

WOODTHORPE GAZETTE

THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF WOODTHORPE GRANGE PARK
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER, 2018

EDITORIAL

REVIEW OF 2018

Although meteorologically, it has been the season of autumn since the beginning of September and as predicted we have had two months of an Indian Summer. Now that the clocks have gone back one hour, and we have returned to Greenwich Meantime it is safe to say autumn is well and truly upon us!

It is at times like this, now that the summer has become a distant memory, that in all walks of life we begin to take stock of what the past year has been like, especially in terms of achievement.

For the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park, 2018 has been a momentous year. Apart from taking on a much higher profile by way of its many activities, the friends have also taken on a much higher profile in social media circles with the launch of the Woodthorpe Park Friends website on www.woodthorpefriends.co.uk and the Friends Twitter Page of [@OfWoodthorpe](https://twitter.com/OfWoodthorpe)

There is, however, one thing I nearly forgot to mention and that is the launch in April 2018 of the bi-monthly newsletter the Woodthorpe Gazette.

The newsletter has seen four bi-monthly publications, with this being the fifth, all covering topics related to issues that surround Woodthorpe Park with a special summer edition that covered topics relating to the glorious summer of 2018.



Home Page of the Friends Website

It is important to remember that before the launch of the website and corresponding twitter page the friends already had a well-established Facebook page. However now that we have both, the friends Facebook page has since seen an increasing number of people following! To date there are 1,030 followers and 974 people liking the page.

September/October edition of the Woodthorpe Gazette

As with this edition, all editions of the Woodthorpe Gazette are available to download on PDF format from the Friends website on.

<http://www.woodthorpefriends.co.uk/page160.html>

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES: LITTER PICKING

Litter picking, or rather clearing up after fly tippers is something that would be fair to say has become, for the friends, something that has resembled a crusade.

This year has seen the friends meet on three separate occasions to clean up litter and other unwanted items that have been carelessly discarded by members of the public, or by those who could not be

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bothered to discard large unwanted items in an appropriate re-cycling centre.

As reported in previous editions of the Woodthorpe Gazette the area of the park where most of the fly tipping takes place is the wooded entrance to the park on Sherwood Vale. As a consequence, this was the area where most of the effort was concentrated.



As you will see from the photograph above, which was taken on the 1st April, 2018 is just an example of what is fly tipped at the bottom of Sherwood Vale.

As a further example, during the friends first litter pick, which was held on Saturday 24 March, 2018 eight huge bags of rubbish were filled consisting mainly of sweet wrappers, dozens of drinks cans and beer bottles. One of the members even found a partially buried bag of wet flyers advertising pizzas and a broken plastic cover from a lawnmower.

That of course was just the beginning! On our second litter pick held on Saturday 5th May, 2018 more waterlogged flyers were found advertising pizzas, which was later discovered, following an investigation by the editor of the Woodthorpe Gazette, that the pizza company, whose flyers were dumped on the park is still in existence, and is trading on Haydn Road in Sherwood.



One example of the many dumped flyers

Word soon gets out and by the third litter pick, which was held on Saturday 25th August, 2018, and reported in the September/October issue of the Woodthorpe Gazette, the friends were accompanied by Nottingham City Councillor Adel Williams, who came along to help and to discover the environmental issues that are raised as a consequence of the actions of the perpetrators of fly tipping.



Councillor Adel Williams with members of the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park

The wooded entrance to Woodthorpe Park is no doubt one area the friends will return to again at some future date. However, there is one issue that blights not just Woodthorpe Park but other parks in the City and County as well, and that is vandalism.



As an example, you will see amongst the debris left by fly tippers is how the wooded area of the park looked in April, 2018, when repair work was carried out on the road bridge that once led to and from the former brick works, which is now the Penarth Housing Estate.

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A month later, this is how it looked on the 13th May, 2018 after the repair works were completed and all the scaffolding removed. However, just five months later, on the 8th October, 2018 the work that was carried out by a team of contractors has now been vandalised by a graffiti artist that according to my estimation has also left his tag on a number of walls on Mansfield Road in Sherwood.



