

Friends of Gosforth Central Park Charity Number 1171862

Trustees' Review 2023

Volunteering continued throughout the year to keep Gosforth Central Park in good condition. Assessment as "Outstanding" by the Royal Horticultural Society's It's Your Neighbourhood scheme again confirms both the quality and nature of our work, being assessed on Community Participation and Environmental Responsibility, as well as Gardening Achievement.

There are around forty regularly attending volunteers at our Monday morning work sessions. Generally, attendance is around twenty-one to twenty-seven each week, with an average of twenty-three. Bank holidays and poor weather gave a lower turnout, reducing the average.

The lowest figure was nine on Easter Monday, when many had given their time on Saturday to support the Family Fun Day. There was a high of thirty on two occasions. Of particular note was Monday 4 December when fourteen volunteers turned up on an absolutely foul day of rain, sleet and ice.

Additionally, a number of volunteers and Trustees work in and for the Park outside the main Monday sessions, making a significant and substantial contribution to Park maintenance and the administration of the charity.

The Friends continue to work in collaboration with, and under temporary licence from, Urban Green Newcastle (UGN). A proposal for a replacement partnership agreement has not yet been put to FOGCP for discussion. However, our relationships with UGN are good but will need to be re-established following staff changes. UGN has worked hard to find a suitable tenant for the Ladies Bowls pavilion; they have had some interest in the Bulman Club, but this and the future of the Men's Bowling Green and Pavilion are important issues for the future of the Park.

UGN secured a Lawn Tennis Association grant to re-condition the tennis courts and this will be completed early in 2024. UGN efforts are continuing to find funding for a similar refurbishment of the basketball court, which continues to be a well-used asset.

Local residents and some park users continue to be concerned about the numbers of rats in the Park and UGN have brought in pest control contractors. We have tried to help by relocating the area we use to temporarily store prunings from our work, including those from our progressive pruning programme for overgrown shrubs and ivy.

Our relationship with Gosforth Shopping Centre (GSC) has continued with mutual benefit. Over Coronation weekend in May, GSC sponsored the Royalty Cinema in the Park and, in December, hosted our wreath making event, alongside their own crafts market. Profits from the cinema have been used by UGN to repair and improve the Children's Playground. They have also funded the cost of planting the Shopping Centre beds, both on the High Street and within the Park; these were designed and planted by FOGCP and are looked after by our Plants Group.

The Friends have also established an initial relationship with the Natural History Society of Northumbria as participants in their Gosforth Wild Web Project. This includes sharing our wildlife data with them, and they will provide wildlife-related events in the Park.

Through one of our volunteers, we now have a link with the Northumberland Wildlife Trust, with one of their expert staff monitoring the Park's nest boxes.

As the programme of study visits from Gosforth Central Middle School came to an end, pupils and teachers from Archibald First School made a number of visits to work in the Park, supported by some of our volunteers.

Problems of graffiti and vandalism have returned, with wheelie bin burning being a favourite. Dog walkers feature as a sizeable proportion of Park users and, for the best part, act responsibly and appreciate the work of FOGCP volunteers. However, a small number of anti-social dog owners don't bother to pick up after their dog, don't prevent them damaging planted beds, and persist in exercising them in the Quiet Area.

As ever, we are grateful to those who support the Park and the Friends through donations including by Gift Aided standing orders, the EasyFundRaising scheme, cash in our Monday flower pot and lots of cakes and biscuits. We have also received some quite substantial donations of plants. In these times of poor public funding, we rely on such generosity.

Of particular note is a donation of £1000. It was the wish of the donor to support an identifiable project, and we agreed on the planting of significant trees. To that end, work was started on developing a new tree line on the east side of the Park which will help compensate for the inevitable loss of the line of Whitebeams on the west side.

Our income this year also had a boost of £2050.00 from a Ward Grant, approved by Gosforth councillors, and spent on tools and materials for events.

And as ever, we volunteers benefit greatly from the pleasure of working together in the Park and the voiced and unvoiced appreciation of park users.

Steve Wootten

Allan Gillard

The Friends of Gosforth Central Park.
Receipts and Payments Statement for the Period 21.01.23 to 20.01.24

RECEIPTS	£	£	PAYMENTS	£	£
Standing Orders		462.00	Equipment and Maintenance		2479.78
Small Donations incl flowerpot		1098.11	Plants Group		1563.08
Corporate Receipts			Wildlife Group		29.99
Newcastle Council Ward Grant	2050.00		Other		
HMRC Gift Aid	230.83				
Womens ' Institute	90.00		Insurance	162.70	
Jesmond Ice Cream Co	40.84		Shopping Centre Plants	642.61	
Sainsburys	40.00		Easter Event	316.13	
Amazon Smile Scheme	25.21		Refreshments	185.63	
Easy Fundraising Scheme	19.34		Willow	144.95	
		2496.22	Miscellaneous	83.72	
Other Receipts					1535.74
Individual Donors	1140.00		Total Payments		5608.59
Shopping Centre Donation	643.11				
Bank Interest	430.43				
Credits on Purchases made	75.10		Surplus of Receipts less Payments		736.38
		2288.64			
Total		6344.97	Total		6344.97
BANK BALANCE MOVEMENT PER RECORDS:			BANK RECONCILIATION AS AT 20.01.24		
Bank Balance at 21.01.23 per Bank Statement and Records		8209.81	Balance per Bank Statement at 20.01.24		8940.87
ADD: Surplus for the Period		736.38	ADD: Flowerpot donation banked 20.01.24 not on bank statement until 22.01.24		5.32
Bank Balance at 20.01.24 per Records		8946.19	Bank Balance at 20.01.24 per Records		8946.19
BANK TRANSACTIONS SUMMARY			AUDITOR STATEMENT.		
Bank Balance at 21.01.23		8209.81	I have audited the Receipts and Payments Statement of		
ADD: Receipts for year		6344.97	The Friends of Gosforth Central Park for the period		
		14554.78	21.01.23 to 20.01.24 from the books and records provided.		
LESS: Payments for Year		5608.59	The Statement gives a true and fair view of the financial		
Bank Balance at 20.01.24		8946.19	position of The Friends of Gosforth Central Park for the		
			period.		
			Rod MacLeod: FCA (Retired)		
			10th February 2024		