

FRIENDS OF THE CARRS NEWSLETTER



Spring 2021

Chairman's Message

The longer the Covid lockdown continued, the more the Carrs proved to be one of the most popular and accessible places of recreation and relaxation in Wilmslow. But this has brought with it new concerns and responsibilities, both for the visitors and for our landlords, Cheshire East.



Visitors enjoying the Carrs at the easing of lockdown in April

Safety through restricted numbers and social distancing (thank you to the vast majority of park users for helping to keep others safe) has been backed up by measures to ensure safety from the elements and the environment. The park has echoed to the sound of chain saws and chippers as a team of tree specialists have been checking, trimming and, where necessary, felling trees throughout the park. New trees are being planted, footpaths are being cleared and opened up, drainage problems identified, and the river is being surveyed and profiled in an attempt to resolve the increased flooding.

We are delighted to be working with Cheshire East, ANSA and their parks management team, and an invited group of experts in fields as varied as geology, wildlife and local history on a development plan for the park which will aim to help visitors to appreciate and enjoy all that this wonderful green environment has to offer.

We are taking a fresh look at the whole of the Carrs in today's circumstances. The plan will aim to accommodate the enormous increase in visitors walking, jogging, cycling and pram-pushing through the park or even just standing and looking, throughout the day. It will re-assess every aspect from the children's play areas to quiet corners and educational opportunities. And everyone will be involved as the plan will be put out to public consultation.

And all the while we have been busy doing what we can for the Carrs as far as the Covid regulations allow, planting and watching bulbs grow, pruning the fruit trees, repairing fences and tidying up the huge amounts of litter left by visitors. We have been disappointed by the proliferation of dog waste bags which are being discarded all around the park in spite of the numerous bins provided. Apparently this is part of a national problem, probably the result of the many new dog owners who have appeared during the Covid lock-downs. We are considering something gentle to start with, a poster campaign, and hope we won't be forced to introduce more drastic measures to keep the Carrs a healthy, safe place.

Heavy rain over the winter led to flooding on several occasions and made some of our favourite spots inaccessible and some of the picnic tables unusable, although the scenery has certainly been dramatic.



The floods at Styal Road

The resulting high level of the water table means that the ground very quickly becomes saturated and the paths become very muddy and churned up by visitors walking onto the grass to respect social distancing.

The weather is improving, the restrictions are slowly being lifted, but will we ever get back to normal in the Carrs? Visits to the park, outdoor exercise and the appreciation of a green environment have become so much a part of life for a lot of people. We will try to bring back as much of the good old days as we can and restore our calendar of events and involve as many volunteers as possible on our litter picks, balsam bashes, and we look forward to seeing lots of visitors to the park and meeting lots of volunteers to keep the park such an attractive place.

Ian Baillie, Chairman

Dates for your Diary 2021

We were hoping to have a full schedule of events for this summer, but the situation is still so uncertain that we have nothing scheduled at present. We hope that maybe we can hold the Dog Day in September. The parkruns remain cancelled and currently there is no news about Cinema in the Park. We will be watching Government advice carefully and will not reinstate any events unless they can be held safely. Please continue to follow Government Guidelines and keep yourself and others safe. We hope that The Carrs will remain a place of quiet enjoyment for the people of Wilmslow.

Our website www.friendsofthecarrs.org.uk or our Facebook or Twitter page will carry details of any updated dates.

Nature Notes

Spring is in full bloom with celandines and wood anemones springing up and chiffchaffs calling and woodpeckers drumming in the woods. The daffodils at Styal Road put on a great show. Sadly the same could not be said for the bulbs we planted at the Hawthorn Road entrance, but we will hope for better next year.



Daffodils at Styal Road

It's pleasing to report that the Carrs wildlife has continued to thrive during the lockdowns. The two goosanders are regularly joined by four interlopers thought to be visitors from Lindow. Mink sightings are on the increase. The mink found in the UK is the non-native American mink and it is now widespread throughout the country. The lifespan of minks is about 3 years in the wild. Mink are solitary and discreet, and they typically only come together to breed. When a mink has a litter they can have up to eight babies, also known as "kits." They live in burrows on riverbanks and may have as many as two dozen dens used for sleeping, resting, eating, and storing surplus food.

