

# FRIENDS OF THE CARRS NEWSLETTER



## Winter 2020

### Chairman's Message

It's been a difficult year for us all, but happily there are lots of positives to report in this Newsletter. We had an incredibly busy summer in the park (thank you ANSA for your heroic efforts in keeping the park clean and tidy) and this has continued into the autumn and winter, with large numbers of visitors arriving every day in spite of deteriorating weather and shorter daylight hours. The parking problems accompanying the increase in visitor numbers have consequently continued, but they are being tackled by the parking wardens, Cheshire East Council and Wilmslow Town Council.

The tragic accident in the park in August led to a full-scale tree inspection by ANSA and several trees were identified as potentially dangerous, some areas were taped off and paths closed. With the Parish Hall entrance arch closed as well because of broken masonry and metalwork, we began to wonder if the park was going to be completely inaccessible. But no, the new-found delights of a regular walk in the fresh air and green surroundings proved too strong, and it has been great to see so many families with their young children and dogs enjoying the outdoors, carefully complying with social distancing advice.

We were pleased to see long-awaited repairs being carried out : the collapsed river bank by the middle bridge reinforced with a fine set of gabions.



### The new gabions

The non-stop flow of water across the path near the first bridge has been channeled underground (both put to the test by recent heavy rain and passing with flying colours) and a protective fence installed along the side of the path up to Hawthorn Lane.

The committee have been coping bravely with the coronavirus restrictions, continuing our monthly meetings via Zoom and tackling the usual maintenance jobs in the park in groups of one or two and with plenty of social distancing.

We have been treated to a spectacular display of autumn colour in the trees and we were so delighted with long-lasting show of flowers on our wild flower patch that we were inspired to seek out new areas for planting with plugs and naturalising

bulbs. We're looking forward to seeing the first fruits of our labours next spring.



### The spectacular Autumn colour

We hope life will become easier in the new year because there are big things on the horizon: we plan to support the Plant Britain campaign through our tree and wild flower planting and we will be signing up to the BBC Countryfile's website to record our achievements, and Cheshire East have asked us to help plan the details for their re-wilding scheme for the Carrs

Yes, we are looking forward to a busy 2021 with the return of all our regular events, the Dog Day, the Litter Picks, the Balsam Bashes, plus tree-planting sessions and working parties with lots of public volunteers.

Wishing everyone a merry Christmas and a healthy, bright New Year.

Ian Baillie, Chairman

### E-mail Addresses

If you receive this newsletter by post, but have an e-mail address, please contact [ian.baillie@friendsofthecarrs.org.uk](mailto:ian.baillie@friendsofthecarrs.org.uk).

### Dates for your diary 2021

The AGM took place on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2020 by zoom. At present we have made no plans for public events next year, but with rollout of the vaccine programme just starting as I write, we are optimistic that public events will be able take place. We are tentatively planning to move the Dog Show to Autumn 2021.

Please watch the web-site [www.friendsofthecarrs.org.uk](http://www.friendsofthecarrs.org.uk) or the notice boards on The Carrs for details. We hope that we will also be able to include details in the Spring newsletter.

## 2020 Events

Sadly, of course, we have been unable to run any public events this year, but your Committee has not been idle. Regular Committee working parties, suitably socially distanced have been held throughout the year. These have bashed, cleared brambles, strimmed and raked the wild flower patch after flowering, and planted bulbs and wild flowers ready for next year. Not to mention litter picking.



**Tending the wild flower patch**

## Comings and Goings

We were very sorry to say goodbye to two members of our committee this autumn, Polly Keen and Colin Shepherd. Colin has been a stalwart of FOTC since its beginnings in 2005. He was Chair for many years and helped and inspired us enormously through all the ups and downs of life in the Carrs and our dealings with the many and various authorities and organisations with whom we have to work. Colin is moving from the area and he will doubtless be contributing his endless energy and skills to causes near to his new home.



**Colin characteristically hard at work on The Carrs**

Polly has been a regular dog walker in the Carrs for several years but only joined the committee a couple of years ago. We hope she will continue to visit the Carrs regularly, always stop for a chat and keep us on our toes with her take on events and issues.

We welcome to the committee Ruth Downs. She lives locally and can't wait (she assures us) to get her hands dirty!

## That strange word

The word Carrs is a name derived from the Norse 'kjarr' meaning meadow recovered from bogland. In our case The Carrs has been created by overlaying a bog with clay followed by a layer of topsoil.

As a result for much of the year it remains very wet because the clay layer blocks the natural permeation of rainfall. In addition the surrounding land still drains into the bog beneath the clay layer. The evidence of that underground water pressure is all too clear where it bursts through the clay layer to form the pools of water which then flow towards the river. This explains why, when one flow of water over the path has been corrected by improved drainage, another one often appears nearby..

Nonetheless the creation of The Carrs remains a local treasure highly valued by Wilmslow, its children and visitors alike.

## Thanks to ANSA

It has been wonderful to welcome so many visitors to the park and to see their enjoyment of the natural environment. But so many visitors create pressure to keep the park looking good. ANSA Environmental Services manage and maintain the parks for Cheshire East Council. They have done a magnificent job this year emptying the overflowing litter bins every day throughout the pandemic and remained cheerful throughout. They have also found time to carry out maintenance work throughout the year and are currently repairing the Boddington Arch. Our thanks to them.

Thanks are also due to the many regular users who equipped themselves with plastic bags on their daily walk and collected litter.

## The meandering Bollin

The land occupied by the Bollin is effectively a watercourse created over thousands of years as the meandering river gouged its way through the Cheshire sandstone.

Those continuing meanderings are very gradual but all too evident at the 'red rocks', a sandstone outcrop close to the middle footbridge. These rocks are now distant from the river and surrounded by a wooded copse. Yet within the last fifty years they were used as a very popular diving platform into the depths of the Bollin.

Latterly the course of the river has been constrained by man made interventions such as sheet piling and stone gabions. Wherever possible environmentally friendly measures such as river bed flow deflectors, and tree planting to stabilise the river banks, are used.

## Nature Notes

This year we benefited from Cheshire East's new tree-planting policy to the tune of nearly 1000 saplings. These were planted at the Twinnies Bridge end of The Carrs and most of them miraculously survived the long, hot, dry summer.

So nature is thriving in the Carrs, although we saw very little of the kingfishers, who probably found all the crowds and dogs too much, and our resident heron went on a long summer holiday, but I'm glad to say he's back on patrol in the park now.

The goosanders have also been spotted on the river recently and the green parakeets are now a regular

feature in the park. Strangely for such an exotic looking bird they can be quite difficult to spot in the summer among the leaves, but when they fly their loud squawks make them very obvious.

## Contact Names

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