Picking up rubbish and other discarded items might, for some seem as if that is the only issue facing Woodthorpe Park. However, there is one issue that is worthy of being mentioned and that is the travellers that pitched up on Woodthorpe Park on the 20th of September.

Although their stay on the park was for a short period only, as they were very soon given a court order to move within days of their arrival, it was the mess that they left behind that was most alarming.



© Nottingham Post: Travellers on Woodthorpe Park

You hear of the mess travellers leave behind after they have been told to leave, and how much it costs councils to clear up after them. It is only when you see for yourself the sort of items they leave behind do you get a true sense of the environmental damage some travellers are capable of making.



As you will see from the photograph above, amongst domestic waste left by the travellers are discarded tyres and large oxygen and acetylene cylinders, which are used in the welding trade, and below, propped up against a tree, large sacks of more domestic waste.



Having reported to two council employees, who were about to go onto the vacated site, to investigate what was left behind I decided to go and further investigate the site for myself.

It was after having sifted through the undergrowth of what was once the wild flower meadow that I, as a member of the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park, decided to take further action.

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Armed with half a dozen huge refuse sacks, a pick-up stick and one of the trollies borrowed from the Plant Shop I set off to clear up the remains of what was left behind.

Apart from discovering in the undergrowth more domestic waste, I found discarded shoes, and a dartboard. Also found amongst all the rubbish was a Sainsbury's shopping basket.



The one thing that I noticed, and reported to Woodthorpe Park's Park Ranger was large quantities of discarded food waste. This, I felt, was of importance as it could attract vermin such as rats, plus dogs would be attracted to the food waste and could make themselves ill by eating it.



Most of the food waste I discovered was in an area where the travellers, before leaving, had set fire to fencing panels, only to have it put out by the fire services, as you will see from the above photograph.

On a lighter side, apart from attracting the attention of dog walkers and people just enjoying the early autumn

sunshine, having collected all this rubbish, the trolley I was using became more and more heavy, and to push it required ever greater effort, especially as it was now all uphill's back to the Plant Shop to where the skip is located where I could dump all the rubbish I had collected.

It was on the steady trudge back to the Plant Shop and the occasional stops to adjust the rubbish to prevent it falling onto the pathway that I met up with a member of the Trevoze Gardens Residents Association, only to discover we both have a kindred spirit, we both care for Woodthorpe Park and its environment.



As the photograph above shows, I did have to stop for a few minutes just to catch my breath where the employee in the golf hut insisted on taking my photograph with all the rubbish I had collected.

Finally, to put an end to the saga of travellers pitching up on Woodthorpe Park, two very heavy concrete blocks have now been placed behind the gates where the travellers entered the site. These will only be moved during the time of the park's annual summer fun fair in July.



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The Park's Gardens: Maintained by the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park

Litter picking, whether as a whole group or one member clearing up after travellers have left the site, is just one of tasks assigned to the members of the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park. Gardening, in more recent times has been one of the tasks now being carried out by the Friends. That is not to say to take over a job formally undertaken by council employees, it is mainly to assist scarce employed staff in the maintenance of Woodthorpe Park's gardens.



The Sunken Garden, Woodthorpe Park

Having lived all my life facing Woodthorpe Park, as a child growing up, I can remember the park had what appeared to be, a whole army of gardeners. For example, the photograph above of the sunken garden was at one time a whole bed of roses that were annually pruned and maintained throughout the year by members of the gardening staff.

How times have changed. The onetime bed of roses has now been replaced by perennial plants, as they are easier to maintain, and the onetime army of gardeners has been reduced to just two members of staff, who are employed to maintain the 52-acre site that is Woodthorpe Park. As a consequence, to make up the shortfall in staff numbers, and to add another string to their bow the Friends have now taken up the general maintenance of the park's gardens

For example, the Friends of Woodthorpe Park, under the supervision of a qualified gardener began planting narcissus bulbs in the formal gardens in November 2017, which was followed up in

February 2018 with the planting of crocus and snowdrop bulbs in the Dell Garden.



