sessions.
TOTAL	£12,184	

Bank Reconciliation

The opening balance as of 1st January 2023 was £3,066.47 (comprising of £2,109.02 held at Unity bank, £685.85 held with PayPal, £271.60 income not yet cleared at the bank, and no cash holdings).

Total income for 2023 was £18,301.24 and total expenditure was £12,184.25.

The closing balance as of 31st December 2023 was £9,183.46 (comprising of £8,861.77 held at Unity bank, £321.69 held with PayPal, and no cash holdings).

Nick Benedek, Treasurer, Friends of Gedling Country Park
31st December 2023