



Spring 2018 NEWSLETTER

Hello to all our Friends

It's Spring at last and here is the latest newsletter. There's lots to report.

Please talk to everyone you know about our wonderful Park and encourage them to become a Friend too.

Remember, we are always looking for volunteers to work actively for the Park's benefit. Come along and help.

Now read on to find out about the events planned for this Summer, and about the exciting conservation work being done by RNCP, the River Nene Regional Park team.

There's an update on the serious implications for us arising from the forthcoming Oundle Marina development.

Events ahead

Dates for your diary:

<i>16 June</i>	Cider & Sausages
<i>30 June</i>	Nature Sleep Out
<i>7 July</i>	Music in the Park <i>and</i> Classic Bike Rally
<i>15 July</i>	Traction Rally
<i>August (tbd)</i>	Night Manoeuvres
<i>16 September</i>	Kingfisher Food Festival



Thanks to our supporters

The Big Lottery, Augean PLC, the Bruce Wake Trust and local people shopping at Waitrose are making a big difference to us in one way or another, as you will read in this newsletter.

Very many heartfelt thanks to them all.

Play Area: in progress

The play area is in the process of being transformed. Funded by a combination of park money and Augean PLC (a loyal long-time supporter) this £50,000 development will give many years of pleasure and joy to our younger park users.

Ranger Matt has asked the Friends to help by funding some wood carvings, which will cost around £4,000. We want to help and are researching how to source money for this.

EVENTS

Cider & Sausages



Rangers Matt and Georgie are repeating the Cider & Sausages event that was such a success last year. Saturday 16 June, from 12 noon to 7pm.

Nature Sleep Out

We're building on the success of Claire's wonderful Wild Sleep Out held in June last year. 30 people, sleeping out in the Park on a warm almost-midsummer evening, enjoyed moth trapping, bird and spooky bat spotting.



The 2017 event raised over £200 for the Park.

This year's Nature Sleep Out will be held on Saturday 30 June. We are already taking bookings so hurry to book your places on this popular event.

Music in the Park

Now into its fourth year, Oundle International Festival has kindly agreed to incorporate Music in the Park (MitP) into the festival agenda. This means we're at the beginning of the Oundle International Festival, on Saturday 7 July, from 10:30am to 6pm.

We will be hosting 6 local brass bands, with the usual (and spectacular) massed band performance in the middle of the day.

Again, there will be a special composition commissioned to celebrate the event and our Park, which will be played during the massed bands section.

Don't miss out on a truly action packed festival. You can get the details by following this link:

www.oundlefestival.org.uk

or contact the booking office: 01832 274734.

What's more, at the same time there will be a Classic Bike Rally which will start at the Wharf and finish at the Country Park. There will be prizes given during the event and the cycles will be on display. For those interested in Classic Bikes and wishing to participate, follow this link:

www.oundleclassicbike.co.uk.

We will have the support of Digfield Ales, and the Kingfisher Café, under the excellent management of Sadie Smith, will be cooking up some wonderful burgers produced from locally reared beef and supplied by Seven Wells Butchers. Sausages too, we always have sausages.

Vintage Car Rally

Something has been missing over the years. Indeed, how could we possibly not have our own Traction Rally event? Now we do, on the Sunday following Music in the Park, 15th July.

The Raunds Temperance Band will be there to help create a really enjoyable day and, indeed, how could a Traction Rally not be supported by essential lubrication from Digfield Ales? All being well, Sadie at the KAF will be cooking up some more burgers and bangers on the day.

Night Manoeuvres

Not content with the huge commitment she has made to *Nature Sleep Out*, Claire is also organising for August (date to be determined) a night time orienteering and manoeuvres event. More details will follow nearer the time.

Barnwell Country Park is as alive during the night as it is when most of us normally use it. This will be a great opportunity to experience nature in the dark.

We know that Claire is talking to a variety of specialists who will be keen to impart their knowledge.

As ever, any volunteers whether with specific specialisations or those who just wish to muck in and help, please let us know. You will be welcome. Bring a torch.

Kingfisher Food Festival

The Friends are taking over the management of our very own food festival, building on the hard work Rangers Matt and Georgie did last year. It will be held on Saturday 16 September.

We are already taking bookings from producers and aim to have 20 to 25 stalls this year.

There will be a raffle during the day, first prize a self-catering week in the Balearics.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Permanent performance stage

Paul Bancroft, Architects, have very generously agreed to work pro bono on the development of the performance area. We are deeply grateful to Mark Benns of Paul Bancroft, who has come up with an exciting proposal.

