



Autumn 2018 NEWSLETTER



Many thanks to you for confirming that you wish to go on being a Friend of Barnwell Country Park.

New data processing regulations came into force in May, meaning we had to write to every one of the over 300 on our old membership list to ask for a positive confirmation that each of you would allow us to keep your email address and go on writing to you like this. 80 people wrote back to say yes, so you are now one of a smaller but truly enthusiastic group, the Friends of Barnwell Country Park.

A bit of history

You might like to know the Friends "FBCP" was founded in 2007 by our Chair, Mary James. Working with Chris Soanes (Senior Ranger in 07) Mary was responding to concerns about the future of Barnwell Country Park. Mary and Chris were sure there would be many willing to show our support for this marvellous local amenity and, as time has told, they were right.

Uncertain times again

Our park is one of several parks currently run by [Northamptonshire County Council](#). The County is in special measures, after independent inspectors [reported](#) years of mismanagement. It will probably be replaced by two unitary councils in 2020. Between then and now the County must struggle on, now aiming to make [£65m savings](#) in the current year.

No-one knows what will happen to the country parks. There are many more pressing needs to be considered first, education, social care, our highways, so we must wait and see. One thing remains certain; a strong and vocal voluntary group of Friends will weigh heavily in any future funding balance.

We should all work to try to increase our membership so that what we say counts. Please encourage your friends and family to join us. It may turn out to be very important.



How to join?

Just email me, Edward, on secretary@barnwellcountryparkfriends.org.uk giving the name and email address. Couldn't be easier.

AGM coming up soon

Wednesday 12 December, 6pm, at the Visitors Centre.

AGM
Annual General Meeting

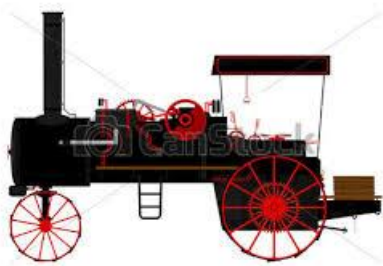
We will be discussing the value of moving from a loosely organised membership association to a charity. There are some major positives associated with such a move, to be balanced with increased levels of responsibility and accountability.

Therefore this will be a particularly important meeting and I encourage you to come along. We value your thoughts and what you have to say could make all the difference to this big decision.

If you can't make it, please let me know by [email](#) or phone (07436 274419) what you think.

Events roundup

This summer, we held two new events; the Traction Engine Rally and the Food Festival. Both were hugely successful.



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Our park is a perfect venue for a Traction Engine Rally and members of the club really enjoyed their visit. They are committed to use the park as a key venue in coming years. We are working with them to enhance the overall experience for visitors and traction engine owners.



We took over the Food Festival from the Park this year. 24 food stalls participated. There was an amazing turnout across the day. Tom Pursglove MP opened the event and chose the winner of the best turned out stall. Pudding & Pie were the winners with a wonderfully creative display (photos on our [facebook](#) page).

Big thanks to Angie Holmes and her team for making the day so successful. We expected to break even on our first event but actually made over £1,000.



Claire Faulkner organised two wild sleep out nights this year, both oversubscribed.

Claire's total commitment to making these events a success is beyond praise. Not only did she organise bat and moth observation but managed to convince the

Peterborough Astronomical Society to set up their telescopes. The night sky was clear and turned out to be a perfect occasion for some serious star gazing.



By our standards, Music in the Park is becoming a mature event. Like last year, we had six brass bands with a massed band performance in the middle of the day. The rain held off and all those who attended thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Without doubt, 2018 was our best year yet.



This coming year, we plan to consolidate our three main events whilst helping with the Cider and Sausages event in June which is run by Sadie Marshall from the Kingfisher Café.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

In our last Newsletter (Spring) we outlined a plan to respond to the recent planning at Oundle Marina by developing a multi-use performance area at the park located in the Little Meadow. We were fortunate to be able to work with Mark Benns at Paul Bancroft, Oundle office, to create a design for the stage. This is an exciting design.

