



SPRING NEWSLETTER – February 2010

Dear Friends,

I am sometimes asked what the Friends of Christchurch Park are for and just what the Friends' committee actually does. Now that we are approaching the time (1 March) when the annual £5 subscription becomes due (please see the last page of the newsletter for details), and in advance of our AGM when we will be asking members to adopt a revised constitution that also addresses these questions, I thought I would take this opportunity to outline some of the issues that members of your committee have been involved with over the recent winter months:

Working with Park Manager Sam Pollard to produce a new bench donation leaflet and map
With the Ipswich Society, helping to fund the development of the "Triangle" outside the cafe
(work to commence this spring)
Negotiating the future management of the tennis courts (announcement due in the spring)
Helping Ranger Laura Whitfield to remove fencing from the islands on the Wilderness Pond and
putting up over 30 bird boxes in the Wildlife Reserve
Attending meetings to establish new bye-laws for all Ipswich's parks (ongoing)
Seeking sponsorship and helping to fund the works to the Wildlife Reserve/Children's Wood
Working with our excellent concerts manager Jessica Webster to finalise bands and sponsors
for this summer's "Brass on the Grass" events
Arranging a tour later in the year to the gardens and state rooms of Buckingham Palace
Taking part in the town's Parks and Open Spaces Forum meetings
Promoting a tidy Park on local radio and in the press
Responding to an application by the Council for works to trees (later withdrawn)
Preparing a talk for the Friends of Felixstowe Seafront about our group and the Park's HLF bid
Holding a Friends event at The Reg Driver Centre in November
Updating the Friends' Notice Board (special thanks to Reg Snook for his excellent nature notes)
Working with the Council to extend the Park's opening hours (awaiting final details)
Approving the design of the carpet bedding and talking to possible sponsors
Negotiating the lease of the garage for the Friends' ParkMobile
Working with the Wildlife Rangers on the proposed butterfly area north of the Wilderness Pond
Organising the spring and Dawn Chorus walks

I think you will agree that our committee members have been busy, and I am really grateful for all their help. On the following pages you can read more about some of these matters that will be covered in greater detail at the AGM. If you would like to play a part in these activities yourself, we welcome new committee members – please pass on your name to any of us prior to the AGM. Of course the best activity of all is to spend some time in the Park, and as the winter snows make way (hopefully...) for the green shoots of spring, we very much look forward to seeing you there.

Richard Wilson

Members' Events in 2010

Saturday 6 March 9.30am – Spring Bird Walk with Philip Murphy

This is an opportunity to join our avian expert Philip Murphy to observe the varied birdlife of the Park before the trees come fully into leaf. Meet at the Soane Street entrance to the Park.

Tuesday 23 March 7.30pm – The AGM of the Friends of Christchurch Park

This year's AGM will again be held at the Reg Driver Visitor Centre. We very much hope you can join us to discuss what the Friends have been working on for the past year, to have a glass of wine, and to hear a fascinating talk by Malcolm Clark on the birdsong of Christchurch Park. Malcolm has been recording voices in nature for more than forty years. In that time he has given many talks on his hobby to diverse groups of people, as well as contributing sound to film and TV soundtracks, and birdsong identification tapes and CD's. He has taken part in several local radio programmes, and some of his recordings are lodged with the Wildlife Section of the British Library. He has spent many hours recording the voices of birds in Christchurch Park which is the subject of his presentation this evening. Limited car parking will be available opposite the Visitor Centre (Bolton Lane entrance).

Saturday 1 May 4.30am – Dawn Chorus Walk

An early start! On International Dawn Chorus Day, join Philip Murphy and our Wildlife Rangers for a magical experience as the Park's birds wake up. Learn more about birdsong and enjoy the wonderful array of woodland birds that can be found here including the Bullfinch and Tree Creeper. This year we will be meeting at the Reg Driver Visitor Centre (not the top of the Bridleway as in previous years) at 4.30am where there will be complimentary hot drinks following the walk. The event is free to members.

