

The Friends of Cotgrave Country Park

**Trustees' Annual Report for the period from
1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024**



Introduction by Alan Holmes, chair of Friends of Cotgrave Country Park

The Friends of Cotgrave Country Park is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). This is the second full year of its operation.

2024 has seen the group deliver several key long-term projects as well as continue to provide invaluable services to the park and the community that use it.

We have continued a close working relationship with Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC), that has allowed us to work collaboratively together to construct two "Community Green Shelters" which at the time of writing are soon to be opened to the public to provide a significant and valuable addition to the facilities offered in the park. This project is in addition to the close liaison with NCC for tasks and maintenance works and support with activities and nature walks.

A huge project that has been completed by the Friends Group this year has been the Information boards. Eight colourful and informative boards were installed around the park in July, after almost 10 months of preparation, design and eventual manufacture. The boards inform park users of the wide variety of flora and fauna found within the park, as well as useful maps and history. This was a collaboration between NCC and the Friends Group. We have had tremendous feedback from the public for the professional look of the boards and they certainly place the park on a footing with other similar green spaces now. My sincere thanks to all that contributed to this project.

We have maintained great communication with the public that use the park with weekly engaging Facebook posts, website updates, monthly blogs and colourful Park noticeboard content. The variety of media outlet ensures all can access interesting and engaging content. I regularly stop to talk with people I meet in the park who comment on what they have read on our "socials" and noticeboards.

We have again won bids for funding for projects in the park and I am immensely thankful for the involvement of many in ideas creation and costing, submitting bids and supporting the delivery phase. We have now been successful for a second year in succession (2023/2024 and 2024/2025) for the Coop Community good causes campaign. This has allowed us to re-invigorate and improve part of the old Nature Trail in 2024, and we are looking forward to the next phase of this long-term project.

A combination of weather and low number of bookings has led to a reduced programme of events and activities this year. Sadly, our Summer Children's Activity Day had to be called off due to bad weather - disappointing after a lot of hard work and preparation. We did have a fully attended Bat Walk and Fungi Foray with great feedback from those who joined in. These events bring into the park many people from the local community, both adults and young persons, to experience the beauty of nature, and to learn from "experts" about local habitat and its wildlife.

The work of the CIO depends on the tremendous efforts of people who generously give their time to ensure it can continue to operate so successfully. The role of volunteers is vital, and the group is always looking for others to get involved. Volunteers are not just needed to conduct tasks in the park on volunteer task days but also to help carry out the everyday running of the organisation.

Alan Holmes, Chair

I would like to pass on my sincere thanks and appreciation to the trustees and all involved with the Friends of Cotgrave Country Park.

Year after year, they work tirelessly to look after and make improvements to the park, that all visitors and users enjoy and benefit from.

This last year has been exceptionally busy and productive for the team and park, and it is fantastic to at last have the information boards in place that we have been looking forward to for a long time.

Cotgrave Country Park gets better and better as a result of all the voluntary work by the Friends Group, and long may it continue with more to come.

County Councillor Richard Butler

Member for Cotgrave Division & Chairman of Nottinghamshire County Council 2024-25

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. The Wildflower and Butterflies Walk in June had 7 attendees, all of whom were enthusiastic and enjoyed the walk.

The Bat Detectors Walk had 17 attendees. It was very much appreciated by all.

25 took part in the Fungi Foray on October 13th.

Unfortunately, the Birdsong and Identification Walk had to be re-timed from July to September and was cancelled due to only 3 tickets sold.

For the past few years the Friends have organised a Family Fun Day, open to the local community for adults and children. This year, it was planned to hold a Children's Activities Event, scheduled for August 24th. It was fully organised but had to be cancelled due to heavy rain and windy conditions.

Leaders and helpers on these activities have given their time and expertise freely and generously. Our thanks to them all.

Contribution made by volunteers

During 2024 members of the Friends of Cotgrave Country Park and others associated with the Group attended 36 task days on the park. The work carried out throughout the year represented some 179 individual volunteer days.

The range of work undertaken included woodland wildflower planting and seed sowing, tree planting on the Bluebell Spinney path, repairing kingfisher nesting banks, repositioning route marker posts, building bridges across drainage ditches, installing information boards and development of the nature trail areas.

