

# WOODTHORPE GAZETTE

THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF WOODTHORPE GRANGE PARK  
MAY/JUNE, 2019

## AT LAST – SPRING IS HERE!

As in previous editions of the Woodthorpe Gazette it has been customary for me to finish with a piece of poetry that best fits the season we are in. As spring has returned, I therefore have decided to break with tradition and open this edition of the Woodthorpe Gazette with a poem by Philip Larkin entitled ‘The Trees.’

### The Trees

The trees are coming into leaf  
Like something almost being said;  
The recent buds relax and spread,  
Their greenness is a kind of grief.

Is it that they are born again?  
And we grow old? No, they die too,  
Their yearly trick of looking new  
Is written down in rings of grain.

Yet still the unresting castles thresh  
In full grown thickness every May.  
Last year is dead, they seem to say,  
Begin afresh, afresh, afresh.



## Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park Second Annual General Meeting

### *A milestone reached*

The Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park held its second Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March, 2019 at the Sherwood Community Centre. Apart from re-electing its officers for the following year, a summary of the group’s progress was read out by Marian Staniforth, the groups minute secretary in which she said:

“The second Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park is a milestone which marks the turning point from simply being a discussion group to one that is playing a more active role.”

She then went on to say: “Volunteers have organised litter picking, planted bulbs, clipped hedges, weeded and helped in the Tropical House and built a website, which has helped to publicise the group.”

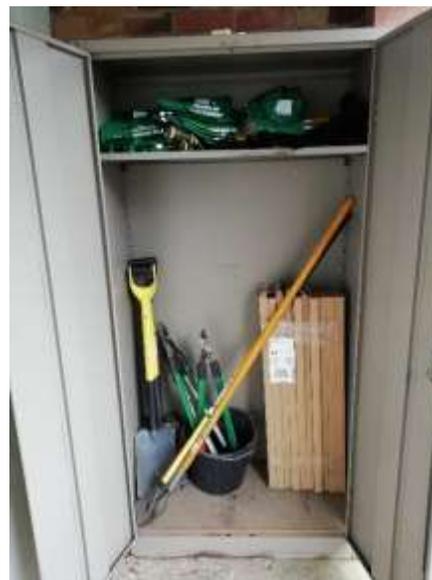
She also said: “It is also hoped, in the immediate future to increase the numbers of regular volunteers who will assist the park’s staff by doing simple gardening tasks. Obviously, we are all on a learning curve and must be guided by the staff as to what we can and cannot do.

### *Being pro-active*

Finally, in the summary of the group’s progress it was said: “The future now is less about talking and more about being pro-active!

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On the subject of the friends becoming more pro-active we now have a securely combination locked cabinet, which is located down the side of the greenhouses adjacent to the vehicle entrance from Woodthorpe Drive.



As you can see above, the cabinet holds a number of basic gardening implements, which includes large plastic bags, suitable for litter picking together with

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litter pickers. Also, there are now a collection, in various sizes, of green high viz vests with Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park printed on them, which will help to make us more noticeable to the general public.



A selfie photograph of the Woodthorpe Gazette editor trying out one of the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park's 'High Viz Vest!'

## The Popularity of Volunteering

According to an online report in the Guardian, dated 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2019, almost four in 10 Britons volunteer, which equates to a survey of more than 10,000 people.

The survey, conducted by YouGov on behalf of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), involved 10,103 people aged over 18, which is the largest poll on the subject in more than a decade.

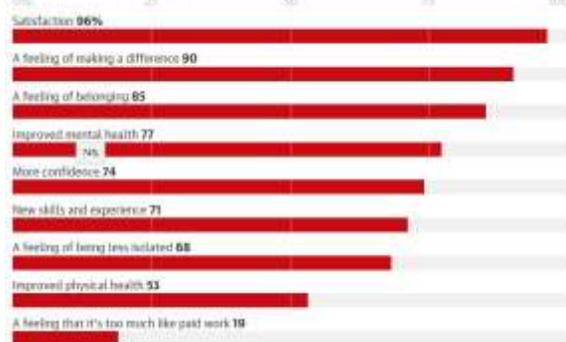
Of the respondents 77 per cent said volunteering had improved their mental health, with just over half (53 per cent) saying it had improved their physical health.

According to Karl Wilding, NCVO's policy and volunteering director: "There is an emerging body of evidence to suggest that volunteering can improve your mental health and that volunteering can help with depression, life satisfaction and general wellbeing."