“Brass on the Grass” Concerts

This year we are delighted to be promoting five “Brass on the Grass” concerts. Please make a note in your diary now for these hugely enjoyable free concerts which were very well attended last year. They will all be held from 2.30pm to 4.30pm by the Arts and Crafts Shelter in the Upper Arboretum on the following Sunday afternoons:

July 18 – Ipswich Concert Band sponsored by the Ipswich Society

July 25 – Ipswich and Norwich Co-op Band sponsored by the East of England Co-op

Aug 1 – Phoenix Brass sponsored by a generous Friend of Christchurch Park

Aug 8 – Ipswich Hospital Band sponsored by Scrutton Bland, Accountants

Aug 15 – Stacks of Sax sponsored by the Lions Club of Ipswich

As in previous years, we are extremely grateful to our sponsors who make these concerts possible.

Forthcoming events at the Reg Driver Centre

27 February Introduction to Garden Design Course Tutor Susan Stephenson will direct this full day course (10am – 4pm) designed to give you a chance to see what garden design is all about, learn a few tricks of the trade and see if you want to take garden design or horticulture a step further. Cost £35, payable in advance, hot and cold drinks included. Please call 01473 252435 to book and for more details.

24 February, 3, 10, 17, 24 March, 10-11.30am Stay and Play Open to all under 5's and their carers/parents, a chance to just play or seek professional support or advice. For more information, contact Louise or Caroline on 01473 253398, www.suffolkchildrenscentres.com.

Forthcoming FoCP visit to Buckingham Palace – Saturday 11 September 2010

Following last April's hugely successful visit to Prince Charles' gardens at Highgrove, this year we are delighted to be able to offer the Friends an opportunity to visit the gardens and State Rooms of Buckingham Palace.

The Palace receives an enormous number of requests for tours and they have an extensive waiting list. This is especially true for the gardens which are very hard to see unless you are invited to one of the Queen's summer garden parties (as committee member David Routh was privileged to be last summer). We were one of the first groups to contact the Palace last year and so have been given priority in the booking process.

We have chosen to take the combined visit to the Palace and the gardens. The visit will begin at 11.45am with a self-guided tour of the State Rooms (using the complimentary audio guide) and the opportunity to see the special exhibition, *The Queen's Year*. With time to visit the café and shop, the group will then be met by a guide at 2.15pm for a 45-minute tour of the gardens. This will include the Herbaceous Border, the summer house, the Rose Garden and views of the Waterloo Vase and Palace tennis court.

The visit will take place on Saturday 11 September. Rather than lay on a coach for the journey, we have decided to allow members to make their own way to the Palace. This would enable you to stay on for dinner or take in an evening show if you so wish. The cost of the tour – which is entirely made up of the ticket price – is £23.00 for adults, £21.70 for over 60's and students, and £13.50 for under 17's. The tour is limited to 25 people and is offered strictly on a first come, first served basis (see below for details).

There are some access restrictions at this historic residence and we are required to notify them in advance if there are any visitors within our party who may require wheelchair access or who have any visual or hearing impairments. If this is relevant to you, please let us know at the time of booking.

Due to the stringent security measures in place at the Palace, we must forward the names of our party by 1 June, and all those taking part MUST take two forms of ID with them to the Palace on the day including a picture ID (such as a driving license or passport) and one showing the home address (such as a utility or council tax bill).

If you would like to join us for this really memorable day out, please telephone our Events Co-ordinator David Routh on 01473 255680 to confirm your booking. After telephoning, David will need to receive your cheque for the appropriate amount within 7 days or the booking will be lost. Please send cheques (made payable to "Friends of Christchurch Park") to David Routh, 62 High Street, Ipswich, IP1 3QS – but you must call first!

Friends' Social Event, 24 November 2009 at the Reg Driver Centre

About thirty people, some of them newcomers, were present for Stuart Grimwade's fascinating presentation entitled "A Victorian Album of Christchurch Park". Not only were we able to marvel at the quality of these digitally enhanced old Victorian photographs on the screen, he very ably described the process which enabled him to do this.

Many of the original photographs are kept at the Suffolk Records Office whose staff allowed Stuart to photograph the originals, sized only 1.5" x 2" and very faint, without the assistance of flashlight and directly from the album in which they are stored. What he was then able to do with the aid of Photoshop on his computer produced what we saw on the screen with much improved clarity. He showed us how he adjusted the colours, the contrast, the hues and brightness and how he was able to fill in the areas covered by the mounts holding the photographs by copying and adding bits from other parts of the photo. The finished product could be sepia or pure black and white. Not only that, the copyright of the now clearly defined and restored photographs was his! However, he pointed out that this modern technology allowed for any amount of tampering with the original photograph and now one could never say with authority that the camera never lies.