Maintenance tasks have included paths and drainage repairs, repairs and clearance to signage and other furniture, litter picking, and tree clearing.

This year local volunteers have been joined by groups from Games Workshop, Specsavers and Rodgers Leask Limited using their employer-supported volunteering allowances. Our thanks to all of them for their contribution to the maintenance and improvement of the park.



Games workshop volunteers

The unseen 'behind the scenes' contribution of volunteers is the work done by Trustees and others who have helped in the organisation of events, producing education and informational materials about the park, managing our website, and communicating with the Public. The input of ideas and comments at meetings are also valuable in ensuring that the group have been able to deliver so much this year. Over 720 hours of meetings, organisation and administration have been recorded.

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.

Social media

We have continued to utilise Facebook and have seen increased activity on our account; last year we had 1500 likes and 1700 followers, and this year, we have 1600 likes, 1800 followers, and around 6600 visits, compared to 5500 last year. An example of a month's activity on Facebook can be seen at Appendix III.

We use Facebook to advertise task days, events, and project updates, demonstrating what an active group we are.

We also use a blog to advertise longer stories about what is happening in the park. 8 posts this year included "Aviva Community Fund Bulb Planting Part 1" and "Stunning New Information Boards Unveiled at Cotgrave Country Park" which received over 600 views.

Biodiversity and Conservation

To start the year our first task was to carry out our bird box clearance, which showed some promising signs of use by both blue tits and great tits.

Also, we completed our Woodland Wildflower Project. £1903.75 was raised by crowdfunding through the Aviva community fund. This allowed 22 volunteers to work over 100 hours to plant 4,750 bulbs and plants, including Native bluebells, snowdrops, celandines, wood anemones, wild garlic, primrose, and dog violets.



Woodland wildflower planting

Other green gym task day activities have included planting hedgerows. Also, Nottinghamshire Bat Group replaced two damaged bat boxes.

Additionally, we hosted our Wildflower and butterfly walk. New plants recorded this year included: Common centaury, Yellow wort, Lesser hawkbit, Hedge bedstraw, Honeysuckle, Beaked Hawk's beard, and White campion. A Ringlet butterfly was sighted on the park for the first time.

Also, a site visit was set up for the Reptile and Amphibian Group to scope out the park for suitability. Overall, it was considered that there is a great deal of suitable habitat, especially for grass snakes, and also suitable areas to deploy mats for a transect survey. It is hoped that we will be able to start a run of surveys next year.

Notts Bat Group carried out a survey. In Bluebell Spinney, at the Mill Lane end of the park, there were 2 pipistrelles and 4 Brown Long Eared (3 together in 1 box). This is the first time this species has been seen in boxes on the park. All the bats were in the boxes on the far side of the footpath away from the housing development.

Finally, Cropwell Bishop Cubs started work on our Nature Trail by creating two bug hotels. In addition to this numerous task days installed children's rubbing posts alongside smaller bug hotels, ladybird towers, bee hotels, and butterfly houses to support nature along our nature trail. Money from the Co-op community fund helped buy these items, Planting of native species including Wild Garlic, Cowslip, and Common dog violet will commence along the trail in spring.



Nature Trail



The plan to refresh and develop the nature trail was drawn up by Rachel Ollerenshaw, our Environment & Conservation lead. She has managed the first phase and was recognised for this by winning the award for the Environmental Project of the Year at the Celebrating Rushcliffe Awards in November.

