

NEWSLETTER

Friends of the Hampden Park

Issue 5

Autumn 2006

Do we deserve a park?

Well do we? What do we personally do to look after it, enhance it, protect it, stop vandalism, or whatever?

You may say 'there is nothing I can do' but, of course there is. Join the Friends of the Park. We're not a 'do gooder' group, we are volunteers genuinely interested in making the park safe and welcoming for everyone. A place to enjoy and not for just the few. We try to protect it from encroachment by developers and actively encourage the Council to restore it to the way it was.

Want to help? All it costs is £2 to join the Friends. A one off membership fee. The extra you can do is join the committee, get involved in the decision making, help where it counts.

There are some major decisions to be made this coming year about where we are going, how we get there and where funding is coming from. For the first time this newsletter is going to everyone who lives around the park, asking their views.

This is a formal notice inviting members to the AGM in February. But not just that! It's an invitation to have your say. Let us know what YOU want. 2007 is the year of the Lottery Bid. Take part in the decisions. See our survey on back page and let us know your views.

How is our Lake?

We all love our lake. It is the top of our wish list for renovation. Members have been asking how the swans are doing and what is happening about our lake.

Well, we have had meetings with Eastbourne Borough Council Parks Dept. and been advised that the swans have been removed for their own safety (*though recently one came back home it will probably have to be 'rescued' again*). Reason? The silting is so bad. Being 'bottom feeders' they cannot survive successfully in our lake at present. Some larger fish had to be removed too. BUT, there is no money to de-silt. The Eastbourne Borough Council funding for parks is being reduced year on year. Currently our only hope of the lake being



*Swan returned for now
In foreground railings renovated by
Community Pay Back help*

When asked by the *Herald* about the lake Cllr. David Elkin, EBC Vice Chairman and Cabinet Member responsible for Parks, advised the *Herald* that they are 'working with the Friends towards securing lottery funding'. Our latest advice is that EBC have received a response 'that our projects appear to be eligible for consideration under the Parks for People programme'. This means the need to fill in stacks more forms. It is hoped our formal application will go forward in 2007. Fingers crossed!

The local situation is that EBC Cabinet will need to give a commitment to fund 5% of the bid. And then to cover the ongoing maintenance. A bridge still to be crossed. What can you do to help? Ring, write, speak to your Councillor and request they back our application.

What are the alternatives? We could try to find a sponsor just for the lake, but this is the pivotal item for the lottery application which would provide funding for renovating the whole park. Without the lake there's no viable lottery bid.

Regarding possible costings, we know that if we have to de-silt the lake and take all the silt off site, wet, the cost could be in the region of £1million. If we could spread the silt out in the park somewhere until it is dry, and then move it offsite, the cost could be as little as one third of that. It may even be worth something if it has the right nutrients (we need a survey to tell us). There is

likely to be some smell whilst it is drying for a few weeks. BUT this could be during the winter.

We would like to know how you feel about this? Would it affect you? Would you let us know on the survey form at the end of this newsletter? We are asking all residents on the periphery of the park for their views. PLEASE REPLY !

As we see it at present, those are the two options to get our lake restored. The lottery bid or individual sponsorship.

What have we done this year?

Well, where to start really? For those who don't know us, the Friends were started in January 2005 with the principal aim of preserving and enhancing the quality of the parkland and open spaces of *OUR* park for the enjoyment and benefit of park users.

We set ourselves a number of aims, namely to influence and raise funds for improvements; to liaise with EBC and other bodies over management, maintenance and development; to ensure we are inclusive and representative of the community; to encourage responsible authorities to make the park safe and pleasant, now and in the future; to see the park come alive and be treated with respect; and to enhance and preserve wildlife and conservation, play facilities, heritage and sporting facilities.

We wanted to make it safer – so we had a working party out in late winter clearing undergrowth and shrubbery so it feels safe to walk through the park.



One of the cleared areas

We wanted to improve it – so we talked to the local Probation Service and we were lucky enough to have two working parties on Community Service who not only ensured the most inaccessible areas are litter free

but undertook the renovation of the bus shelter at the Decoy Drive entrance, treated all the hardwood benches and posts and painted all the railings around the lake for us. A mammoth task not achievable without their help.



Finished Shelter

Our very grateful thanks to all of them and, fingers crossed, there hasn't been one inch of graffiti since they finished it. Again thanks !