Many of the photographs were originally produced by Robert Burrows in the mid nineteenth century. Robert Burrows was also an artist which perhaps is evidenced by his use of models (the same gentlemen in a top hat and a lady in bonnet and shawl) in the composition of several of his photographs of the Christchurch Park and the Ipswich riverside. Another photograph was a study of an artist's studio showing himself and the brothers T and E R Smythe, local well-known mid nineteenth-century artists, with one of their works on an easel.

Stuart very aptly closed his presentation by playing us the peel of the restored fourteenth-century St Lawrence Church bells, the oldest working bells in Christendom, which Sir Thomas Wolsey would have listened to when he lived nearby many centuries ago.

The evening was very enjoyable with an excellent talk, refreshments, lively discussion and a very comfortable venue. Many thanks to all those who helped to make this such an enjoyable evening.

Ann Snook

Park Road entrance borders

Some members of the Friends have resurrected the "gardening group" which traditionally has cared for the borders running up to the Park Road entrance. We plan to work on the first Monday of each month from 10am – 12am, and the first meeting after the winter break is scheduled for Monday 1 March. We have found in the past that each member has a particularly useful gardening skill to offer but whatever your level of expertise, extra pairs of hands always make the task much easier and the finished product much better. So if you can spare just a couple of hours to join a group of like-minded people, please do come and join us – and bring your favourite tools!

For further details, please contact Ann Snook on 01473 251037.

Ranger Update

Many of you who have been in the Park recently will have noticed the work that has been going on in and around the Wildlife Reserve. The dilapidated fence has been removed along with the old gates and signs that were in disrepair. This may seem a rather drastic measure but we want to incorporate the Wildlife Reserve into the rest of the Park – it has come across as somewhat foreboding and uninviting to the general public. The harshness of the fence line will make way for a more natural hedgerow barrier. Any gaps that are now apparent will be filled in with native hedging plants and the Reserve will be fringed by three to five metres depth of longer grass – extremely beneficial to all sorts of wildlife. Information boards and signs instructing dog owners to keep their animals on leads will be put up. The southern edge by the Wilderness Pond will be re-fenced as it is unlikely that any substantial vegetation will be able to grow here due to the lack of light in this area. This fencing will be the same design as has been used to protect the wet meadow to provide continuity to the designated wildlife areas in the Park. Furthermore, the extremely steep steps that have been removed on the northern edge of the Reserve will be re-sited so that they run more gradually down the centre of the slope with a woodland edge fringe of wildflowers on either side.

The area next to the wet meadow and immediately north of the Wilderness Pond has been designated as a butterfly garden but it is looking rather tired at the moment. Sadly, planting of this area will not commence until spring 2011 due to financial constraints. However, it will be kept mown, with self seeding butterfly-friendly buddleia allowed to flourish, and signs will be put up shortly showing the future planting scheme which has been designed by Alan Reynolds, one of my colleagues. This simple yet elegant design will be easy to maintain and will incorporate a wide range of native and non-native plants ideally suited for encouraging butterflies, birds and other insects. The aim of this project is to provide juxtaposition between the formal rockery and informal wet meadow. There will also be a seating area, which will provide a vantage point looking down over the Wilderness Pond.

A working party from the Friends joined me on two extremely cold days recently to work in the Wildlife Reserve. We managed to take down some of the old damaged bird boxes and put up over thirty new boxes which have been expertly built by Reg Snook. This includes an owl box (perhaps for one of Mabel's offspring?), some wedge-shaped Treecreeper nesting boxes and Mandarin Duck boxes which we have put up on the islands in the Wilderness Pond. These boxes may seem rather high for ducks, but the Mandarin is a wood duck and nests in holes in trees. Reg tells me that our Mandarins originate not from China but from the collection at Victoria Nurseries on Westerfield Road! Nonetheless, they are much valued by birders and twitchers who find this species hard to find elsewhere.

Some of you may have seen us battling across the icy pond in a rather unstable flat-bottomed boat, wire cutters in hand. This was so we could gain access to the hundreds of yards of fencing that were put up on the islands during the Heritage Lottery project to protect young plants. It is now time to allow the ducks and other wildlife full access to the islands, and the remainder of the fencing should be removed in the coming weeks.