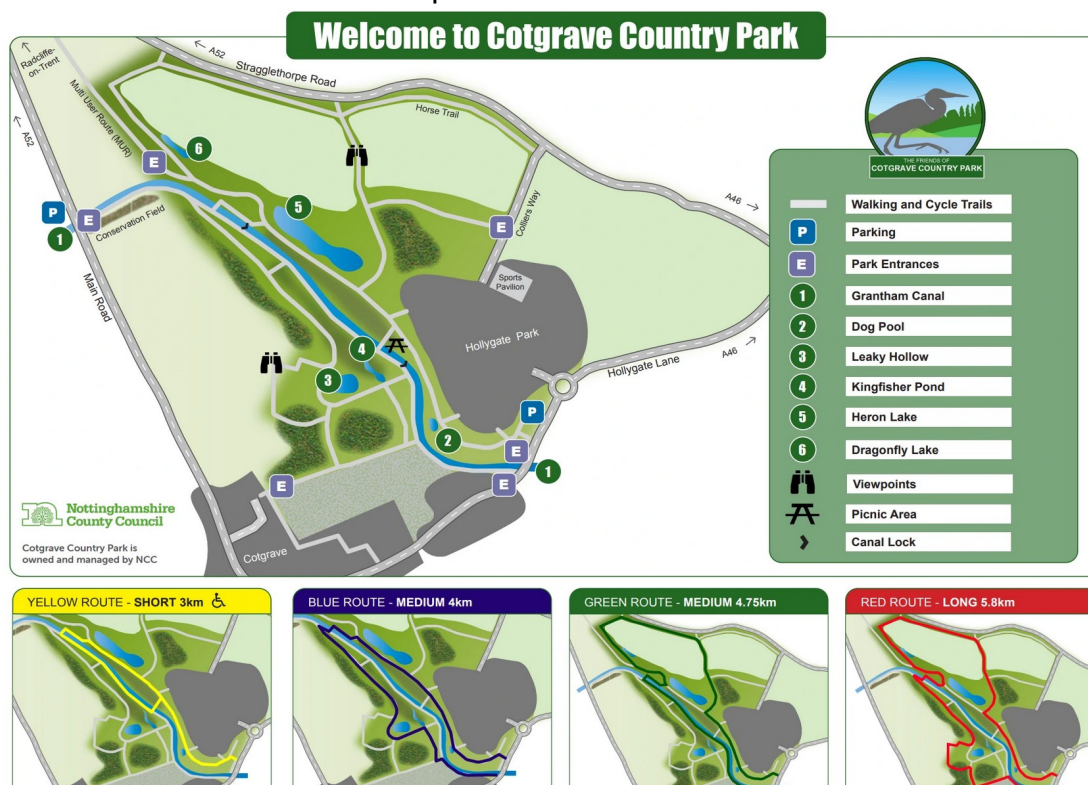


Celebrating Rushcliffe Awards

Park Information

There have been two significant pieces of work designed to improve the information available to the public about the park and enhance users' enjoyment.

A new contemporary styled map of the park and the four marked walking routes was designed by Sharon Conway (SC Creative Solution Ltd) in collaboration with FoCCP and NCC. This was posted on notice boards and the park website, as well as being publicised on our social media platform.



New park map

The other significant addition to the park were a series of eight information boards placed at points of interest. The project was developed by the Friends Group and supported by Nottinghamshire County Council. The boards feature differing themes of flora and fauna found in the park as well as some useful general information and maps. One board looks at the previous history of the park when it was a colliery, and another is a large panorama board on the viewpoint overlooking the surrounding area.

The design, production and installation of the boards relied on many hours of work by a group of the Friends and Lee Scudder of Nottinghamshire County Council. The boards were designed by members of the group with the help from a graphic designer and local business AR Signs manufactured them. Volunteers installed the boards over a number of task days.



Information board in situ

The Friends have had another very productive year supporting our management of the Country Park. In particular, the Friends put a huge amount of time and effort into the content, design and manufacture of the new interpretation panels which have been installed across the park, and which provide lots of information for visitors. With the new 'green roof shelters' also in place in 2024, development of the park for the local community and for wildlife progresses, and we look forward to continuing this work with the Friends in 2025.

Nick Crouch, Natural Environment Manager, Nottinghamshire County Council.



Wildflower meadow information board



Heron lake information board

Further Development

Plans are in place to continue the development of the nature trail by commencing planting native species wildflowers along the path and further extension will depend upon feedback and the success of fundraising bids such as the Co-Op Community Fund.

Engaging with the local community is an important aim of FoCCP. We have been involved with the Cotgrave Integrated Neighbourhood Local Design Team. Successful Integrated Neighbourhood Working happens when local councils, health and social care, community groups and voluntary sector organisations work together with communities to find ways to improve the health and wellbeing of local people. By registering on the Rushcliffe Community and Voluntary Service online Volunteer Centre we hope to attract more, much needed, volunteers, not only to carry out tasks on the park but to help with background work, such as organising and running events or general administrative work.

