

The Friends of Cotgrave Country Park



Charity registration number: 1199132

Trustees' Annual Report for the period from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022

Introduction

The past year has been a significant one for the group. In May 2022 a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) was established and registered with the Charity Commission as a charity.

Over the last two years it had become clear that this major change in the way the organisation was constituted was necessary. The group had made successful bids for funding which brought its income to the threshold of £5000 whereby registration with the Charity Commission was a legal requirement.

The excellent work of Paul Phillips, taking the lead on fundraising for the group, identified possible future funding opportunities that would continue to require registration.

It was also apparent that officials needed protection from personal liability if people were to be encouraged to become active within the group.

This report describes the activities of the group throughout the whole year, including the months prior to the establishment of the CIO.

Objectives and Activities

The object of the charity is to provide or assist in the provision of facilities for recreation and other leisure time by the preservation, promotion, support, assistance and improvement of Cotgrave Country Park.

The Friends have delivered a range of educational nature based walks and activities including a Family Fun Day open to the local community for adults and children.

Events

Fun Day apart, we have put on eleven activities in the park. These have covered many aspects of nature: wildflowers, butterflies and moths, fungi, bats, bugs and tree identification. All have been educational and informative, and enjoyed and appreciated by the attendees.

Many thanks to all the leaders and helpers on these activities, giving their time and expertise freely and generously. A successful season!

See Appendix I for a full list of events.

Fun Day

The Fun Day was a significant success, following last year's first event. Numbers were good, and a warm day was enjoyed by all. Children's activities were fun, enjoyable and educational. All coming to the event had the opportunity to wander nature related information stalls, with volunteers freely giving time and effort to help inform the public.

Thanks to sponsors and to all organisers and contributors working hard to put on this free event. We believe the event is important in raising awareness amongst local communities of the great opportunities for education, relaxation and leisure that the park provides.

Contribution made by volunteers

During the year members and others associated with the group attended 28 volunteer task days on the park. The work carried out on these days were the equivalent of 158 man-days (790 hours) work.

The range of work carried out included path repairs and drainage works, extending the new path at the kingfisher pond, clearing /maintaining the Rill path, cutting back trees and shrubs around a number of the plantations, work on the Multi User Route, hedge-laying along the canal tow path, and work on the forest school area.

The Fun Day involved a tremendous amount of planning and help from many on the day. It was great to see so many willing to help with all aspects on the day and their help ensured its success.

The contribution of a number of individuals has been invaluable in this busy year. All who have contributed to the running of the group and the transition to a CIO have done so in their own time and our thanks goes to all of them.

Achievements and Performance

The work of the Friends is to keep the park in great condition for the public that use it for recreation and relaxation as well as the nature that inhabits it.

The events described in the previous section have ensured that people from the area have been able to enjoy the park and find out more about the fauna and flora that can be found there.

Awareness of the Park and information about it has been greatly enhanced by a redesign of the Friends of Cotgrave Country Park website (www.cotgravecountrypark.co.uk). Tom Thurston has done a fantastic job on this and, in the process, has also reduced the administrative cost significantly.

Those people enjoying a walk in the park can make use of new sign posts marking 4 trails of varying length and hopefully next year the trails will be enhanced by information boards.

A survey completed by a small number of users of the park was carried out during the year. The results are shown at Appendix III. The answers showed that 50% of the users used the park most days and 78% at least once a week. 78% of the users travelled less than 2 miles to the park and all who took part travelled within 5 miles. The most common word used to describe what users liked about the park was "natural".

Financial Review

The audited statement of accounts can be found at Appendix II.

The savings of the group are held in a single charity bank account and use of these funds are determined by Trustees.

Fundraising

The charity's principal sources of funds have come from grants, supplemented by membership fees, and donations from individuals and local businesses.