My thanks to Peter, Richard and Reg for all their hard work on this project. If any other members of the Friends would like to help with the many wildlife-related tasks we face in the Park, please do contact me on the number below.

Laura Whitfield, Wildlife & Education Ranger, 01473 433993

Christchurch Park – its good for you!

Three fascinating articles in *The Times* last autumn reported on a number of scientific studies that emphasize just how important urban parks and gardens are. On September 8, Dr Ken Thompson, a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Sheffield who led the Biodiversity in Urban Gardens in Sheffield (BUGS) project, stated that parks and gardens were better for wildlife than the countryside which has been “trashed” by modern farming techniques. Even the smallest urban garden could contain a range of plants and insects that would make most farmland look like a “biological desert”. The project found over 1,100 varieties of plants – more than two thirds of British native flora – and 700 species of insects and other invertebrates in the Sheffield gardens studied. In another 30-year study, the ecologist Jennifer Owens found more than 8,000 species in her own suburban garden in Leicester, 20 of them previously unknown in Britain. Dr Thompson said that comparatively little effort was needed to turn a typical garden into a haven of biodiversity: “The top thing, far more important than anything else, is you need more big shrubs, trees and hedges. You massively increase the volume of vegetation. It’s a lot of places to live and lot of stuff to eat.” The veteran trees in Christchurch Park are a particularly good source of food for resident and passing wildlife. Putting less effort into the garden could make it more attractive to many species, Dr Thompson said: “Don’t be too tidy – don’t be in a hurry to clear up everything the moment it stops flowering or Hoover up every fallen leaf.” Sam Pollard’s (occasionally controversial) plans for areas of longer grass and for many of the fallen leaves to stay as a mulch *in situ* are just such attempts to build up the wildlife in the Park.

The following day, Dr Ross Cameron, an environmental biologist at the University of Reading, said that gardens and parks were “essential to our wellbeing” and should be given the same protection as virgin countryside. Urban green spaces must be protected against a wave of “garden-grabbing” developers as they give a wide range of social, physical, environmental and psychological benefits. He said that an estimated 32 sq km (7,900 acres) of gardens had been lost in London alone in the past five years as developers tried to squeeze more homes into areas by building on gardens, which were designated brownfield land. At the same time, millions of homeowners were paving over their front gardens, with as many as half in some towns and cities vanishing under asphalt. Dr Cameron said that studies with patients suffering mental health problems also showed that gardens and parks helped to reduce stress: “A recent report from Australia suggests gardening helps delay the onset of dementia in the elderly.” He also cited social benefits, such as crime reduction: “There is evidence from a study in Chicago that areas with greater greenery have less crime. The greatest reduction was in domestic violence, a stress-related crime.” This Chicago study found that in otherwise similar areas, those with more trees had less crime, and a significant part of the difference could not be accounted for by any other cause. Finally, green spaces such as Christchurch Park could also help to cool urban environments otherwise warmed by climate change.

The last item, with perhaps even more relevance to the Friends of Christchurch Park, was published in October with the headline: “Urban Parks keep residents healthier and happier”.

It highlighted a study published in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* which found that town and city dwellers living near parks were healthier and suffered fewer bouts of depression than those without easy access to such green spaces. The study, based on health records in the Netherlands for nearly 350,000 people across the country, was adjusted to take into account socio-economic background and found that in urban zones where 90 per cent of the area was green space, the incidence of anxiety disorders or depression was 18 people per thousand whereas in areas with only 10 per cent greenery the incidence was 26 per thousand. The annual rates of more than a dozen types of disease, including cardiovascular, respiratory, neurological, digestive and mental disorders, were also lower for those living near parks. The impact on health was most marked in people who spent a lot of time out in their green surroundings, especially children and those aged 45 to 65. The study concluded that “the role of green space in the living environment should not be underestimated”.

Perhaps what we should take from all this is that we ought to be visiting our Park even more frequently – it really is good for you!