Financial Review

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

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 which provide an assured income totalling nearly £850 this year. The income from membership fees has enabled us to fund those items not covered by grant income and the essential administrative fees (eg insurance) necessary for the continued running of the group.

Bids for funding have been to:

Co-Op Local Community Fund. A total of £1703.45 was received from the 2023/4 funding round. This has met the cost of the phase 1 redevelopment of the Nature Trail.

Other monies received were from Nottinghamshire County Council to match the funds previously raised through the Local Community Fund to pay for the production and installation of the 8 information boards that can now be seen around the park. This was supplemented by a donation from Councillor Richard Butler, Rushcliffe Borough Council.

Friends of Cotgrave Country Park have, once again, been chosen to be part of the next round of the Co-op Local Community Fund. The funding round started on Sunday 20 October 2024 and will run for 12 months until 19 October 2025. During this time, Co-op Members will be able to choose their cause. The more members who choose FoCCP, the more money we'll receive.



Co-Op presentation

Structure, Governance and Management

The charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). It is governed by a constitution adopted on 27 May 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 6 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.

In addition, Rachel Ollerenshaw is Environmental and Conservation Lead. This is a discretionary appointment made by the Trustees.

Nottinghamshire County Council own Cotgrave Country Park and allow the Friends to conduct agreed activities in the park under guidance and supervision. Regular meetings are held between the Friends group and the County Council Park management.

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 continue to be supportive of the group.

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.

As liaison officer between FoCCP and the Town Council I am happy to be associated with this voluntary group of like-minded people who care for the country park, improving the park environment, and arranging numerous events for the local community. Well maintained paths offer a gateway to the great outdoors, enabling all to experience the joy of walking."

Councillor Leo Healy. Cotgrave Town Council.



Coffee in 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
Rachel Ollerenshaw	Environment & Conservation

Declarations

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

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)	Alan Holmes	Trevor Chapman
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Chair	Secretary
Date	28/1/25	

Appendix I

Accounts 1st January 2024 – 31st December 2024

Income	£	Expenditure	£
Balance brought forward	14092.18		
Membership	849.00	Naturescape(bulbs/plugs)	1924.40
Nature Trail (Co-Op)	1703.45	Nature Trail	1793.82
Notts County Council	5838.00	Bat Boxes	231.18
Rushcliffe B C (Signage)	500.00	Signage	10786.00
Rushcliffe Rotary Donation	250.00	Donation Notts Bat Group	30.00
Ticket Sales	84.00	Funday expenses	69.15
		Hall Hire	60.00
		Sundry expenses	67.08
		Insurance	157.56
		Balance at Bank	8197.44
	-----		-----
	23316.63		23316.63

Appendix II

A 2024 Diary

16/01/24	Quarterly meeting between FoCCP Chair and NCC
28/01/24	Bird box monitoring/cleaning.
30/01/24	AGM: Rachel Ollerenshaw elected as a Trustee.
06/02/24	Trustees agreed to buy replacement bat boxes for the woodland behind lock 7.
08/02/24	Task Day: woodland wildflower planting.
18/02/24	Task Day: woodland wildflower planting. Final version of new Park Map approved.
19/02/24	Meeting with RWE Solar Farm developers re projects that could be funded.
24/02/24	Cotgrave Integrated Neighbourhood Working Community Event.
27/02/24	Task Day: woodland wildflower planting.
05/03/24	Updated entry to Rushcliffe Big Green Book submitted.
10/03/24	Task Day: 18 trees (10 Lime, 8 Oak) planted on Mill Lane path.
19/03/24	Trustees met to discuss scope of Nature Trail Project
19/03/24	3 New Bat Boxes purchased.
20/03/24	Donation of £250 received from Rushcliffe Rotary Club.
21/03/24	Task Day: Planted Hawthorn screening hedge behind storage unit; Cleared and burnt sea buckthorn on toe; digging out to repair kingfisher banks.
26/03/24	Group Meeting
09/04/24	Task Day: Cutting back to widen track to viewpoint to allow vehicle access; cutting back picnic area; fixing post arrows. Local landscape gardener donated some sleepers and stakes. Trustees met to discuss a strategy for the group going forward.
14/04/24	Task Day: Litter picking.
15/04/24	Bat survey: 3 pipistrelles together in a box and 1 in another. 5 boxes with possible bats behind cobwebs.
22/04/24	Quarterly meeting between FoCCP Chair and NCC
25/04/24	Task Day: Cut back some of the overhanging trees along the path between the dog pond and the cabin, some stump treatments in and around the corral area and planted some marsh marigold plants in the