Social Media

Our presence on social media has grown due to the excellent care of Ruth Lees. We recently reached a milestone on Facebook with over 1000 followers of our page (now an even greater 1100!). Many also use Twitter and we now have 967 Twitter followers. Paul Jabore looks after our website. These are all

great places to find up to date news about The Carrs. Follow us on Twitter@FotCarrs, Facebook:Friends of the Carrs in Wilmslow or the website <http://www.friendsofthecarrs.org.uk>.

Committee Working Parties

The Committee have continued to hold monthly working parties on The Carrs complying of course with Government guidelines. Many of these have had to concentrate on clearing the increased amount of litter left by the increasing number of visitors. While we love seeing people discover the beauty of The Carrs we would like to have time to work on improvements rather than litter picking. Thanks to all those users who have helped to clear litter on their walks. To others please leave The Carrs as you find it and take your litter home.

Walking and health

We've all been told walking everyday will do us a world of good... but why?

Here are 3 easy take away reasons to remember next time we are huffing and puffing up a hill!

We are built to walk. What does this mean? Take your imagination back to the Stone Age and picture a day in the life of a hunter gatherer. They definitely couldn't nip down to M&S for a loaf of bread. They had to walk ALL DAY, carry and hunt all the while making sure they weren't munched by a sabre toothed something!

It's easy to forget but we lived like this for THOUSANDS and THOUSANDS of years more than our current lifestyle. This means that our bodies function best when we get closer to how they were built to function. We were built to walk.

Our Heart and Lungs become healthier. Use it or lose it! It's as simple as that. As we walk we are elevating our heart rate and increasing our breathing. This exercising of these systems leads to increased cardiovascular and pulmonary (heart and lung) fitness. Why do we need a healthy heart and lungs? For the simple reason that the healthier our heart and lungs the longer we will live an ACTIVE and FRUITFUL life. No point in living to 90 if we are bed-ridden from 80 onwards!

Walking Burns Calories. Unless you are an olympic athlete we all love to have a little treat here and there and why not, life is for living. However all these calories can add up and if we see a little weight around the midriff forming it's not the end of the world, but too much fat is bad for our hearts. Cue walking! Walking for thirty minutes or more a day is a fantastic way to raise the heart rate and get a little low impact sweat on! Raising our activity level raises the amount of calories we burn during the day and will help with fat burning.

Trees, the heart of the Carrs

The Carrs was an estate belonging to Sir Henry Boddington, and he landscaped it and planted thousands of trees here. These trees are now

unfortunately all getting old at the same time. Many have fallen as a result of the stress of extreme weather, and whilst Cheshire East's current policy of leaving fallen trees to rot down naturally for the benefit of the park's wildlife, this can look a bit neglected. The situation has been made more difficult because of the safety aspect in a public park, and every tree has been checked, trimmed, and, in some cases, felled. Many trees now have identification tags so that if a concern arises, it can be quickly reported and dealt with. On the positive side, Cheshire East have an intensive tree-planting policy and for every tree that is lost, they aim to replace it with three new ones, not to mention the large areas of new plantings in the Carrs last spring that have survived the drought, heat, floods, gales and icy temperatures of the last 12 months and are now showing lots of new shoots and leaves. Cheshire East have plans for more planting and will concentrate on native British trees such as ash and black poplar.

The black poplar planting is a particularly interesting project as they are under threat and disease has wiped out many of these trees in Manchester parks. A new genetic line of disease resistant trees is being bred and it is these which may be planted in The Carrs.

Black poplars are distinctive and can grow to 30 metres. It is famously pictured in John Constable's painting "The Hay Wain". They grow well on riversides and are valuable for wildlife with catkins providing an early source of nectar for bees and the seeds are enjoyed by finches.

Balsam

We were unable to hold any public Balsam Bashes last year although the Committee did their best in limited groups to keep it at bay. Despite our efforts it will have gained ground. How about pulling some Balsam as you walk this summer? And please keep a look out on our website, social media and notice boards and join us if we are able to arrange a public Balsam Bash.

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