He then went on to say: "It helps as it is a social activity, and when you are doing things with others and groups that conviviality and connectedness is important, and that it was most beneficial to people who didn't have a partner or a job.

The NCVO survey also found that 69 per cent of those who responded to the survey had volunteered at some point in their life, 38 per cent having done so in the past year. Extrapolated over the entire adult population, this means more than 20 million people had given of their time at some point in the year.

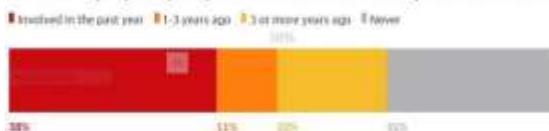
### Volunteers say the experience has given them ...



Guardian graphic | Source: YouGov, National Council for Voluntary Organisations

The report was also able to discover that older people were more likely to volunteer than younger people, and 90% of volunteers said they felt their contribution had made a difference.

### Seven in 10 people say they have volunteered at some point in their lives



Guardian graphic | Source: YouGov, National Council for Voluntary Organisations

Other findings in the NCVO report include indications that people from middle class backgrounds were nearly 50 per cent more likely to have volunteered in the last 12 months than those from working class backgrounds (44 per cent compared with 30 per cent).

The report also noted that people from a lower socioeconomic group are more likely to say they have never been involved in volunteering.

Research also shows that volunteering participation consistently indicates that inequalities of resources and power means that some people are more likely to be excluded from certain activities.

However, the poll found that 74 per cent of NCVO's respondents agreed that volunteering had given them more confidence, with the figure rising to 84 per cent among 18- to 24-year-olds. In addition, 71

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per cent said they had gained new skills and experience, rising to 85per cent among 18- to 24-year-olds. And 96% said they were satisfied with their experience and 69% said they would recommend it to others.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jan/25/new-big-society-britons-volunteer-survey-reveals-benefit-mental-health-loneliness-antidote>

## Are we part of the Big Society?

Launched in 2010 by the then prime minister David Cameron when in a speech he referred to it as the Big Society when he envisaged volunteer groups running post offices, libraries, and transport services and also shaping housing projects, I ask this simple question: “Are the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park part of David Cameron’s Big Society?” My answer to that question would be an emphatic yes!

Although the friends were not part of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations survey, we, as a group are very much a part of Woodthorpe Park, and the work we do as volunteers, whether as a whole group or as individuals, is very much appreciated. Appreciated not just by those who are the park’s employees but the many visitors to the park as well, and who may themselves wish to become volunteers.

As I have reported in previous editions of the Woodthorpe Gazette, gone are the days when Woodthorpe Park had what appeared to be, a whole army of gardeners.

With now just two full time gardeners to hand, it now falls into the hands of those who give up their own time and volunteer to help keep the park presentable for its many visitors to enjoy

To put it all into sharper focus, places like the Great Central Railway at Loughborough and indeed closer to home at the Transport Museum at Ruddington, both of these two major tourist attractions, like all major tourist attractions, have a nucleus of paid staff but are mostly run by volunteers.

In many ways, we are also similar to the Great Central Railway in as much as we also have a nucleus of paid staff to look after the park’s environment. However as they are limited in both time and resources, they like the Great Central Railway, also require the back up of a pool of willing and able volunteers.



**Great Central Railway, Loughborough: Ex Southern Railway 4-6-0 King Arthur Class Locomotive 777 Sir Lamiel. Restored by Volunteers – Driven by Volunteers!**

We as volunteers are just as important as the volunteers who run places like the Great Central Railway and should be proud of what we do and achieve as volunteers.

**PS:** When, as a group, we are all out together sometimes we are under the supervision of one of the park’s gardeners. With their guidance, we are also learning a skill which, as individuals, we can put to good use in our own gardens!

## Example of the work carried out by the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park



**Litter picking: Very much an activity carried out by the friends, whether as a group or as individuals.**

The above photograph was taken of just some of the rubbish collected by members on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March when the members took part in the national Keep Britain Tidy Campaign A campaign that ran from the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March to 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2019.

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Weeding and tidying the flower beds in the park's sunken garden.



An example of just some of the rubbish cleared up by one volunteer after a group of travellers were evicted from Woodthorpe Park in September, 2018.



Box Hedge cutting in the Park's Formal Garden.

Finally, as recent as Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April, 2019, and as an example of individual members carrying out tasks on Woodthorpe Park, two members took it upon themselves to empty the rubbish bin in the Dell Garden and carry out a litter pick around the perimeter of the park.

## EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE



Woodthorpe Park is an environment that is well used to stage major events. For example the annual four-day James Mellors Fun Fair that is held in the month of June and not forgetting the other major event that was held on the 11<sup>th</sup> August, 2018 Nottinghamshire Hospice's Party in the Park. Also it must not be forgotten that Woodthorpe Park is used daily by dog walkers and people just wanting to enjoy the park's green environment, this is to name but a few!

However, the one event that has proved Woodthorpe Park to be a popular venue is the annual Christmas Fair, a fair which last year ran for four weekends, and was so popular that by the last weekend had ran out of Christmas trees.

Over the four-weekend period' apart from the many craft stalls, local instrumentalists and groups were invited in to play music, all of which added to the seasonal atmosphere of Christmas. However, apart from seasonal music provided by the various groups and instrumentalists, members of the congregations of the local churches were invited to come along and sing Christmas Carols, which again proved popular.

When thinking of Christmas as a Christian festival one particular carol that springs to mind is 'Hark the Herald Angels Sing,' which in the opening lyrics it says:

*Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King! Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled."*

It is this particular carol that exemplifies the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Born to bring peace earth to all mankind and all nations shall live as one.

It is of course easy to bring to mind what Christmas stands for, especially from a Christian point of view. However, in the world we now live in the true meaning of Christmas has become lost in the lather stream of mass consumer spending.

Apart from Christmas being an important Christian festival celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, Easter too has the same religious significance that being the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. However,

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apart from chocolate Easter Eggs, which is said by Christians to represent Jesus' emergence from the tomb, very little commercially is made of Easter. Apart from it being the first Bank Holiday since Christmas and a chance to get away for the four-day weekend, that is all Easter commercially seems, to represent nowadays.

For those like myself who see Easter with the same religious significance as Christmas, a little-known event took place on Woodthorpe Park.

Amidst the birdsong of the dawn chorus, as the sun was beginning to rise over Woodthorpe Grange just as a full moon was waning, heralding the start of a new day, at 05.45 members from the local church communities from Sherwood and Mapperley gathered together outside the café on Woodthorpe Park for an Easter Sunrise Service to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.



Rev. Bridget Baguley

The short service was led by the Rev. Bridget Baguley the Vicar of St. Martin's Church in Sherwood. The service was opened by proclaiming Christ has risen, which was followed by the ritual lighting of candles.

Following the lighting of candles this was followed by a further proclamation which, again was read out by the Rev. Bridget Baguley, which said:

O God, you summon the day to dawn, you teach the morning to waken the earth. **Great is your name, great is your love.**

For the valleys shall sing for joy, the trees of the fields shall clap their hands. **Great is your name, great is your love.**

For you the monarchs of the earth shall bow, the poor and the persecuted shall shout for joy. **Great is your name Great is your love.**

Your love and mercy shall last for ever, fresh as the morning, sure as the sunrise. **Great is your name, great is your love.**



Ritual of lighting of candles

The service of thanksgiving also included two short rousing songs of praise and a Bible reading from the Book of John, chapter 20 verses 1 to 18.

After the service was concluded, for all those who were present it was back to St. Martin's Church for light refreshments of tea, coffee and of course the symbolic Easter hot cross bun!

However it was whilst making my way to St. Martin's Church with everyone else that I noticed little wooden crosses had been placed on branches of some of the trees, with the inscription: 'Take Me Home.'

So touched by the symbol of the cross on branches of some trees someone wrote on the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park Facebook page:

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*'Thank you to the lovely people who had hung crosses up around the park for taking home.  
Happy Easter to you all xx'*



**Photograph of one of the many crosses placed on branches of trees that says: 'Take Me Home.'**



**Entrance to Woodthorpe Park from Mansfield Road**

From a personal perspective, the Easter Sunrise Service, and indeed all the events that take place on Woodthorpe Park, whether commercial or private, prove that Woodthorpe Park is a park for all seasons that welcomes not just large commercial events that

bring the local community together, but also private events, and indeed Christian and other religious festivals as well. All of which goes to prove that Woodthorpe Grange Park is very much a people's park, and very much part of the fabric of the local community. Indeed, it is a park for all seasons.



