

Friends of Cotteridge Park
Annual Report and Accounts 2020

The Shed Has Landed

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Trustees Annual Report

The Trustees are pleased to present their Annual Report and Accounts for the Charity for the year ended 31 December 2020.

Objectives

The charity's objectives which are contained in its Constitution are:

For the benefit of the inhabitants of the surrounding area of Cotteridge Park and visitors to the area ("the beneficiaries"), the promotion of the provision of facilities for education, recreation and other leisure time occupation in the interests of social welfare with the object of improving the conditions of life for the beneficiaries without distinction of sex or of political, religious or other opinions in particular but not exclusively by:

a) The promotion, support and improvement of Cotteridge Park.

b) Organising programmes of physical, educational, creative and other activities in the interests of social welfare, primarily in and around the park.

Covid-19

In the early part of 2020 Covid-19 took hold across the country and from the end of March we went into full lockdown. While most of FoCP face-to-face services had to stop, we managed to maintain contact with many of our volunteers and supporters through social media and traditional phone calls and adapt delivery by moving some of our regular activities on-line through 'zoom' and similar. When lockdown lifted over the summer we were able to re-open, in line with Public Health and Government Guidelines, and deliver some activities such as Tai Chi and Swing Fit in person once more. However, as our 'tier' rose and lockdown returned towards the autumn and end of the year, we had to again stop most of our face-to-face activities and once more return on-line.

Despite the devastating impact of Covid-19, the FoCP have managed to keep going and maintain a range of activities to promote engagement and wellbeing; in particular, we are pleased that we were able to grow our work supporting young people by funding two youth workers to undertake street and detached youth work – engaging, explaining, and helping young people during the pandemic.

We were also able to successfully deliver a virtual CoCoMAD which was well supported and appreciated by many people.

Perhaps most importantly for the future, in August 2020, we were able to see through the construction and handover of a new community building in the park – The Shed. With the roll-out of vaccinations and the gradual easing of restrictions, The Shed as a focal point for activities, engagement, and a safe place to meet will be hugely significant for the park and the community.

Clearly the year has been challenging for everyone and devastating for many, and we must also acknowledge the commitment and tireless efforts of the many volunteers and supporters who have supported the work of the FoCP throughout; making and keeping the park such a safe and special place for so many people. The review of activities below reflects our work during the year.

2020 in Cotteridge Park



The Shed, our new community building in Cotteridge Park opened its doors in August 2020, despite all the obstacles created by the Coronavirus pandemic.

The team of volunteers began by opening The Shed for weekends and occasional evening test sessions. When schools re-opened, additional opening times were added for the after-school slot.

From mid-September, in response to demand and, with the support of the great volunteer team, The Shed was open 7 days a week (give or take the odd day off for really bad rain).

The Shed Volunteers

To date, almost 60 people have signed up to join the volunteer team and more are continuing to join. Almost all of these people are new volunteers who have not previously volunteered in the park.

Volunteers range in age from 14 years old through to those in their 80s, a mix that represents our community.

Between opening in August and lockdown in November, The Shed was open for 464 hours with the support of 1113 volunteer hours.

We now have a team of enthusiastic, trained baristas of all ages and lots of people with their Level 2 Food Hygiene certificates.



What has been happening in the park – despite the pandemic?



The original plan for The Shed was to be a space that encouraged people to use our park more often and for longer. Research identified toilets, refreshments and somewhere to shelter from bad weather was needed most.

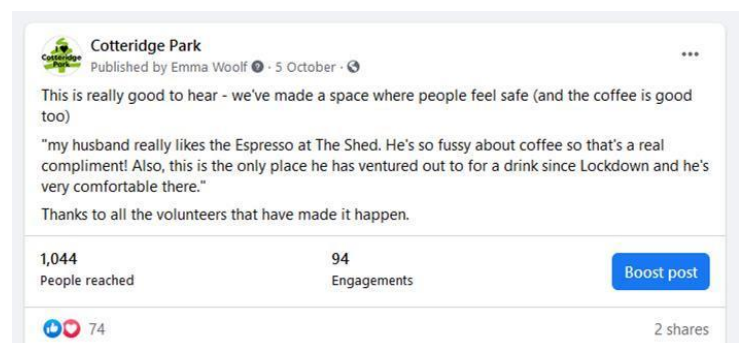
Despite the pandemic, The Shed has managed to provide access to toilets and refreshments – with very rigorous covid-safe systems. What we have not been able to do is invite the public to shelter in the building or organise indoor activities yet; that will happen as covid restrictions ease and we are able to safely open-up indoors.

As with all open spaces, Cotteridge Park has been very busy since the first lock down in March. The Shed, when it opened, quickly became a focal point and meeting place for the local community.