Mark has brought in to work with him the well known landscape designer, Marcus Green, who has recently moved to our beautiful part of the world.

An equally illustrious acoustic/sound engineer, Bob Essert (of Sound Space Vision) has agreed to become involved. Bob is currently working on a new opera house at Neville Holt, having worked on such prestigious projects as Garsington Opera in the past.

We are truly blessed and exceptionally lucky to be supported by these outstanding professionals.



Artist's impression of the proposal

Our first step will be to consult BCP users. Look out for a display at the Visitor Centre, and do take part in one of the surveys which will follow. It is important that we understand the views of our users on this project so please tell us what you think of it.

We estimate the budget to be in the region of £150,000.

This could be a long-term asset unique to our area, helping to develop the Park and our surrounding area as even more of a destination location. It could also help to offset possible revenue loss to the park as the Marina is developed (more on the Marina below).

Tots Play Area



As discussed in the last Newsletter, we are looking to give the tots play area a substantial upgrade.

We are seeking funds now to refurbish it and introduce new modern educational amusements: in total, the project is likely to cost between £4,000 and £5,000. The funds we received from the Waitrose “Community Matters” tokens are now the priming money for this project.

We aim to mix match our own funds with those from other external funding bodies.

Secure storage needed

During March, there was an attempted robbery at the Park. Thieves attempted to make off with kit being used for the renewal of the children’s play area. A container holding a mini-digger was damaged, but the robbers were unable to break in. Not content with failure, the intruders proceeded to break down the fencing and helped themselves to the red diesel held there specifically for the use of the works team on the new play area. What a wicked world. We may apply to change our Big Lottery bid to fund tougher security fencing. Failing that, we will need to raise additional funds.

Ultimately, our aim is to turn the compound into a safe storage, works and maintenance area capable, ideally, of doubling as a summer time classroom.

UPDATES

The Oundle Marina

The Oundle Marina project has now received full planning consent for a leisure development which will include short-term rental housing, café and restaurant as well as more leisure and boating facilities.

Our objection to the Marina development was based on the fact that it will have excellent car parking facilities which will compete directly with BCP’s car park. The difference between BCP’s parking area and that of the marina is ... yes, you guessed it, free parking.

All the parks in Northants generate essential revenue from parking fees. Pedestrians go free and may walk in our wonderful community park for nothing. Some of our more thrifty fellow users, already opt to avoid paying the parking fee by using the layby whilst others already use the marina. We calculate that the layby, when not occupied by buses, loses the park around £300 per week in the high season. Imagine then what will happen when the marina is redeveloped.

We also worry about our Kingfisher Café. The café and restaurant facilities in the marina will compete for Sadie’s business.

NCC funding is perilous – after all, the County is now in special measures. It is highly likely that our parks will be squeezed ever more tightly, and so our park may well suffer. Currently, the bigger parks of Irchester and Brixworth cross subsidise the smaller ones: Barnwell, Sywell, and Fermyn. As the pot gets smaller, we cannot continue to expect these larger parks to continue to do this. Ultimately, something will give. For this reason, it is very important we do all we can to find alternative ways in which to support our park.

By building a permanent performance area, we create a new source of revenue and a new communal resource for our community. In addition, a project such as this will almost certainly help to secure jobs within our area and, in the long-term, even create more jobs.

RNRP

We met up with Kathryn Hardcastle in March to discuss what relevance RNRP (River Nene Regional Park) has to BCP and the Friends. It turned out to be one of those edifying experiences which makes us feel good about ourselves and the long-term future of BCP.

Set up 12 years ago, RNRP has become a dynamic catalyst for positive change in our valley. It is a Community Interest Company dedicated to the promotion and improvement of the Nene Valley region. It is a self-funded organisation employing a team of six committed and enthusiastic specialists. Kathryn has been managing RNRP for five years.

RNRP is concerned with the active long-term implementation of a sustainable community-led future for the Nene River valley through stimulation of employment, sustainable development of ecosystems, research, leisure, and educational opportunities relating to our region.

RNRP's influence along our long Nene river system is both tangible and constructive. In our view, it reflects the best of modern community based thinking.

e.g. The NENESCAPE Resilient River Project & How You Can Get Involved

The Nenescape Landscape Partnership Scheme (Nenescape) is a five-year programme of projects with Heritage Lottery Fund as its core funding source.

The Nenescape project aims to combine the valley's contextual social heritage with active social engagement. RNRP's team, working with 12 delivery partner organisations, is proving it is possible and succeeding in this important area.

