



# Friends of Yeovil Country Park

*"Supporting and helping to maintain Yeovil Country Park in conjunction with the Countryside Team"*

Reference: FOYCP04042024

Dated: 04 April 2024

## **Friends of Yeovil Country Park**

### **Trustees Annual Report**

### **for the Year ending**

### **31 December 2023**

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## Reference and administrative information

The reference and administrative information forms part of this report.

Charity name

Friends of Yeovil Country Park CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

Registered Charity number

Charity No: 1185579 Registered 1 October 2019

Principal and operational address

Yeovil Country Park, Brunswick Street, Yeovil BA20 1QZ

Trustees

The Trustees who served during this period in alphabetical order are as follows:

- Amanda Card - Treasurer
- Gary Cashmore - Chairman
- James Fison - died 16 July 2023
- Nicholas Hill
- Edward Sadler
- Alison Suter

Constitution

Friends of Yeovil Country Park CIO was registered on 1 October 2019. The Constitution for the Friends of Yeovil Country Park CIO has been reviewed and we can confirm that Issue 3 remains the current version, document Reference: FoYCP28042019 Issue 3.

## Trustees Report

Friends of Yeovil Country Park report and financial statement as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) for the Charity's fourth period ended 31 December 2023.

It is with much sadness that we had to announce that one of our Trustees, James (Jim) Fison sadly passed away. Jim was a founder member of the Friends since the establishment of the group in 2012. He was a great asset to the Country Park and valued Trustee with his wealth of local knowledge and experience.

We are now running the group with five Trustees. The constitution allows for up to eight Trustees and, despite the fact we are quite happy running with five Trustees, we will be raising an agenda item at our next regular meeting to seek new members. At the same time, we will be looking for suitable candidates with the necessary skills, experience and qualifications for the role of Trustee and offer them a position as a new Trustee in our team.

Our thanks to all of the Trustees, Members and Volunteers who generously gave their time and expertise over the year to achieve the goals of the Charity. They are our most valuable asset.

The year witnessed much activity in the Country Park and visitor attendance increased visibly.

Last year we mentioned that we had applied to Woodward Charitable Trust for funding. Following the submission in December 2022, in March we found out that we had been awarded a £500 contribution. This, together with £400 from the Friends, allowed us to deliver free Woodland Wellbeing sessions to PROMISEworks and Yeovil4Family (Y4F) in conjunction with the Community Ranger. Each charity group received forest school sessions, with activities aimed at children from 5 to 15 years old and in total approximately 50+ taking part. Experiences range from outdoor activities in the Park i.e; fire lighting, paint making, mini boat making and racing and tree walking. There were three after-school sessions and a bat walk for a group of 10 children and accompanying adults.

These Forest school activities are a theme the Friends are keen to develop in the future and engage with more of the community who will benefit from learning about the countryside.

The Park continues to achieve Green Flag recognition status and it was awarded to the Park again in the year. We applied for the Pride in Parks award in May and judging occurred in September.

The April Spring Trail was a great day for all involved. It was brilliant to see some 640 parents and children enjoying themselves. Lots of positive feedback was received from the public. We were able to secure support, with the help of donated confectionery from local supermarkets Asda, Tesco and Iceland that was handed out for completing the Trail.

Wildlife Garden refurbishment was completed in December with an end of project report submitted as part of the requirements of the sponsorship from Wessex Water. Unfortunately the project was delayed due to unauthorised camping in the area and antisocial behaviour that had to be dealt with by the appropriate authorities before the project could be completed.

The Yeovil Town Super Saturday event held in September was supported with the aim to advertise the Country Park. We shared a stand with the Rangers making bird feeders with apples from the Park.

The Hallowe'en trail, another big event, drew large numbers of the public, with over 1250 in attendance, some of the longest queues ever for this yearly event. Positive feedback was received from the families who attended and from some new visitors to the Park who didn't realise how good the area is.

We have continued to support Park Yoga with sponsorship that has delivered weekly sessions from May to September with an average of 80 attendees per week. This is beneficial to the Park as it draws people to the facility.

Friends of Yeovil Country Park remains an active going concern.

## Accounts

The accounts were reviewed and approved by the Trustees. The detailed Accounts are included below.

The card payment facility obtained has been beneficial as more of the public move to card and phone payments at our events. The only charge incurred is a small fee per transaction.

We had approximately 12 volunteers, excluding Trustees.

### Income and Spending

Accounting period 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 and the financial controls for the period of this report were reviewed by the Members and Trustees at meetings held throughout the year.

The accounts include funds and commitments from 31 December 2022 accounts. These amounted to £17,005.93

### Funds generated principal income;

The two principal events, namely the Spring and Hallowe'en trails, were both successful, with the Spring Trail generating an income of £510.00 at the start of the year and was attended by over 640 adults and children.

The Hallowe'en Trail generated an income of £1,640.74 and was attended by over 1250 adults and children.

Pencil sales accounted for another £252.70

Public donations for dog biscuits totalled £782.38

Grants were received from Woodward Charitable Trust £500.00 together with other sundry items summarised on the accounts sheet.