We have made new connections with park users who had not previously engaged with our volunteers. For example, access to toilets and water bottle top-ups has turned out to be a great way to meet the young people who use the basketball courts.

The Shed has been particularly valuable for isolated people or for people who had been shielding and wanted a safe place to venture outside for the first time.

However, in early November, with the advent of lock down 2, the trustees decided that to comply The Shed would have to close until circumstances and Public Guidance changed.



Activities in Cotteridge Park

One of the key reasons to have a new community building was to enable the Friends of Cotteridge Park to deliver new services and activities for our community. Since The Shed opened we have been able to develop new services, welcome new groups and adapt services that had been halted by covid and/or needed new ways to work.

New - Detached youth workers

One of the impacts of the lockdowns – especially during the school closures - was that more young people were in the park for longer periods. We were concerned that these young people needed support to use the park safely and as such raised funding for detached youth workers.



Initial funding was for 10 weeks, but we were then able to reallocate funding for projects that could not go ahead because of the pandemic to provide additional sessions.

The youth workers have added a great service to the community, and we are now looking for additional funding to enable this work to continue. During the first phase of the project 300+ interactions with young people were recorded.

We also hope to learn from the experience in Cotteridge Park and develop the service into a pilot for other open spaces across the city (if funding bids are successful).

Working with Schools and Young People

Our work with schools and young people was greatly limited because of the pandemic. The Duke of Edinburgh volunteer sessions that run on Sundays were few and far between, and we were unable to run our regular Forest School sessions, although we did manage to deliver several ad hoc sessions when teacher levels and 'bubbles' allowed.

Cotteridge School

We were able to help Cotteridge School come up with a covid-safe way to welcome new families.

The Shed also joined in the "end food poverty" campaign providing free snacks and drinks using funds donated by local people and to help ensure that the park doesn't become a "no go area" for parents and carers who can't afford to be "pestered", Friends of Cotteridge Park is now providing Cotteridge Primary School with vouchers to use at The Shed for families receiving support.

New – GOATS; Getting on at The Shed

With funding from the City Council's Neighbourhood Network Scheme, the GOATS are meeting weekly at The Shed (or virtually during the lockdowns).

The aim of the GOATS project is to provide men, over 50, with activities and a place to meet as part of a mental and physical well-being programme. So far they have organised a range of sessions from bike repairs to blacksmithing as well as running the training for our baristas.



New – Bicycle Polo

With the opening of The Shed, Birmingham's Bicycle Polo Club approached FoCP about using the park as their new training home; we were happy to say yes, and except during the lockdowns they have been at the park every week – and welcoming local people to join the club.

Park Activity Sessions for the public

As with everywhere else, at the first lockdown all face-to-face outdoor physical activity and volunteer gardening sessions were stopped. While some sessions such as **Tai Chi** and **SwingFit** went online, we found this was not a satisfactory solution as too many regular participants did not have access to the internet and/or missed the vital social elements of the sessions.

As soon as the guidelines allowed FoCP worked with Birmingham Open Spaces Forum, Birmingham Public Health and Birmingham Parks to re-start the sessions in a covid-safe way in July 2020. Unfortunately, the previous funder was unable to support the sessions during and after the lockdown as funding had been redirected to services meeting the needs created by the pandemic.

We have been able to source some other funding from donations, grants, and income generated by The Shed to ensure that at least some of this valuable community service could continue as restrictions lifted.

SwingFit and Tai Chi were the first sessions back as they suit physical distancing well.

[Click on this link](#) to see the SwingFit participants joining in a global phenomenon in October.



Tai Chi in the sunshine

Our popular **GreenFit Baby**, perinatal exercise classes lost their funding but we managed to adapt the sessions to become self-led Baby Strolls supported by volunteers.



Baby Stroll on the rain



The **Pre-Schoolers Forest School**

changed into a DIY Forest School. Working with a local project that FoCP supports – Roam – we provide weekly leaflets and downloads to enable carers and young children to meet in small groups for self-led DIY forest school activities.

Our Forest School sessions with local schools continue as before when permitted and having access to a toilet and hot drinks via The Shed are a much-appreciated improvement.

The previously supported **Walking Group** continues without a leader – which makes it harder for new people to join. The **Running Group** has continued as a friends network – but isn't able to engage with new runners or run the Couch to 5k course.

As restrictions ease, we will continue to look for funding to support these important activities.

Volunteer Gardeners

The need to protect volunteers has meant that the regular gardening sessions on Tuesdays and Sundays have been very infrequent in 2020. As such maintenance of the park has been limited. The Wigloo, in particular, has suffered from the lack of attention.

Individuals and family groups have continued to work when they can and there has been an increase in the number of people using their allowed exercise to pick litter which is great to see.