During this year we were one of the causes chosen to receive support from the Co-Op Community Fund. The distribution between the chosen causes was decided by shoppers. The funds we received enabled purchasing and hiring of equipment and facilities that enabled us to run such a successful Fun Day for users of the park. Unfortunately, we have not been chosen for the coming years causes.

We received donations from Nottinghamshire County Council which included money for bat boxes and towards the expenses of the fun day. Cotgrave Town Council also gave us a donation towards funday expenses.

Other bids for funding have included:

- Rushcliffe Bio-Diversity Fund. We have been informed that our bid has been successful for £750 towards the cost of a kingfisher pond project. The rest of the cost will need to be found from other sources.
- Highways England Biodiversity Fund for funding schemes near the A46/A52. Our bid to fund a conservation field project has been accepted in principle and this year will see feasibility studies take place.
- Nottinghamshire County Council Local Community Fund. The bid here is to fund production of information boards around the park. This bid has now been deferred to the 2023-4 financial year.

Structure, Governance and Management

The charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). It is governed by a constitution adopted on 27 May 2022. Previously a community group operated according to a separate constitution. Under the provisions of the latter the community group was dissolved with effect from 31 December 2022.

3 Trustees are ex-officio office holders of the charity (Chair, Treasurer and Secretary). Others can be elected by the membership. There are currently 5 Trustees.

Nottinghamshire County Council, Rushcliffe Borough Council and Cotgrave Town Council may each appoint one charity trustee, although there are no council Trustees at present.

The charity trustees will make available to each new charity trustee, on or before his or her first appointment a copy of the constitution and any amendments made to it and a copy of the CIO's latest trustees' annual report and statement of accounts.

The charity's elected officials are Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Fundraising Lead, Activities and Events Lead.

Nottinghamshire County Council own Cotgrave Country Park and allow the Friends to carry out agreed activities in the park under guidance and supervision. Regular meetings are held between the Friends group and the County Council park management. A document explaining how the relationship is managed will be agreed in the coming year.

The Friends liaise and network with Rushcliffe Borough Council and Cotgrave Town Council, both of which have representatives attend the group's meetings. Both councils have been supportive.

Public Benefit

The Trustees have a legal duty to have regard to the guidance published by the Charity Commission on public benefit when they exercise their powers or duties. This means that they must be aware of the guidance, take it into account when making a decision to which the guidance is relevant and if they have decided to depart from the guidance, they have good reasons for doing so.

The purpose of the charity is to provide an environment that is of benefit to the public and does not limit access to that environment in any way. The Trustees have been provided with copies of the Commission's guidance and all decisions are made with the purpose and guidance in mind.

The stated aims of the charity are specifically designed to bring benefit to the public by enhancing the experience of all who use the park.

Reference and Administrative details

Friends of Cotgrave Country Park
Charity registration number 1199132
7 Vine Farm Close
Cotgrave
Nottingham

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

Alan Holmes	Chair
Trevor Chapman	Secretary
Sharon Broadbent	Treasurer
Paul Phillips	Fund Raising
Rachel Tindsley	Events & Publicity

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)

	
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Full name(s)

Alan Holmes

Trevor Chapman

Position (eg Secretary,
Chair, etc)

Chair

Secretary

Date

18 April 2023

Appendix I

Month	Date	Park/ Social events
April	30.04.2022	Community Garden Stand
May	01.05.2022	Birdsong walk
	17.05.2022	Daytime Butterflies and moths walk
	20.05.2022	Bat and Moth walk
	28.05.2022	Childrens Activity
June	12.06.2022	Wildflower Walk
		Family(under 10's) activity/Minibeasts
	28.06.2022	Daytime Butterflies and moths walk
July	24.07.2022	Wildflower walk
August	21.08.2022	Family Fun Day
	09.09.2022	Bat walk
	23.10.2022	Fungi walk
Dec	07.12.2022	Tree Identification Walk

