

## MESSAGE TO THE FRIENDS

What would you like to see happening at the Park? Use the [contact details](#) to let us know.

As Friends, we sign up to a shared commitment to the Park. The Park is facing difficult times. It is up to us to work to ensure that the Park continues to strike the right balance between a maintained and a sustainable natural environment.

Our catchment area is huge: word of mouth has brought a visitor from Holland; Coventry is an occasional starting point for a visit. Everyone values our Park for its peace and beauty.

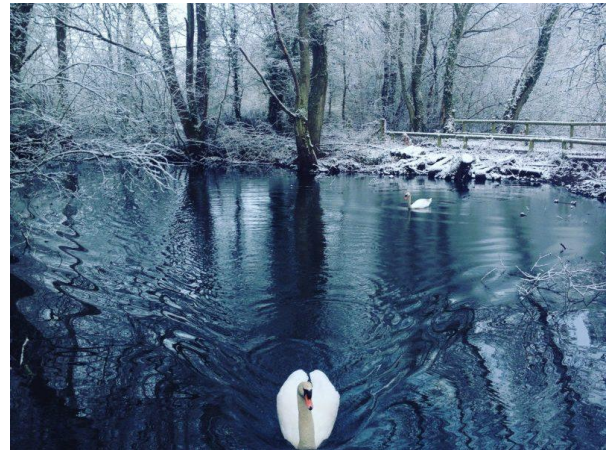
## FUTURE PLANS

- We would like to expand the use of the Park in quieter periods.
- We are keen to increase its use as a centre for education. If you are a teacher or work with local schools, please encourage your school to talk to the Rangers about using the Park as a teaching asset.

### Tots' Play Area DECEMBER 2017

Waitrose Community Matters green token scheme will be launching our funding appeal for the Tots' Play Area which is within the wicket fence behind the Visitor Centre. Some of you know that this area was vandalised. It is very much in need of renewal. The Friends hope to be able to raise sufficient funds through Waitrose and other funds to meet the costs of improvements. Currently, the cost associated with this project is around £5,000.

**PLEASE USE THE GREEN TOKEN SCHEME TO VOTE FOR THE PARK IF YOU SHOP AT WAITROSE IN DECEMBER.**



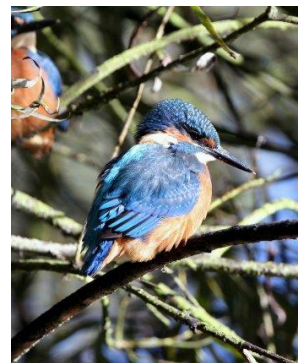
*Photo competition winner: credit to Portia Graves*

## FOR INFORMATION

### Children's Play Area

As you may know, the Park is run by "First for Wellbeing" or "1<sup>st</sup>4W" for short. The 1<sup>st</sup>4W team have been busy sorting out funding for a complete refurbishment of the main play area. Matt Harrel, our Senior Ranger, reports that some of the kit is now all of 25 years old.

This is a major project which is being organised by 1<sup>st</sup>4W. The Friends welcome it, on behalf of the many parents of young children who enjoy using it.



## PERFORMANCE AREA - BIG PLANS

Those of you who have supported **Music in the Park** over the years will know that we are at the mercy of the elements. If you checked out the performance tent, you will have seen that the bands have had to cope with a floor made of cardboard and (this last year) a ground layer of hessian sacking. As a matter of interest, those hessian sacks were used to transport coffee beans from Colombia, but that still didn't make them tough enough to act as a floor.



*Thanks to the good offices of the Arts Council of England (ACE), we now have a safe and solid performance flooring for future events. No more cardboard and sacking, no more mud. 😊😊😊*

It is now proposed that we seek to create a permanent performance area with a roof and a level floor. The staging we have already acquired will be incorporated into this structure for performances and stored when not in use in the safe container.

The rear of the performance area will have a fence with viewing slots, enhancing everyone's chances of seeing the shy kingfisher who hangs out there when it's quiet.

The performance space will be surrounded by walling on three sides with the open side facing across the green grassy area shared by the Visitor Centre, tots' slide and play area.

When it's not in use as a performance area, it will be possible to use this space to avoid the rain and for the education rangers to continue to work in the open.