In total, receipts for the year amounted to £3,801.19

### Key spending was for;

Hallowe'en Trail expenses £643.03 were higher than normal due to a restock of display items. We also received confectionery donations from our sponsors Tesco, Asda and Morrisons who continued to support the local community.

Spring trail expenses of £121.60 and again supported with confectionery donations from our sponsors Tesco, Asda and Morrisons.

Park Yoga £765.00 contribution to the running of this activity in the Park.

Purchases for the Park totaled £1,035.31 made up of: wood carving a feature bench £500.00; purchase of bat boxes £129.98; purchase of wildflower seed £405.33

Google domain name yearly expenditure of £10.00

Purchase of seeds and plants £189.77

Forest school costs £783.33

Miscellaneous items for the year amounted to £226.21

Together with other costs the total expenditure for the year amounted to £3,786.47

Accounts summary sheet;



# Friends of Yeovil Country Park

## Receipts and Payments Account and Statement of Balances for the year ending 31st December 2023

Receipts		Payments	
Tesco Bags of Help	0.00	Purchases	0.00
Post Code Lottery Award	0.00	SSDC Invoices	0.00
Sales of Knitted/Handmade Items	22.00	Misc Expenses	226.21
Sponsorship	0.00	Spring Trail Expenses	121.60
Public Donations	13.27	Purchases for Park	1,035.31
Super Saturday	29.50	Calendar Printing	0.00
Pencil Sales	252.70	Activities	0.00
SSDC reimbursements	0.00	Park Yoga	765.00
Grants	500.00	Halloween Expenses	643.03
Dog Biscuits Donations	782.38	Google Domain Cost	10.00
Post Card Sales/Donations	50.60	Wellness Event	0.00
Halloween Trail	1,640.74	Pencil Purchases	0.00
Wellness Event	0.00	Seeds/Plant	189.77
Wessex Water Grant	0.00	Bank Payment Charges	12.22
Spring Trail	510.00	Forest School	783.33
Other Grants	0.00		
Wessex Water Grant	0.00		
Asda - Green Giving Tokens	0.00	Total Payments	3,786.47
Other Grants	0.00		
Total Receipts	3,801.19		
-	-	Excess of Receipts over Payments	14.72
	3,801.19		3,801.19

### RESERVE FUND

Balance at start of year 1st Jan 2023	17,005.93
Excess of Receipts over Payments	14.72
-	-
Balance to date	17,020.65

### REPRESENTED BY:

Balance at Bank 31/12/23	
Current Account Old	0.00
Current Account New	16,320.05
Deposit Account	0.08
Cash in hand of Treasurer (Café safe)	40.00
Not yet on statement	660.52

17,020.65

Amanda Card, Honorary Treasurer

## Objectives and activities

Fundraising opportunities. We continue to identify sponsors who we can work with to improve the Park facilities and have again applied (December) to the Woodward Charitable Trust small grants for outdoor activities delivered to families with vulnerable children. We expect to hear back early next year.

We continue to hold regular Friends group meetings to review plans and ideas.

## Summary of main achievements during the year

Our main achievements for the year are with the Spring and Hallowe'en trail events. Both attract large numbers of families and continue to be popular events to attend in the local area.

Completion of the Wildlife Garden area with the help of a grant from the Wessex Water Foundation of £750 to which the Friends added additional funds, allowed the improvements with the help of Park Rangers and volunteers. An end of project report submitted during December marked completion.

## Key plans for the future

We will continue to run our key public events the Spring Trail and Hallowe'en Trail.

Establishing Friends, website;

Tesco Bags of Help Wildlife Trail project completion, remains delayed but has been reviewed with a revised plan to achieve. Initial delay was due to the impact of COVID-19;

Wyndham Hill project is essentially complete apart from signage engraving and erection;

Park Yoga sponsorship;

Exploring new fundraising and sponsorship opportunities.

## Reserves policy

Our reserves policy is to retain a working capital to cover costs incurred prior to income being received; cover unforeseen events; project overrun costs; etc. The amount is set at £2,500 unallocated reserves.

## Risk

The risk identified in the last report concerning Somerset establishing a Unitary Council and the potential impact to the Country Park has materialised. At the end of the year the Council declared a financial emergency and a spending freeze was imposed. There will be greater reliance on the Friends to support projects next year.

Funding opportunities are increasingly harder to identify in the current economic climate. We are reliant on help with this funding, the delivery of future projects could be impacted.

Inflation remains a challenge for family expenditure and the ability to attend events in the Park where a charge is levied, which means there is more pressure on seeking/generating funding in order for events to have a lower charge or be free to attend (for the community).

## DBS

We will continue to review this for any new roles that we may undertake. No action was required for this financial year, since the original guidance was obtained from DBS. We currently have no Trustees, employees or volunteers who are in roles that are eligible.

## Report approval

Report approved by all of the serving Trustees of Friends of Yeovil Country Park.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees;



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Gary Cashmore

Position: Trustee - Chairman

Date: 04 April 2024



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Amanda Card

Position: Trustee - Treasurer

Date: 04 April 2024