Richard Wilson

Forthcoming events in Christchurch Park

Sunday March 21 The Sainsbury's Sport Relief Mile The perfect setting for you to rise to the challenge for Sport Relief! Enter the Mile today, get sponsored and make a real day of it. The event begins at 9.30am with various runs of 1, 3 and 6 miles from 10.00am to 11.30am. To find all the details of this event, go to www.sportrelief.com/the-mile/ipswich-christchurch-park-mile

Sunday May 2 Ipswich Transport Museum, Ipswich to Felixstowe Rally The premier Vintage Car Run in the East of England for vehicles built before 1975. Over 500 cars, motorcycles, lorries, buses, coaches and military vehicles gather in the Park ready at 11.30am for the start of their journey to Felixstowe Promenade. A free event, open to all.

Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 May Ipswich Food and Drink Festival Details to be confirmed.

Sunday 20 June Suffolk Pride 2.00pm – 8.00pm, more details from www.suffolkpride.co.uk

Forthcoming Ranger Events

All Ranger events in Christchurch Park begin at the Reg Driver Visitor Centre. There will be a charge of £2.00 per adult and £1.00 per child. Booking is essential and payment must be made in advance. For more details please telephone 01473 433994.

April 15 Green Man (Children's event) 1.00pm-3.00pm. The Green Man is a mythical figure often portrayed as a mask made of leaves typically carved in wood or stone. Join the Rangers to learn more and to make your own mask collage.

May 29 Walk with Trees (Over 10's) “Walk in the Woods” is the Tree Council's month-long festival to encourage everyone to enjoy trees and woods in spring. Join the Rangers on a walk to learn how to identify some of our most common native and non-native woodland species.

The Fireworks event and the Armistice Day Parade

Very unusually, the annual Scouts Fireworks display and the Armistice Day Parade this past year coincided on the weekend of the 7 and 8 November. I was extremely concerned about this and attended a meeting held at the Reg Driver Centre where all those involved in the Parade gathered to discuss the forthcoming arrangements. The clash between the two events was agreed to be regrettable and both the Scouts and Park Management promised to do their utmost to have the Park tidied up early on the Sunday morning ready for the Parade to take place.

Prior to this meeting, as I walked my dog Toby around the Park, I conceived the following idea: "why not approach the local press and Radio Suffolk with the thought of making this year's Fireworks event the 'greenest' ever, and try to persuade all those attending that it would be a good idea to take their litter home with them?".

I telephoned our Chairman Richard Wilson and Robin Vickery (Chairman of the Royal British Legion, Ipswich Branch), for their support as well as Mark Murphy of BBC Radio Suffolk and Liz Parry from the East Anglian Daily Times. Robin Vickery and I then met Mark Murphy at Radio Suffolk's Broadcasting Centre and went on air one morning with a plea to all those proposing to attend the Fireworks event on the Saturday evening. We asked that they might take their litter home with them in order to make this the most environmentally friendly event ever. Over the coming days, Mark Murphy continued with a daily prompting to members of the public and the EADT ran an article on page 18 of the 29 October edition entitled "Plea to clean up after display". Similar requests followed in the Evening Star.

The Fireworks were enjoyed by thousands of visitors on the Saturday night. When I arrived with Toby on the morning of Sunday 8 November, I found the Park was almost cleared of all the rubbish. It was a real credit to all those who attended the Fireworks and to those Scouts, Staff of the Park, Rangers and volunteers who helped to prepare for the Park for the Armistice Parade at 11am that morning.

After the events of this weekend, I received a letter of thanks from Sam Pollard, the Park Manager, which included the following kind words: "I am writing to thank you for your input in the run-up to this year's Fireworks event... I was very proud to represent the Park at the Remembrance Day Parade knowing that it looked in excellent condition. I also received many positive comments about the condition of the Park. Once again, thank you for your continued support." I was delighted to know I had made a difference.

David Routh

Forthcoming events at Christchurch Mansion

Enjoy free, 30-minute guided tours of the Mansion each Wednesday at 11am and 12am until the 24 March courtesy of the Friends of Ipswich Museums.

5 – 8 April Meet the Barber-Surgeon Dr Blumfield is in the Mansion tending to his famous patient, Thomas Gainsborough. Find out more about the Suffolk artist, what life was like in the 1700s, and how a surgeon treated his patients. Watch out for this barber-surgeon - he's razor-sharp! Suitable for children 5 years and over, but all children must be accompanied by an adult. Cost £1.50 per child. Sessions at: 10.30, 11.30, 12.30, 14.00 and 15.00. Book in advance to guarantee a place - 01473 433691 or drop in to Christchurch Mansion. British Sign Language interpreted sessions on Tuesday 6 April at 10.30 and 12.30.