As part of this project, we hope to increase the number of containers in the compound for a combination of storage, workshop area and classroom area so that our Education Rangers have a permanent set up for classes. We also aim to apply some funds to extend the café to include a soft play area and maybe an ice cream parlour.

Paul Bancroft Architects and RE Newton joiners have teamed up to sort out designs and initial budgeting for this project. We are very grateful for their interest and commitment to the Park and our community.

The dominant proportion of the superstructure will be made from natural materials. Green oak will be the main structural element.

Drawings will be made available at the Visitor Centre.

When the project has been budgeted, we will be applying for funding up to £100,000 from the European fund. This is a fund which may expire with BREXIT so time is of the essence.

We welcome your comments.

- ♥ Do you think that this is a good initiative?
- ♥ Are we wasting our time?
- ♥ Do you think that this is going too far?
- ♥ Are you interested seeing the Park supporting itself more with live outdoor performance?
- ♥ Are there groups you belong to who would be interested in using such a facility?

Please send your answers to these questions, and any other views you may like to raise on this project, to:

[secretary@barnwellcountryparkfriends.org.uk](mailto:secretary@barnwellcountryparkfriends.org.uk)

Use this email address to contact the Secretary by email directly or go via the [Friends website](#).

**WE WELCOME YOUR THOUGHTS AND COMMENTS: SUPPORTIVE OR CRITICAL, EVERY CONTRIBUTION HELPS.**

## COMING UP NEXT

### FLOWER ARRANGING CLUB

Sandy Miles will be running a special Christmas flower arranging club session on Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> November, starting at 10 a.m.

It will last for about two and half hours, including foraging for some of the materials and a break for tea and cake. Participants will learn Christmas wreath-making skills.

We are grateful to Sandy for running this as a fundraising event. All proceeds after direct costs will go towards upkeep and improvements to the Park.

Early birds will be charged £30 or it will be £35 on the day.

Meet at the Visitor Centre.

Please apply via the [Rangers](#) or to [secretary@barnwellcountryparkfriends.org.uk](mailto:secretary@barnwellcountryparkfriends.org.uk)

# AGM

Annual General Meeting

We are holding our 2017 AGM on Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> November, starting at 6 p.m. at the Visitor Centre. All are welcome.



## REPORTS

### MUSIC IN THE PARK 2017

The 2017 Music in the Park event was a success, in many ways. We had about 1,800 visitors during the day, hosted five brass bands, and commissioned an original piece of music for the massed bands' portion of the day.



The purpose of Music in the Park is to entertain visitors, broaden the appeal of the Park as an entertainment venue, increase our catchment and thereby encourage new visitors to share this jewel of a Park, thus ensuring its long term survival.

We received much positive comment. The bands enjoyed themselves. We raised money. We were fortunate to obtain the commitment of both the Arts Council of England (ACE) and Northamptonshire Community Fund as our major sponsors. As a result of their participation, we have gained a really good PA system for nothing and a quality performance flooring system which will enable us to accommodate a wide range of performance types (including brass bands) safely on a level stable performance area. Overall, this was a success.

### MUSIC IN THE PARK 2018

In future years, and in response to popular demand, we will NOT host this event on the middle Sunday of July, competing with Wimbledon Finals Day and Silverstone.

***In 2018 Music in the Park will be one week earlier in the calendar and will be part of the Oundle International Festival.***

In fact, Music in the Park will be the main event for the Festival on its first Saturday.

## MORE ON MOTP 2018

We are delighted to report that all but one band will come back for the Saturday which is testament to their enthusiasm because summer Saturdays are some of brass bands' busiest days.

We are also thrilled to report that Raunds Temperance Band will be replaced by a South Northants band, Towcester Studio.

***In addition to Music in the Park 2018, we will be hosting a British Legion Sunday event on our traditional Sunday slot and Raunds will join us solo for that event.***

***More on this important event in a subsequent Newsletter.***

## COMPLETION OF DONORS' BOARD OFFICIAL PARTY AT THE FIRST KINGFISHER FOOD FESTIVAL

On 17<sup>th</sup> September we took the opportunity to celebrate all the hard work the Friends put into raising funds for the all-weather surface for the North Lake Path. This coincided with our first Kingfisher Food Festival.