	wet grassland beyond leaky hollow. Progress digging out the kingfisher banks to enable beginning the re-build. 4 volunteers from Games Workshop took part.
05/05/24	Task Day: Route Marker Posts repositioned and some added.
07/05/24	Joined Community Care Transformation Programme - Nottingham & Nottinghamshire.
19/05/24	Task Day: An additional date at short notice.
21/05/24	Task Day: Path repairs, scrub control and work on Kingfisher nesting banks.
	Meeting to agree first improvements to the first section of the nature trail.
28/05/24	Group Meeting.
04/06/24	Announcement of smaller event replacing Fun Day.
	Approach made to Nottinghamshire Amphibian and Reptile Group to carry out a survey in the park.
	Task Day: Strimmed round the main group of picnic tables and cut a path between them, cleared a tree from the towpath and exposed the drain on Mill Lane so that it now runs free. Collected broken glass on the bridge and cleared the rubbish around a den area in the wood.
05/06/24	Sighting of Bee Orchids on the park.
08/06/24	Entry on Notts Help Yourself updated.
09/06/24	Task Day: Repaired 2 benches and reset 1. Cut back one of the wooded areas by Heron Lake. Strimmed around benches by dog pool.
13/06/24	Task Day: General duties, picnic bench repairs.
20/06/24	Task Day: Two bridges erected across ditches to provide access to a path at the top of the steps and to a bench overlooking Leaky Hollow. A group of volunteers from Games Workshop took part in the day.
23/06/24	Wildflower and Butterfly walk.
25/06/24	Task Day: General duties, scrub clearance etc.
02/07/24	Task Day: installed the 'trees and birds' lectern on High Trail and replaced the fisherman's gate (car park end of the Lake).
07/07/24	20 slabs and 20 edging stones donated by local landscape gardener.
08/07/24	Application submitted to Co-Op Community Fund 2024.
09/07/24	Task Day: Information Board erected on Heron Lake. Grass strimming.
14/07/24	Task Day: Information Board erected on viewpoint.
	Notts Bat Group replaced and relocated 2 repaired bat boxes and put back 1 fallen box, all in Bluebell Spinney.

18/07/24	Task Day: installed welcome lectern near car park and wildflowers lectern overlooking Leaky Hollow. Carried out preparation work for Cub Scouts activity day. A group of volunteers from Rodgers Leask Limited (consulting engineers) took part in the day.
20/07/24	Initial walk around park and assessment by Nottinghamshire Amphibian & Reptile Group.
21/07/24	Cropwell Bishop Cubs built 2 bug hotels for the Nature Trail.
23/07/24	Quarterly meeting between FoCCP Chair and NCC
28/07/24	Task Day: The last Information Board installed at the Toe.
06/08/24	Task Day: Hard standing for Information Boards, cutting back scrub. Group meeting.
11/08/24	Task Day: Making track safe where BMX features had been dug.
15/08/24	Task Day: General maintenance.
20/08/24	Task Day: Preparation and grass cutting for event.
22/08/24	Task Day: Maintenance to bollards at Heron Lake.
24/08/24	Children's Activities event cancelled due to weather conditions.
27/08/24	Trustees meeting:
03/09/24	Task Day: Ramp and handrail constructed to bottom end of permissive path through wood from top of steps.
06/09/24	Bat Detectors Walk.
08/09/24	Task Day: Ramp extended and bridge at top of the path raised to reduce the slope. Vegetation on car park cut back to make parking bays visible.
19/09/24	Task Day: Posts for securing gate of shelters fixed; entrance path from Stragglethorpe Road cut back and cleared to allow access for horse riders; Vegetation on High Trail cut back.
22/09/24	Task Day: 2 steps up from Bluebell Spinney repaired; Betony seeds sowed all around Leaky Hollow area; large logs removed from den building area.
24/09/24	Group meeting:
01/10/24	Rachel Ollerenshaw nominated for Rushcliffe Volunteer of the Year and Young Volunteer of the Year.
03/10/24	Members of the group attended afternoon tea with the Chair of Nottinghamshire County Council, Councillor Richard Butler, at County Hall to acknowledge the work of voluntary groups in Cotgrave.
07/10/24	Friends of Cotgrave Country Park chosen to be one of the 2024-25 Co-Op Local Community Fund causes.