We wanted to keep the perimeter safe – we've challenged development plans for offices; we've questioned the proposed demolition of Park College and we're asking our political representatives how on earth they have allowed Hampden Park to be written out of Eastbourne Park, thus losing layers of protection against potential development. We're still hoping to get this decision changed! Apparently, an officer advised, "it straightened a wiggly line" – do you think that justified the change? TELL US!

We wanted more done - we've worked with the Parks Dept. to agree the projects to go into the lottery bid and helped them tick the right boxes to qualify for community involvement, etc.

We've made friends - we have had members' forums to keep you informed, quiz's, speakers, cheese & wine evenings and a treasure hunt in the park on Spring Bank Holiday. Thanks to the committee and friends.

We wanted a Guide - with the help of the Parks Dept., we have produced a super leaflet entitled the *Park Guide*. It's available free to everyone from the TIC or the café in the park. It's also pinned to the inside of the renovated bus shelter. Your copy is enclosed.

We've contributed – by our members participating in RSPB bird surveys and enjoying conducted wildlife walks.

We've involved the schools – St Andrews School has made bird boxes to be put up this coming winter and the students from Sussex Downs College have not only planted up the new, improved water garden area but they also designed the planting and grew the plants from seeds themselves.

We are working with EBC - on the new Arboretum and you will see that work on the path has been started. Planting will take place in the Autumn. Want to help?



Arboretum: The new path in preparation

Watch the local paper for news of the date because then we'll need all your help.

We've helped EBC – by assisting with planting young trees in the old nursery area, though unfortunately we lost a number during this dry hot summer. These are to be replaced this coming autumn. Want to help?



Sadly some saplings were lost

We've been planting - the flower beds outside the café. We've also endeavoured to keep them watered and weeded. We had a bit of a helping hand from time to time from the local youths, after hours, but we'd rather they didn't - they don't seem to know a plant from a weed. Hey ho!

We're planning a new leaflet - this one to take you on a walk around the lake. It will detail all the trees you will



Spring planting

find, with information about them and their history. But that's for 2007.

Membership

Our membership is now over 100 - and our aim is to double this year on year. Membership application form is on page 4.

Silver for all !

The park played no small part in helping not only Hampden Park but Eastbourne gain silver in their categories of the *South East in Bloom* competition this summer.

Despite the dry weather everyone went all out to make the park as beautiful as possible. We were even blessed with superb weather. We await news on what improvements can be made to help them both towards gold next year.

Police

The police want to keep a log of everything untoward that happens in the park. If you see any incident, even if not important enough to involve the police, please call them on 0845 6070 999 and leave a message for Adam Cox who is our community bobby.

Survey

We've prepared a survey sheet. Could you spare a few moments to give your comments to enable us to focus our plans for 2007? We don't want to pressure you but it is important we represent your views and wishes and need your assurance we are on the right lines.

AGM

Official Notice - the AGM will be held on Thursday 8 February 2007 at the Hampden Park Community Centre in Brodrick Road, commencing at 7.30pm. Not a member, no problem, join now or come at 7pm and join on the night at the door.

Survey
for all members of Friends and residents local to the park

- Do you agree the park is an essential asset to be preserved yes/no
- Do you agree with the work the Friends are doing? yes/no
- Do you support the lottery bid to achieve the restoration and improvement of the lake and park? yes/no
- Would you accept the temporary closure of the Decoy Drive entrance and the lake area for maybe up to three months to facilitate the lake works? yes/no
- Would you tolerate dredged silt (*with the possible potential smell*) being stored near the lake, for a few weeks only, to drain before removal? (*This would greatly reduce disposal costs*) yes/no
- Are you current users of the park? yes/no
- Would you use the park more if the lake, etc., was improved? yes/no
- Do you use the children's play area? yes/no
- Would you like to help with any planting or clearance projects? yes/no
- Are you happy with the "wild" state of the park woodland and the limited access to these areas? (*NB This is intended to benefit wildlife habitat*). yes/no
- Do you feel that the playing fields and Sports Park should be more integrated into the ornamental park, i.e. with better landscaping? yes/no

Please let us know your views

Name _____

Address _____

Friends of the Hampden Park

Membership Application Form

Fee £2 per person

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Tel No. _____ Attending AGM Yes/No

Email address _____

Willing to be nominated for committee _____ Yes/No

Contact details for The Friends of the Hampden Park
Please return this completed form to
1 Walnut Tree Walk, BN20 9BP or
Telephone 07802 884088 or
email: friendsofhampdenpark@hotmail.co.uk