We invited our local MP, the Rt Hon. Tom Pursglove, officially to reveal the donors' board, and both Cllrs Wendy Brackenbury (representing NCC) and Cllr Phil Stearn (District Councillor, Oundle Ward) joined the opening ceremony. You may have seen the article in Nene Valley News.

It has taken some time but, at last, the Donor's Board is installed in its proper place.



The Friends Committee thanks all those who contributed towards this hugely successful campaign. The Big Lottery was the major contributor, and our stalwart local supporters contributed nearly half the final amount.

## KINGFISHER FOOD FESTIVAL

This was our first food festival at the Park supported by Made in Northamptonshire (MinN). It was a Friends initiated event which was kindly taken on by First for Wellbeing (1<sup>st</sup>4W). It was a modest start but, out of small acorns grow great events. We are keen to see this event repeated and grown. It is a natural development for the Park and should broaden our catchment.

*Responding to your feedback: We accept there was insufficient marketing for this event and we will be seeking to address this in future years.*

For those who came to the KFF event and haven't yet been in touch, we'd welcome your thoughts.

## LOOKING FORWARD OUNDE MARINA

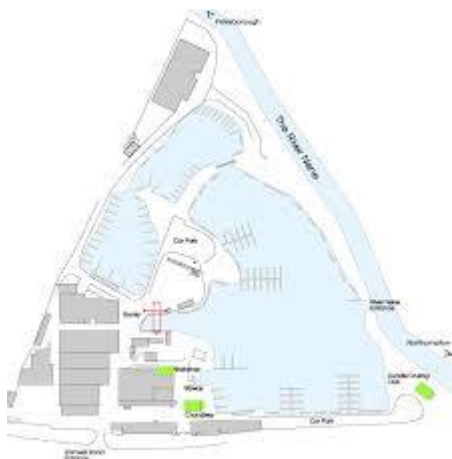
Oundle Marina now has planning consent for a multi-use retail and residential development. Having seen the plans, our understanding is that it will include housing, both fixed and floating, as well as retail and eateries.

Our Chair, Mary, has written to Cllr Phil Stearn expressing concern about the impact of this development on the Park. As it stands there will be a substantial provision for parking at the Marina as well as a café and restaurant. Provision has been made for access from the Marina to the Park.

The method by which the Park is funded is a combination of parking revenue (the £3 those who come by car pay) and a small rental from the Kingfisher Café (KAF). Our Park is one of a group of five parks in East Northants. The largest of these, Irchester Country Park, cross-subsidises smaller parks like ours. However, the emphasis is for each park to be self-sustaining. The pressures of funding get harder every year.

As it stands, we cannot see what incentive the Marina will have to work with the Park. They have a café and restaurant planned and plenty of parking to accommodate visitors and residents. Not all, but many, of us are concerned both that this will undermine the Park's future and that insufficient thought was given by ENCC planning department to the impact of the Marina on the Park. Yes, visitors to the Marina may well enjoy walking around the Park. A crossing has been planned to facilitate this. However, unless there is a parking charge which is comparable to the Park's, we see no incentive for those visitors to use the Park's parking when they visit. Were parking at the Marina to be free, the Park could suffer significantly.

We welcome your thoughts and comments on this very important issue. As Friends of Barnwell Country Park, you are a group with influence. We need to know what you think. Do you consider that the Marina is a threat to the survival of the Park in its current form?



## SPECIAL REQUEST

Please talk to your friends about our Park and encourage them to become a Friend. By working together, we will make this Park a beacon for others to follow. Pride in our Park will lead to our aims succeeding and the continued service you enjoy.

And remember, we are always looking for more volunteers to work more actively for the Park's benefit.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Mary James – Chair*

*Mark Felton – Secretary*

*Edward James – Treasurer*

*Nick Bould – Barnwell Parish Council*

*Sue and Neville Oakes – Oundle Town*

*plus Angela Holmes, Claire Faulkner, Simon Mutsaers*

*and Justin Jeffrey, Webmaster*

Any thoughts or comments you have on any topic concerning the Barnwell Country Park and its wider implications for our community, please write to:

[secretary@barnwellcountryparkfriends.org.uk](mailto:secretary@barnwellcountryparkfriends.org.uk)

*Thanks for reading this newsletter.  
Ultimately, its purpose is to raise awareness of activity at the Park and of the all-essential fund raising to supplement what comes in from the Park's revenue sources.*