- 13/10/24 Fungi Foray event.
- 17/10/24 Rachel Ollerenshaw shortlisted in the Environmental Group/Project of the Year category in the Celebrating Rushcliffe Awards for her work developing the Nature Trail project.
- Task Day: Work commenced on Nature Trail, general maintenance, clearing a bike ramp.
- 27/10/24 Task Day: Work on Nature Trail.
- 10/11/24 Task Day: Trees removed to open out the woodland clearing for the bird feeding area of the Nature Trail. "NT" signpost erected near the start of the trail. A staked corridor to lead people into the woodland clearing from the pathway created.
- Notts Bat Group carried out a survey. At the Mill Lane end of the park there were 2 pipistrelles and 4 Brown Long Eared (3 together in 1 box). 2 pipistrelles were counted in a box near the lock.
- 19/11/24 Registered with Volunteer Centre Database.
- 20/11/24 Two Trustees attended a celebration event to celebrate the award from the 2023-24 Co-Op Local Community Fund.
- 21/11/24 Rachel O awarded environmental project of the year at Celebrating Rushcliffe award night.
- 21/11/24 Task Day: 5 Specsavers staff joined us for the day. Work started on rebuilding one of the kingfisher nesting banks. Also cutting back of the wooded areas between Leaky Hollow and the Mill Lane path.
- 24/11/24 Task Day: Short day cutting hazel to use to build fencing on the Nature Trail.
- 28/11/24 Attended Rushcliffe Volunteer Coordinators Network Meeting.
- 14/12/24 Citizen Science Workshop run by Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust attended.
- 19/12/24 Task Day: Final one of the year. Gathered hazel cuttings (see task day 24/11) and built fencing for nature trail.

Appendix III

January 2024 roundup!

- 🐦 We celebrated [#NationalBirdDay](#)
 - 🐦 We learnt about the [#BigGardenBirdWatch](#)
 - 🐶 We celebrated our dog pond being re-open!
 - 🚲👤 We took a look into our walking routes and bike trail
 - ❄️ You shared your photos of the park in winter
 - 🐦 Our first task day of the year - bird box clearing
 - 😊 Friends of Cotgrave Country Park is part of the Co-op Local Community Fund
- To find out more and to choose us as your cause, click here:
<https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/83469>
- 🗣️ FOCCP discussed everything happening in the park during our annual AGM





FRIENDS OF COTGRAVE COUNTRY PARK

ACCOUNTS 1st JANUARY 2024 – 31st DECEMBER 2024

INCOME

EXPENDITURE

Balance brought forward 1/1/2024	£14092.18
Membership	£ 849.00
Nature Trail (Co-Op)	£ 1703.45
Notts County Council	£ 5838.00
Rushcliffe B.C (Signage)	£ 500.00
Rushcliffe Rotary Donation	£ 250.00
Ticket Sales	£ 84.00

Naturescape (bulbs/plugs)	£ 1924.40
Nature Trail	£ 1793.82
Signage	£10786.00
Bat Boxes	£ 231.18
Donation NoRm Bat (Walks)	£ 30.00
Funday Expences	£ 69.15
Hall Hire	£ 60.00
Sundry Expences	£ 67.08
Insurance	£ 157.56
Balance at bank	£ 8197.44

£23316.63

£23316.63

Accounts checked and Audited

Signed 

Karen Knight MAAT

Dated 