12 – 15 April Toy Talks Have you ever wondered which Prime Minister donated his cigar boxes to make a doll's house? Do you fancy finding out a bit more about the toys on display (plus some that aren't)? Why not join our friendly education assistants on a short and sweet tour of the toy room. Perfect for families, though any age welcome (children must be accompanied by an adult). Talks at 10.30, 11.30, 12.30, 14.00, 15.00. Free, no need to book.

Saturdays, 8 – 29 May Willow Workshops Join Jo Hammond, a local and experienced weaver, for these relaxed and friendly half-day workshops. All projects are based on English willow and are suitable for beginners. Participants can bring secateurs if they wish, but all essential tools are provided. Each workshop can be enjoyed individually, or all four work nicely as a series.

8 May Willow platter: Weave different coloured willows into a pretty platter, good for serving bread.

15 May Willow and paper lantern: Make a willow framework, and cover with coloured tissue to make a beautiful glowing lantern.

22 May Willow Woman: A quirky, stylized garden sculpture which introduces weaving, tying and wrapping skills.

29 May Willow dragonfly: Make a delicate willow dragonfly to hover in your garden.

Ages 14+, cost £16 per person (£14 students), book two different workshops for £28. Tickets must be paid for and collected in advance from Christchurch Mansion. Materials are provided at a maximum cost of £5 per person per workshop, payable to the tutor on the day. Workshops are at 10.00, 12.30, 14.00 and 16.30.

Places must be booked in advance by telephoning 01473 433691.

Autumn Birdwatching Walk – Saturday 31 October 2009

Overcast but mild conditions greeted the select group of FoCP members who attended this late-autumn walk. Upon entering the Park at the Soane Street entrance, we were greeted by the harsh rattling call of a Mistle Thrush. This individual then flew across in front of us and landed, appropriately enough, on top of a huge clump of mistletoe in a tall tree next to the Mansion. Additional sightings in the area of the Mansion involved a Sparrowhawk flying over and an aerial altercation between a Carrion Crow and a Magpie. High overhead groups of Redwings, small wintering-visiting thrushes from northern Europe, headed westwards, identifiable by their thin “seep” callnote.

A familiar sight on the Round Pond was that of several adult Black-headed Gulls; despite being a regular feature on the pond, it was pointed out that these gulls had probably spent the summer months at breeding sites in eastern and northern Europe many hundreds of miles away. On the Wilderness Pond the highlight was the presence of at least nine Mandarin Ducks, including six spectacular males. Christchurch Park and Holywells Park are probably the best sites in Suffolk to see this amazing species. Reg Snook informed us of plans to improve the Wilderness Pond area for breeding ducks and geese, including removing the fencing and the provision of nesting boxes for the Mandarin Ducks. We had several sightings of Jays in the Wilderness Pond/Wildlife Reserve area, but an obvious absence was that of small birds, despite much searching.

The bird nesting boxes in the Wildlife Reserve area were installed back in the late 1980's and several were noted as showing obvious signs of deterioration. Reg informed us that it was hoped to soon replace the dilapidated boxes which would obviously be to the benefit of the local populations of Blue and Great Tits. The distinctive call of a Green Woodpecker was heard over the Park's open areas. We completed our walk with excellent views of the Park's most famous ornithological resident, Mabel the Tawny Owl, present in its usual tree near the northern Westerfield Road entrance.

Many thanks to those who participated in this walk, particularly to Reg Snook who brought us up to date with the various conservation issues affecting the Park.

Philip Murphy

The Constitution of the Friends of Christchurch Park

The committee of the Friends would like to propose to the AGM on 23 March that the document on the facing page is adopted as the Constitution of the Friends of Christchurch Park. We have produced this constitution to more accurately reflect the objects of the group and to clarify some matters that were not covered by the constitution previously in place.

We believe it is a much stronger statement of who we are and what we do, and we recommend it to our members.