In order to provide an alternative, David Smith at Waterland Associates, Oundle office, has agreed to help. When David has finished his design, both the Paul Bancroft and Waterland Associates plans will go on display at the Visitor Centre and we will start a public consultation to establish the level of support for both the design and the project.

We are very excited about this project which will take time. On the assumption that we gain the community of park users' support, we will then need to obtain planning permission and raise funds. It could cost around £150,000 to build.

This is the largest and most ambitious project we have taken on. With your support, we are determined to make it work – always subject to our many users agreeing to the idea and selecting a design during our public consultation. Of course, the Friends will have the first review, as the most committed park users.

We are deeply grateful to Paul Bancroft and David and Waterland Associates for their enthusiastic support as committed architects working to improve our community.

A New Secure Compound is Required

You may be aware that the park has been subject to a number of burglaries. The Kingfisher Café's stores have been broken into on several occasions; the café itself has also been damaged. During the time that the play area was being refurbished, a bowser full of diesel was stolen from the compound.

These events have made us change our priorities. In consultation with the park rangers, our first job must now be the redevelopment of the compound, where our community event container is housed, into a secure unit.

David Smith of Waterland Associates has kindly agreed to take us through the planning consent process to convert the existing compound into a secure palisaded area which will be the perfect spot to relocate the park's workshop.

When the plans are submitted for the redevelopment of the compound, we will circulate these to our members for comment.

We are confident that the impact of the new compound area will not be intrusive because the new fencing will be hidden in a few years' time by planting of willow and other native species.

As part of the redevelopment of the compound and moving the workshop, we will extend both water and electricity to the secure area, enabling us to link the compound to the security system which should help to add a further disincentive to thieves. We can but hope.

We are provisionally working on a budget a total cost of no more than £55,000 for this project. This will certainly be the largest project we have undertaken. It is essential to help protect the assets of the park.

Refurbished Play Area, Mole Run and Carvings



In early summer, the Parks Department teamed up with Augean plc to give a much needed facelift to the play area. Now finished, the play area looks great and is

really appreciated by kids and parents alike. The mole run has been enjoyed as much as the sand play area.

This led to a request from Matt Harrel (our Senior Ranger) to help fund some carvings themed to fit with the mole run. We've been lucky enough to work with the Midlands Co-operative Society and participated in their Community Dividend Fund. They awarded £950. We are hugely grateful to the Co-op. This now enables us, on a matched funding basis, to commission a number of wood carvings and an interpretation board linked to the Mole Run. We have commissioned Dick Tilley from Spirits of the Wood to create the carvings.

In addition, as part of our constant community outreach policy, we are delighted to report that we are also working with Nenescape (River Nene Regional Park) to have some fish carvings made at the same time. We plan to make this a public event. Watching wood carving is a great experience. We will be contacting local schools to publicise Dick's work as soon as the date is set - early 2019.

We have decided to include an interpretation board close to the Mole Run. Richard Chandler has kindly agreed to prepare the words for this and he is hoping to attract a local illustrator to work with him. We are hoping Richard will also create another interpretation board on dragonflies.

Tots Play Area – funding needed

We have written about the need to refurbish the Tots' Play Area (immediately outside the Visitor Centre overlooking the Little Meadow) in previous newsletters. We are inching our way to raising the funds to carry out this project.

We have raised around £1,400 from a group of community funds and are now approaching another fund who we hope will provide around £1,500. The Friends will contribute the balance.

A note on Funding Reserves

We have a reserve fund, for a rainy day, and for use in leveraging further support from those with deeper pockets. In the coming year the compound will require a substantial commitment from our reserve, most likely between £8,000 and £10,000.

Facebook

We used [our facebook page](#) actively during the Park's Food & Drink Festival.

Next time you are on facebook please add and befriend us, if you haven't already done so. We will continue to use this means, as well as email, to alert you to forthcoming events.

Website

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

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

*Thank you for your support.
Do encourage others to join
or rejoin the Friends.*