Appendix II

FRIENDS OF COTGRAVE COUNTRY PARK

ACCOUNTS 1ST JANUARY 2022 – 31ST DECEMBER 2022

INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
Balance brought forward 1/1/2022	£ 4543.78		
Miscellaneous	£ 65.48	Miscellaneous	£ 606.02
Membership	£ 667.00	insurance	£ 168.00
Donations	£2783.26	Website	£ 180.00
Ticket Sales	£ 158.09	Funday	£1223.31
Funday	£2332.21	Balance @ Bank	£8372.49
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	£ 10549.82		£10549.82

Accounts checked and Audited _

Karen Knight MAAT

Appendix III

Cotgrave Country Park user survey

1. How often do you use the park?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	• Most days		50.00%	9
2	• At least twice a week		16.67%	3
3	• Once a week		11.11%	2
4	• 2-3 times a month		5.56%	1
5	• Less often		16.67%	3
			answered	18
			skipped	0

2. How long do you typically spend in the park?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	• Less than an hour		33.33%	6
2	• 1-2 hours		66.67%	12
3	• More than 2 hours		0.00%	0
			answered	18
			skipped	0

3. What do you use the park for (tick all that apply)?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total

3. What do you use the park for (tick all that apply)?

1	• Walking		77.78%	14
2	• Dog Walking		44.44%	8
3	• Cycling		44.44%	8
4	• Jogging		11.11%	2
5	• Fishing		0.00%	0
6	Other (please specify):		27.78%	5
			answered	18
			skipped	0

Other (please specify): (5)

1		Just enjoying nature
2		Events and play park
3		Dog pool
4		Spotting flora and fauna
5		To take children out

4. How far did you travel to visit the park?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	• Less than 2 miles		77.78%	14
2	• Less than 5 miles		22.22%	4
3	• Over 5 miles		0.00%	0
			answered	18
			skipped	0

5. What do you like about the park?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00%	18
1		Just on the doorstep and beautiful		
2		Dog swimming pool, nice walks, natural, lots of water		
3		Diverse and quiet, nearby		
4		Variety of walking trails		
5		It's solitude		
6		Flora and fauna, plus good surface on the paths for walking		
7		Trees, lake, canal, view over Tollerton and Nottingham.		
8		Clean, nice routes		
9		Dog pool		
10		Lovely natural landscape		
11		Natural space full of wildlife		
12		It's naturalness		
13		Natural surroundings without play areas etc.		
14		Peaceful, nature, wildlife, good paths		
15		It's rugged natural landscape		
16		Natural surroundings		
17		Open space, close		
18		Open spaces, clean, friendly people, peaceful.		
			answered	18
			skipped	0

6. What would you like to see improved in the park?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00%	18
1		Extra bridge to hollygate		
2		Needs toilets		
3		Nothing really		
4		Dogs on lead sections of the park,, climbing/play apparatus for children (made from trees from the park in keeping with the area)		
5		Tea, kofi, refreshments		
6		Activities for children around the walks		
7		More car parking, perhaps on weekends?		
8		Feature areas similar to theirs in Rushcliffe Country Park in Ruddington		
9		Nothing		
10		More bins to encourage disposal of rubbish		
11		Signage and information		
12		TOILETS		
13		Parking for those who visit from other areas or can't be bothered to walk to the park. Too many people using surrounding roads (Mill Lane area in particular)		
14		Clearer footpaths from foliage, toilets and an open flat grass area would attract more people, woodland is very dense restricting growth		
15		Parking and some on lead zones in congested areas		
16		Toilets, refreshments		
17		A childrens play area, preferably made from wood. A larger car park.		
18		More for young children to explore. E.g. willow or natural play things incorporated into different walkways like at Rushcliffe and westbridgford parks.		
			answered	18
			skipped	0

7. On a scale of 1-10, how likely are you to recommend Cotgrave Country Park to friends, colleagues, and family, where definitely is 10 and 1 is not at all likely?

Answer Choices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Response Total
	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5.56% 1	11.11% 2	83.33% 15	18
										answered	18
										skipped	0

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Signed 

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