Nenescape covers conservation and restoration work, drawing on a combination of professional expertise and voluntary engagement and participation. Current projects celebrate the River Nene's long history, selecting proven best practice from the past, whilst weaving in an essential modern context.

In keeping with RNRP, Nenescape's goal is to achieve a long-term sustainable future for the valley and all its inhabitants.

Land management techniques in the late 20th Century drove out historic traditional practices, for example, the drastic mechanised "haircut" methods of hedge cutting. River systems and control of land erosion by flooding suffered similar change. Nenescape is looking to use older techniques to achieve a more stable balance between river flow and land erosion.

A project called "Resilient River" aims to connect habitats along the River Nene by restoring neglected or poorly altered back-channels to the main flow of the river. This could:

- improve biodiversity;
- protect, enhance and interpret historical heritage techniques and practice; and, by so doing,
- improve resilience of the river's waterways in the face of increasing population, urban development and progressive climate change.

Back-channels generally represent an earlier course of a river, they tend to offer attractive havens for key and often endangered fauna and flora e.g. providing sanctuary for spawning. Consequently, they are vital to the health of a river.

Where access is feasible, for example at Barnwell Country Park, these locations can become exciting venues for controlled recreational participation as well as ongoing educational activities.

This project illustrates perfectly the RNRP's purpose: responsible husbandry, intelligent engagement and communication with our environment. For those who live in this part of Northamptonshire, this is the principal asset of our region: the River Nene.



Backchannel on the Nene_(credit: Steve Brayshaw)

Nenescape has earmarked twelve such projects of which the Barnwell Inner Back-channel is one. A variety of techniques will be deployed at each site including bank regrading, introduction of new gravel beds and hinge and pin/pleaching.

For more information, please go to the Nenescape website:

<http://nenescape.org/about>

Nenescape /RNRP have kindly agreed to make available handouts which can be obtained from the Visitor Centre at BCP.

How You Can Help:

The implementation of the twelve Nenescape projects is being managed in the field led by Nenescape's Viktor Tzikas. Viktor is organising tree plantings over the next three years as well as direct participation in back-channel projects.

Either contact Nenescape direct (see above link) or contact us (secretary@barnwellcountryparkfriends.org.uk) and we will ensure that he makes contact with you. There are opportunities for all ages and families.

There will be also be guided walks and talks about these projects. For more information, you can go to RNRP's website:

www.riverneregionalpark.org.uk.

We will ensure that the BCP Visitor Centre has both RNRP and Nenescape literature available. Our Rangers will always be able to provide more information.



Viktor is an expert angler who very kindly has promised to write a few articles for us. For those interested in angling who are not familiar with his work, here is Viktor's blog address :

<https://carpychrons.wordpress.com/category/park-lake/>

As you can tell, we are huge fans of what RNRP is creating and can only hope that Nenescape will be replicated across the British Isles.

Bruce Wake Trust “Access for All”

You may recall, and will have seen on the Donors’ Board at the beginning of the North Lake Path, that the Bruce Wake Trust (BWT) was a generous contributor to the path. What an improvement the path has made for everyone.



BWT has continued to keep an eye on what we are doing. It has provided us with sufficient funding to cover the costs associated with our first mobility scooter as well as enabling us to look out for a further second hand scooter and, when found and purchased, refurbish it up to appropriate safety standards.

We must do more to advertise this great resource to ensure that those with more limited mobility can get out and enjoy BCP. We would be very grateful if the Friends would let those they know with limited mobility that they too can share the beauty of the Park.

Facebook

We aim to make more use of our own Facebook page and intend to learn more about the various forms of social media used by many of the Friends.

Please support us and help by adding these events to your own pages so that we can get maximum coverage to advertise our events.

If anyone would be willing to help, please do get in touch.

Website

Keep an eye on the [website](#), set up for us by Justin Jeffrey of IQ Marketing, for information and news of forthcoming events. Newsletters are stored there too.

The Big Lottery

Special thanks to the Big Lottery which does so much for us, from contributing substantially to Music in the Park to granting funds towards levelling the ground behind the Visitor Centre so that flooring for performances there (the Summer Fringe events, for example) can be laid out more easily and effectively.

Treasurer

We heartily welcome a new Treasurer, Bob Ward, who, like all of us on the committee, is dedicated to the long-term sustainable future of our Park because it has given so much over the years to us all.

Committee

Mary James, Chair

Edward James, Secretary

Bob Ward, Treasurer

Kim Grove, Funding

Nick Bould, Barnwell Parish Council

Sue and Neville Oakes, Oundle Town Council

Barbara Ding

Claire Faulkner

Angela Holmes