The above two photographs are of the Friends bulb planting in the formal gardens which, as you can see, is under the supervision of a qualified member of the gardening staff.



Members bulb planting in the Dell Gardens, which, again, is under the supervision of a qualified member of the gardening staff.

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As you can see by the tiny specks of yellow appearing out of the ground in the formal garden, these are the fruits of the labours of the Friends of just 4 months ago to when this photograph was taken on 24th March, 2018.

Unfortunately, because of the prolonged winter and short spring, the promise of spring flowers was very poor this year. With this in mind, if the weather is kind to us this winter it will be the spring of 2019 before the Friends are able reap the full benefits of their labours of November 2017. The same also applies to the bulb planting earlier this year in the Dell Garden.

Since the two bulb planting sessions, members have been spotted maintaining the park's formal gardens. As you will see by the photograph below of Woodthorpe Park Friend Janice Farr, who, during the summer months took to weeding the flower beds in the sunken garden.



Also, as the above photograph shows, two of the Friends, husband and wife, Alex and Marian Staniforth trimming the box hedging in the formal gardens.

2019 looks as if it will be a much busier year as the Friends take on a more proactive role within Woodthorpe Park. From a meeting of the Friends held in the Grange on Wednesday 28th November, apart from litter picking and the general maintenance of the park's gardens a decision was made that the Friends will take on a more formal role as regards to the care of the park's gardens. It has also been suggested that requests from the head gardener could be made for Friends to work in specific areas of the formal gardens and to what particular tasks are required with regards to garden maintenance.

With a more proactive role being played by the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park, it would be easy to say that council employees should be doing those jobs, or, the Friends are doing someone out of a paid job. Unfortunately, in the world we now live in that is not the case. With ever decreasing budgets to councils coming from central government, and the reduction of budgets to places like parks and other open spaces, maintenance of these areas is increasingly falling into the hands of volunteers like the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park and similar Friends groups in Parks throughout Nottingham.

The positive side to being a Friend of Woodthorpe Park is you have a say in how the park is managed. Also, in the process of taking part in the general maintenance of the park's gardens, you also learn a skill and, of course, you make new friends!

Finally, if you can't wait until 2019 our friends in the Plant Shop are looking for volunteers to weed the Tropical House. Please note, you will be

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made most welcome and the one compensation is that at least you will be warm inside!

Promoting the Friends

As I have already pointed out, 2018 has all been about the Friends of Woodthorpe Park becoming, as a group, more proactive. As a consequence of our proactivity, and finally having a constitution (which is available to read on the Friends website), we were able to apply, successfully for a small grant that has enabled us to purchase promotional materials such as a pullup display banner, business cards and flyers.



As you can see from the above photograph, because of now having the funds to promote the Friends as a group at this year's Festive Family weekends in the greenhouses adjacent to the Plant Shop, we were able to put on a promotional display that drew a favourable response from members of the public wanting to know more about the activities of the Friends and maybe to join.

There are other items of promotion still under discussion, which when resolved will be reported in a later edition of the Woodthorpe Gazette.

Gazing into a Crystal Ball!

Riding on the success of 2018 what does 2019 have in store for the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park? Further promotion; greater proactivity; increasing membership? All of these questions I am sure will be answered as the months of 2019 unfold.

In many ways it's like gazing into a crystal ball. Let's hope we'll all be saying this, this time next

year. That is, what a successful year the Friends have had, and let's hope 2020 will be just as successful.

Finally!

As with previous editions, as a matter of course, each edition of the Woodthorpe Gazette has ended with a poem befitting the season. The November/December edition is no exception. Therefore, with the Christmas festivities now upon us, I feel it is appropriate to end this edition with a poem written by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow entitled:

"I Heard The Bells On Christmas Day"

I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

I thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along th'unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

And in despair I bowed my head:
'There is no peace on earth, 'I said
'For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men.'

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
'God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to men.'

Till, ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day
A voice, a chime, a chant sublime,
Of peace on earth, good will to men.



May I take this opportunity to wish all members of the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Peaceful New Year.