Richard Wilson

Friends of Christchurch Park – Constitution

1. The Group shall be called Friends of Christchurch Park, hereinafter referred to as “the Group”.
2. The objects of the Group shall be to work for the benefit of the public:
 - i) to secure the preservation, protection and improvement of Christchurch Park as a place of historic and ecological interest, beauty, tranquillity, rest and recreation;
 - ii) to promote the conservation of the natural plant, animal and bird life in the Park;
 - iii) to encourage appropriate use of the Park through a range of activities;
 - iv) to educate the public in the history, natural history and other aspects of the Park;
 - v) to actively engage with the local Council and the Park’s management for the better achievement of these aims.
3. In furtherance of its objects, the Group shall have the power:
 - i) to raise funds and to invite and receive contributions provided that in raising funds the Group shall not undertake any substantial permanent trading activities;
 - ii) to buy, lease or otherwise acquire any property necessary for the achievement of the objects of the Group;
 - iii) to sell, lease or dispose of all or any part of the property of the Group;
 - iv) to co-operate with other voluntary bodies, charities and statutory authorities operating in furtherance of the objects, or of similar charitable purposes, and exchange information and advice with them;
 - v) to establish any charitable trusts, associations or institutions formed for all or any of the objects;
 - vi) to do all such other lawful things as are necessary for the achievement of the objects.
4. Membership of the Group shall be open to any individual, household or organisation that supports the objects of the Group and pays the relevant subscription as determined by the AGM. Each individual, household or organisation membership carries one vote.
5. The affairs of the Group shall be controlled by a Committee comprising a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary and not more than six other members elected from and by the members of the Group at the AGM. Officers and Committee members shall be elected for one year but may be re-elected. The Committee has the power to co-opt members and to form such sub-committees as it deems necessary from time to time. Four Committee members shall constitute a quorum and the Committee shall meet not less than four times a year.
6. Officers and members of the Committee shall be entitled to reimbursement of expenses incurred on behalf of the Group.
7. The duties of the Committee shall be:
 - i) to control the affairs of the Group and to use its funds in furtherance of the objects;
 - ii) to keep accurate accounts of the Group’s finances, which shall be available for reasonable inspection by members and shall be audited and presented to the AGM;
 - iii) to maintain bank accounts in the Group’s name, requiring two named and unrelated officers to act as signatories;
 - iv) to make decisions on the basis of a simple majority vote. The Chair shall be entitled to an additional casting vote in the event of a tied vote.
8. The AGM shall be held not later than 1 April each year to elect officers and members of the Committee, to approve the accounts and to consider other proposals from the Committee. Notice of the AGM shall be sent to members not later than 2 weeks before the meeting.
9. Any proposal to amend the Constitution shall be sent to members by the committee not later than 2 weeks before the AGM. Approval of an amendment shall require a two-thirds majority of those present and entitled to vote.
10. In the event of the dissolution of the Group, any residual funds shall be donated to an organisation having similar aims.

Sam's Notes

I am sure that many of you may have noticed that I like to start off all of my notes with a bit about the weather. That is because I have a real interest in the subject, and I suppose I am a bit of an anorak! However, I doubt if there is anyone who hasn't shown an interest during our period of 'real snow' over the last couple of months! I am sure that all of you noticed its ability to turn the most mundane (possibly ugly) view into something of beauty. Many of us with young hearts will have joined in with – or looked longingly at – the fun that was being had on just about any slope in the Park. But just as there are often tears before bedtime, there are dangers with the beauty/fun.

The snowfall in December came with a great price. We lost over 15 limbs from, mostly, evergreen trees - the sheer weight of the snow being too much for the trees to bear. Then there was quick succession of thaw and frost on well-compacted snow to bring about some very icy paths. This was even more dangerous on Christmas Eve when rain had made certain paths impassable. It was unfortunate that we had to close the Park because of this and we would hope to avoid this happening in the future.

Whilst talking of ice it is also worth a reminder that walking across iced ponds can never be considered a safe thing to do. I imagine that I am preaching to the converted with that fact, so I mention it only that you might pass the message onwards if you see others about to try this reckless activity.

Frost and ice has also damaged the Brett Fountain in the Upper Arboretum. We would like to repair this damage as soon as possible.

Our thoughts are now turning to warmer times and to an explosion of colour as spring comes along. We are offering an 'Introduction to Garden Design' course at the Visitor Centre. This will take place on 27th Feb 10-4 and will cost just £35 for the day. Please phone 252435 to book a place.