Sustainability

We are absolutely delighted with the way The Shed has been supported by the local community since it opened in August. It was not until the 2nd lockdown that we realised just how important The Shed had already become to so many people.



Not only is The Shed appreciated by the community, but it is also funded by them. The income generated by sales of refreshments and merchandise already covers the running costs of the building, plus generating some additional funds to pay for the activities that the community wants.

We have also seen an increase in our donations as The Shed provides a place where conversations about the work of the Friends of Cotteridge Park volunteers can happen and donations can be made.

And even in lockdown The Shed (or the paving at least) is in use to help people stay fit and active.

Despite all the obstacles we have realised a 10-year dream – to bring a community building back to Cotteridge Park. For us 2020 will not be the year of the pandemic, it will be the year The Shed opened.

The Shed will be here for many years to come – at the heart of the community – meeting the needs of the community.



Future Plans

As and when the lockdown lifts, we will be able to restart activities; especially those that are normally physically distant such as tai chi and swingfit.

As 2020 ended it was hard to see how CoCoMAD 2021 can take place in its usual format, but we do hope to host a series of lower key events throughout summer 2021.

At the moment, using The Shed as an indoor venue in the first half of 2021 is looking unlikely, but we will continue to respond as flexibly as we can in line with changes to public health guidelines.



Photo courtesy of Phil Banting

Thanks and acknowledgements

None of the FoCP work would be possible without the fantastic support of our generous donors and supporters. “Thank you” from all the volunteers and park users.

Bernard Piggot Charitable Trust
Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation
Bruce Wake Charitable Trust
CB and HH Taylor Trust
Charles Brotherton Trust
Comic Relief Core Strength
DLA Piper UK LLP
Edgar E Lawley Foundation
GJW Turner Trust
Garfield Weston Foundation
George Henry Collins Charity
Grimmitt Trust
Lillie Johnson Charitable Trust
Michael Marsh Charitable Trust
Rowlands Trust
Saintbury Trust
Sport England
The Cook and Wolstenholme Trust

The Midland Adult School Union
The Roger and Douglas Turner Trust
William A Cadbury Trust

All the generous individual donors and local businesses that supported The Shed, CoCoMAD and the work of the volunteers

All our friends at Birmingham City Council Parks (and beyond) & Birmingham Open Spaces Forum

Thank you to the wonderful designers and construction teams

Axis Design Architects
 Featherstone Build & all the contractors
 Open Systems Lab
 Pulp Build
 Rigg Furniture, Enamel Shades

and Newso – for the exterior artwork
 Kerry Leslie & Edie Woolf



Financial review

Income and expenditure for 2020 was in line with budgets. The building project (The Shed) continued to bring in grant funding and donations and met its funding target.



Not surprisingly The Shed accounted for the bulk of expenditure in 2020.

The operation of The Shed has been disrupted by Covid lockdowns but, in the three months when it was open it generated income of over £5K.

Online CoCoMAD cost £13K; less than the £19K usually spent, but still a substantial financial commitment – supported by grants.

Reserves and reserves policy

Trustees consider that in the current uncertain climate, and in particular the continued reductions in funding for parks and 'softer' social activities, that excluding costs associated with the annual CoCoMAD festival, the charity should aim to hold an unrestricted reserve equivalent to a minimum of 3 months running/delivery costs for park activities and general running costs.

Cash funds at the end of 2020 stand at £23K which trustees consider to be in line with the above intent. It is worth mentioning that the bulk of the £81K held at the end of 2019 related to capital costs associated with building The Shed, that work has been successfully completed.

Although the capital spending on The Shed is complete there is a continued need to focus on grants and donations to fund activities previously funded by Active Parks. Hopefully, as lockdown is eased The Shed can become fully operational and we can use income generated ourselves to help support activities in the park.

This year's budget has been drawn up to enable trustees to monitor spend against our plans. This takes into account additional financial responsibilities in running a building such as cleaning and catering supplies, electricity, repairs, and maintenance.

Structure and Governance

The Friends of Cotteridge Park CIO is a membership organisation for those who enjoy and use Cotteridge Park and was registered as a charity on 21 January 2019. It began its activities on 1 June 2019 following the transfer of funds from the old charity.

The Trustees were appointed on registration, represent the members, and manage the business of the charity on their behalf. The charity has no employees and is run entirely by volunteers.

The charity holds regular management meetings open to all members, and quarterly Trustee meetings. Trustees serve for one year and elections are held each year at the AGM.