**Woodthorpe Park: A Park for all Seasons**

## **Woodthorpe and Winchester Court Flats – Renovation almost Completed**

Readers of the Woodthorpe Gazette will recall in the July/August 2018 edition I said: Woodthorpe and Winchester court flats were originally built in 1965 on the site of the former Nottingham Suburban Railway's Sherwood Station. I then went on to say that on Nottingham City Homes website Woodthorpe and Winchester Court flats are described as: Being situated in the stunning setting of Woodthorpe Park in Sherwood and boasting panoramic views over the city and the park that is literally on your doorstep," the two 16 storey blocks of flats with 180 dwellings which have been a feature on Nottingham's landscape for over 50 years are currently going through a major transformation to bring both blocks of flats up to the standards required for the 21st century.



**1/2: Panoramic view of Woodthorpe Park from the roof of Woodthorpe Court flats**

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**2/2: Panoramic view overlooking Sherwood and beyond**

In the July/August 2018 edition of the Woodthorpe Gazette I also said that it was originally announced in 2016, Woodthorpe and Winchester Court flats are going to be converted into an Energy Efficient Extra Care Housing scheme, which will consist of a new three-storey building with up to 40 one-bedroom flats that are designed as independent living schemes so that people are able to remain in their own home for longer, with support on hand should they need it.

That report in the Woodthorpe Gazette was nearly a year ago, and a lot has happened since, so much so that the renovation of the flats is scheduled to be completed in June 2019.

However apart from external work on the buildings still to be completed and external landscaping work now in progress, it would be worth reminding ourselves just how much the environment and how much the fascia of Woodthorpe and Winchester Court flats have changed in just two years.



Taken on the 28th January, 2017 all was soon to change. In just two years the two blocks of flats have lost the original 1960s design and have been remodelled into buildings more in keeping with the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



The above photograph also taken on the 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2017 shows the original Winwood community centre and Woodthorpe Court to the right of the photograph.



The above photograph, taken on the 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2017 as work gets underway with preparing the ground for what would be the offices for the contractors of the two-year project Willmott Dixon. Also in anticipation of the demolition of the Winwood community centre, below sees the temporary residents community centre already in place.



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The above photograph, taken on the 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2017 from the 9<sup>th</sup> floor of Woodthorpe Court Flats shows the demolition of the garages, whereas the photograph below taken just two days later shows the final demise of the Winwood Community Centre.



The above photograph taken on 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 shows the site now clear of the former buildings and made ready for the building of the three-storey Extra Care Housing scheme.



The photograph you see above, which was taken on the 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 is of the foundations being sunk in preparation for the building of the three-storey Extra Care Housing scheme. Whilst below, (photograph taken on the 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2017) sees the framework for the new building being put together.



Whilst the preparation work was underway to building Extra Care Housing scheme, work was also being carried out to remove the 1960s stone cladding.

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Once all the stone cladding from both blocks of flats had been removed the next to follow was the removal of the resident's balconies.

After the stone cladding had been removed together with the balconies this gave the two blocks of flats from the outside an almost derelict look, as you will see from the photograph above, which was taken on 11th March 2018.

A lot has happened to the two blocks of flats and the surrounding area since all the above photographs were taken. The Extra Care Housing scheme is now almost completed, which when completed it will have its own communal facilities, specialist bathrooms, scooter stores and care provider offices.



To give you an idea of the scale of change, the photograph above was taken on 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2018. Notice the two cranes used in the construction of the Extra Care Housing scheme, then compare it to the photograph below taken on the 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2019. The contrast between the two photographs is so unlike anything that could ever be imagined. The environment, in just two years has changed beyond anyone's imagination.



Right from its outset two years ago this has been one photographic project I have enjoyed following through. The photographs I have shown in this article are just a few of what I have taken. In fact, to date I have taken 474 photographs and 4 videos, which were taken at the time the contractors were laying the foundations for the building of the Extra Care Housing scheme.

Finally, it will be one project I will follow right through to its conclusion in June, which, when complete I will share on the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park's website, the friends Facebook page and twitter.



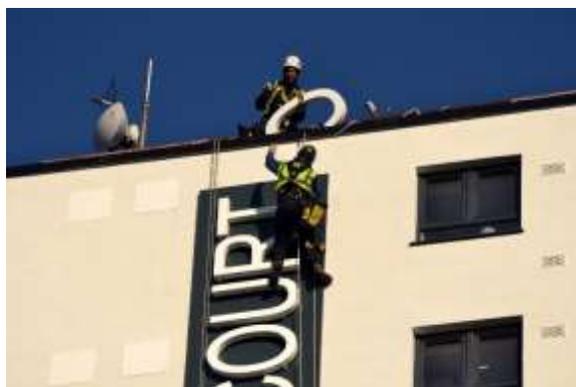
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As a PS to the above article: You cannot help but notice on the sides of the two complexes that face down Chestnut Walk the huge vertical signs that say Woodthorpe Court, and Winchester Court. However according to one of the contactors after the signs had been put into place a high wind managed to dislodge three of the letters on the side of Winchester Court thus leading to Winchester Court becoming for a time 'WIHESTER COUR,' as the photograph below shows.