A project waiting in the wings is a bit of hard landscaping to the triangle between the Mansion and the Round Pond. This area is to be resurfaced and have picnic tables added. The Ipswich Society in partnership with the Friends of Christchurch Park and the Suffolk Environment Trust is funding these improvements. Please also see Laura's notes on the Wildlife Area project.

Finally I want to offer the opportunity to come stargazing in the Park. Orwell Astronomical Society are organising a Star Party on the 20 Feb at 7pm. You must book a place in advance and entry is £3 payable on the night (telephone 252435 to book). Another reason to look forward to better weather!

Sam Pollard, Park Manager

Note: To contact the Park Manager or for any other enquiries about the Park or Park events, please telephone the Reg Driver Centre on 01473 252435.

Membership

We warmly welcome the following new Friends –
E. Beryl Beech, Peggy Mawson, Miss Sheila Piper, Mrs Eileen Andrews
Mr J.J. & Mrs E. Greenhalgh, Anthony & Patricia Rivett

Corporate Members

Woodcock & Son (Estate Agents)

16 Arcade Street
Ipswich IP1 1EP
01473 233355
www.woodcockandson.co.uk
(FoCP contact John Woodcock)

Ipswich School

Henley Road
Ipswich IP1 3SG
01473 408300
www.ipswich.suffolk.sch.uk
(FoCP contact Peter Gray)

The Will Shop

84 Berners Street
Ipswich IP1 3LU
01473 233110
www.thewillshop.com
(FoCP contact Adam Muldoon)

W. D. Coe Ltd

20-28 Norwich Road
Ipswich IP1 2NG
01473 256061
www.coes.co.uk
(FoCP contact William Coe)

Orwell Veterinary Group

Berners House Surgery
56 Berners Street
Ipswich IP1 3LU
01473 257557
www.orwellvets.co.uk
(FoCP contact Charles Bagnall)

Scrutton Bland (Accountants)

Sanderson House
Museum Street
Ipswich IP1 1HE
01473 259201
www.scruttonbland.co.uk
(FoCP contact John Pickering)

Gilmour Piper and Associates

(Osteopathy & Integrated Healthcare)
10 Fonnereau Road
Ipswich IP1 3JP
01473 217592
www.gilmourpiper.co.uk
(FoCP contact Andrew Gilmour)

FoCP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

(To year ending AGM – 23 March 2010)

Chairman: Richard Wilson 01473 230105

Events/Meetings: David Routh 01473 255680 ParkMobile: Ken Lightfoot 01473 251749

Secretary: Ann Snook 01473 251037 Committee Member: Ian Hatton 01473 288538

Membership Secretary: Robert Fairchild 01473 254255

Vice-Chairman and Treasurer: Peter Grimwade 01473 257016

For all ParkMobile bookings please contact Ken Lightfoot on 01473 251749

Membership Subscriptions – IMPORTANT

All subscriptions to the Friends of Christchurch Park (£5 per household) are due annually on 1 March. To help reduce our administration costs, we would prefer all members to pay by continuous Standing Order. If you already pay by Standing Order no further action is required. If not, please send the completed Standing Order Authority AND the Membership Form (at the bottom of the page) to Robert Fairchild. Please call Robert on 01473 254255 if you are in any doubt as to whether you already pay by Standing Order.

We appreciate that Standing Orders are not always suitable and we still welcome payment by cash or cheque. Please include the completed Membership Form (below) with your payment and send to Robert Fairchild at the address below before 1 March.

STANDING ORDER AUTHORITY

Account to be credited:

Friends of Christchurch Park

Bank:

Lloyds Bank, Cornhill, Ipswich

Account Number: 02952840

Sort Code: 30-94-55

Account name to be debited:

Bank and Branch:

Amount:

£5.00 (five pounds)

Please pay to the Friends of Christchurch Park annually on the 1st March until further notice

Signed:

Date:

(detach here)***** (detach here)

MEMBERSHIP FORM

I have enclosed a new Standing Order Authority

Please find enclosed a cheque for £5 made payable to Friends of Christchurch Park

Please find enclosed a cash payment of £5

(Please tick as appropriate)

Name(s):

Address and Postcode:

Please send this form to Robert Fairchild, 10 June Avenue, Ipswich, IP1 4LT