Reference and administrative details

Friends of Cotteridge Park

c/o 44 Franklin Road, Birmingham B30 2HG *Registered Charity Number 1181644*

Trustees

Martin Holcombe - Chair

Emma Woolf MBE - Vice Chair

Max Woolf

Cathal Lynch

Carola Lange

Laura Brooks - Secretary

Ian Mather – Treasurer

Carole Drury (appointed 19 June 2020)

Declan Vaughn (appointed 23 Nov 2020)

Matt Kersel (resigned September 2020)

Bankers

Unity Trust Bank, PO Box 7193, Planetary Road, Willenhall, WV1 9DG

Independent Examiner

Karen Hanlan, Karen Hanlan Independent Examiner Limited, 12 Waterloo Close, Wellesbourne, CV35 9JG

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees

Signature:	Print name	Date
	Chair, Friends of Cotteridge Park	12 April 2021

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Friends of Cotteridge Park CIO on the receipts and payments accounts for the year ended 31 December 2020.

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Friends of Cotteridge Park CIO ('the Charity') for the year ended 31 December 2020 which are set out on pages 13 to 15.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the Charity you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. The accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Karen Hanlan, ACA, ACIE
Karen Hanlan Independent Examiner Ltd
Hollyoaks
Lea Marston, B76 0BW

Date: 12 April 2021

Receipts and payments accounts
Year ended 31 December 2020

	Un-restricted	Restricted	Total	Total
	Funds	Funds	2020	2019
	£	£	£	£
Receipts				
Grants	-	112,599	112,599	8,990
Donations	11,561	24,973	36,534	7,072
Income from activities	8,130	-	8,130	23,316
Bank Interest	85	-	85	243
Total receipts	19,776	137,572	157,348	39,621
Payments				
Fundraising costs	9,414	-	9,414	2,778
CoCoMAD event	-	13,232	13,232	19,921
Park Building Project	-	170,452	170,452	45,277
Heritage Lottery Project	-	-	-	7,330
Science Project	-	2,861	2,861	2,297
Youth Worker	-	4,500	4,500	-
GOATS project	-	3,546	3,546	-
Other activities	1,560	-	1,560	1,349
Costs of running 'The Shed'	7,050	-	7,050	-
Insurance	605	-	605	716
Independent Examiner's Fee	1,100	-	1,100	600
Administrative expenses	562	-	562	666
Computer equipment	-	-	-	852
Total payments	20,291	194,591	214,882	81,786
Net receipts over payments	(515)	(57,019)	(57,534)	(42,165)
Transfer of funds from old charity	-	-	-	122,870
Transfer between funds	(14,766)	14,766	-	-
Cash funds at beginning of year	36,408	44,297	80,705	-
Cash funds at end of year end	21,127	2,044	23,171	80,705

Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the year

	Un-restricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds 31.12.20	Total funds 31.12.19
B1 Cash Funds				
	£	£	£	£
- Current account	10,017	2,044	12,061	9,482
- Deposit account	11,085	-	11,085	70,253
- Old charity bank balances	-	-	-	652
- Petty cash	25	-	25	318
Total	21,127	2,044	23,171	80,705

	Fund balance at 1/1/2020	Receipts	Payments	Transfer between funds	Fund balance at 31/12/20
B2 Restricted fund balances	£	£	£	£	£
Park Building Project	39,594	115,778	(170,452)	15,080	-
GOATS Project	-	3,750	(3,546)	-	204
CoCoMAD 2020	-	13,544	(13,232)	(312)	-
Youth Worker funding	-	4,500	(4,500)	-	-
Science Project	2,863	-	(2,861)	(2)	-
Story Project	1,840	-	-	-	1,840
Total	44,297	137,572	(194,591)	14,766	2,044

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees:

Signature:	Print name	Date
	Martin Holcombe Chair, Friends of Cotteridge Park	12 April 2021

Notes to the accounts

Park Building Project and asset for continued use by the charity

Building works and fitting out of 'The Shed' were completed in the year. Funding was provided by many local individuals as well as many grant making charitable Trusts with a significant proportion (£90,000) from Sport England. The Shed will provide a venue for many indoor & outdoor activities well into the future & will support a number of future projects to be undertaken by the charity.

'GOATS' project – Getting On At The Shed

Funding provided by Selly Oak Constituency Neighbourhood Network to run a project to improve the health and wellbeing of older members of the community.

CoCoMAD 2020

Funding provided by The Arts Council Emergency Response fund to the charity to put on an on-line version of the annual CoCoMAD event.

Youth Worker funding

Funding from Birmingham City Council in response to COVID-19 to support youth workers to ensure that young people could continue to use the park facilities and enable them to do so safely.

Science Project

Funding received in the previous year from the Big Lottery Community Fund to support the science and nature club run by the charity. The impact of the pandemic meant that the project could not be completed. The funding, with the permission of the funder, was re-directed to the youth work project.

Story Project

Funding received in the previous year from The George Fentham Trust to run a story telling project. The impact of the pandemic meant that the project could not be completed. The funding, with the permission of the funder, was re-directed to the youth work project.