To remedy the situation the contractors, Willmott Dixon called in a team of two specialist builders who abseiled down the side of Winchester Court to re-insert the three missing letters, as the photograph below demonstrates.



However, as you will see from above photograph, aware that they were being photographed; and yet in spite of dangling over 10 storeys high they both still managed to turn around and smile and wave towards the camera.... How very sporting of them!

## Having a Head for Heights!

Speaking to the two contractors before they made their repair to the sign and their eventual descend down the side of Winchester Court, I asked them what is the tallest building they have had to repair and descend down? Their answer was: 'Winchester Court is by no means the tallest building we've had to do repair work on. The tallest we've been up is over 40 storeys high, which was somewhere in London.' This I then followed up with: So, you haven't been down the outside of the Shard in London yet?' To which came the nonchalant reply: 'No not yet, but I expect we will do at some stage!'

In case you are wondering what the height of the Shard is. According to their website, the Shard is 309.6 metres, or 1,016 feet, high and is Western Europe's tallest building. It is 95 storeys tall, with level 72 the highest habitable floor. The building is served by 36 lifts, some of which are double-decker.



Imagine dangling 1,016 feet, high outside the Shard? What an amazing head for heights those two contractors have!

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## Calling all Sherwood and Mapperley's budding poets

For all those who regularly look at the notices and photographs posted on the friends Facebook page, Twitter and especially on the friend's website will not have failed to notice the link from the homepage of the friend's website the heading 'Calling all Sherwood and Mapperley's budding poets' underscored in red with the sub-title 'To find out, click on the above icon!' As the illustration below demonstrates.



Calling all Sherwood and Mapperley's budding poets'  
**To find out, click on the above icon!**

The reason for this notice is threefold, firstly it is to draw to the attention to the fact that in three years' time Woodthorpe Grange Park will be celebrating its centenary. Secondly, as in previous editions of the Woodthorpe Gazette I have always rounded off each edition with a poem that best fits the season when each edition is published, and thirdly it is calling on all of Sherwood and Mapperley's writers and poets to compose a poem that best describes the four seasons on Woodthorpe Park. Also, apart from the four seasons, to write about what best describes your experiences of Woodthorpe Park. I then went on to say: 'If you wish to submit a poem please place your name at the bottom of the poem and email it to my email address, which you will find on the Contacts and Additional Information page on the Friends of Woodthorpe Grange Park website.'

Finally, I wrote it is hoped that every poem submitted will be published as part of a centenary publication in 2022.

Since the notice was posted it has already garnered a response with two poems written by local poet Pam R. Shepperson. One entitled 'Return to Woodthorpe Park,' and the second entitled 'Woodthorpe Woody.'

Having read both poems, I feel it is the second poem that is appropriate to end this edition of the Woodthorpe Gazette, and one I dedicate to all the dog walkers, which includes myself, who daily exercise their dogs in all seasons on Woodthorpe Park.

Of course, as in all poetry there is a subtle message hidden behind what is written, in this case it is quite simply: 'Keep Your Dog On A Lead!'

### Woodthorpe Woody

Have you seen Woody?  
He slipped from his lead,  
Shot down the Bank,  
Like a race horse once freed.  
The golfers were sorry,  
And each shook their head.  
Off to search woodland,  
And gardens instead.

Did you spot Woody,  
The rascally mutt?  
He's not near the engine  
Nor the pitch and put.  
He ran to kiss Meggy,  
Our Doberman cross,  
Then galloped away,  
Showing off like a boss!

At football a player  
Said he'd had to call  
A wild running Collie  
That dived for the ball.  
Could that have been Woody  
Gone mad on the pitch?  
Last seen in mid-flirt  
With a Labrador bitch.

The owner found Woody,  
The innocent soul,  
With a kind café girl,  
And half a bacon roll.  
Poor Woody so sad,  
But gave a brave bark.  
"Don't lose me again  
On this huge Woodthorpe Park!"

Pam R. Shepperson

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For those wishing to submit a poem, please see the notice below.

