

Chantreyland Meadow

Most of the groups of self-set goat willow have been successfully removed from the meadow plateau during spring 2017. The newly planted mountain ash are beginning to establish around the eastern tree planting. At each tree station heavy clods of blue/yellow clay mixed with concrete and brick had to be removed and replaced with topsoil in order to plant the ash trees.

Gorse bushes were in full flower and the black knapweed was stripped of its seed by flocks of a wide variety of finches. The whole plateau was mown down at the end of January 2018 in preparation for the cowslips, followed up by many spring and summer flowers such as melilot, meadow sweet and the regrowth of black knapweed with its purple thistle-like flowers.

Walks and talks 2017

The Friends conducted history walks in Graves Park and put on a history talk in the summer. All the events were successful. The September history walk, which we ran as part of the Heritage Open Days weekend, introduced more members of the public to the rich history and archaeology in the park, as well as guiding them through the wildlife area and arboretum. We are hoping to run similar events in 2018 and would welcome any suggestions.

Woodseats Playground

The recently formed group "Friends of Woodseats Playground in Graves Park" are continuing with their campaign to further renovate the playground near the Cobnar Road entrance. The group have chosen to work independently of the Friends of Graves Park, however, we support them and hope that they are successful in improving the playground.

Fundraising

The FOGP now has its own donations account with **JustGiving**. Visit the website and donate to the Friends online, with the ability to register all donations for Gift Aid.

Please spread the word!

Donate to campaigns via mobile phone, choose the code for your campaign and text code + £2 (OR £1, £5, £10) to 70070

Protect Graves Park: Text FOGP42 £5

Woodseats Playground: Text FOGP22 £2

Animal Farm: Text FOGP02 £1

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Friends of Graves Park

Newsletter

Charity no: 1080407

Winter 2018

Introduction from the Chairman

The Friends are still waiting for a court date, at which we hope to be able to secure a declaration regarding the documents supposedly protecting Graves Park. **We still need financial help from our supporters.** Please send what you can to the contacts on the back. Together we can protect the park forever.



The Old London Road with added tree

The Friends are disappointed to hear that the parks department will not be moving the tree that they planted in the middle of the old London Road. They insist that it is in the right place, with a sharp bend to

take it to the exit by Bole Hill Farm. Of course, the original route was to the east of this and was walled up when the old road closed. The current exit was created by the parks department when they took down the wall to create that exit in the 20th century. The Friends will continue to push for the original line to be reinstated.

Freedom of Information Results

Spending the proceeds of the sale of Cobnar Cottage

Our freedom of information results are as follows:

£8,600 Field Shelters (constructed in the animal farm before the sale)

£28,166 Play improvements

£78,877 contribution to Toilet Block. We queried this sum, as the toilets are a refurbishment rather than a new build and one could build a house for this sum. The response was that the replacement of the toilets adjacent to the bowling greens would now cost (construction and fees) £61,459.37, as previous figures were based on estimates and this is the cost after tendering. However, these may

change once work starts. Any underspend will be spent on new paths at the Animal Farm (c.£11,000) and new seats at the Rose Garden (c.£7,200).

The total is £115,643 excluding tennis. Cobnar Cottage contribution to Tennis court improvements: £36,356.79
Total £152,000 including tennis.

Graves Park Tennis Courts

As promised, the Friends of Graves Park followed up the renovation and illegal leasing of the courts to a private company.

Our FOI requests resulted in yet more questions; the figures don't add up! According to our first request, £36,356.79 from the sale of Cobnar Cottage was spent on the tennis courts. Further enquiries claimed that a further "£22,943.21 was paid by SCC via S106 monies". This apparently makes a total of £49,300 from SCC, along with a contribution from the Lawn Tennis Association of £42,887.87. In total, SCC claim to have spent, with the LTA, £92,187.87 on the refurbishment. As these figures are clearly wrong, by about £10,000, we shall have to pursue this further.

The courts are currently leased for 5 years with an option to renew for another 5 years. We are still unclear as to how this arrangement will benefit Graves Park and raise more funding than before!

The Arboretum

All the shrubs purchased and planted, as a result of the grant from the local councillor fund for Graves Park, have continued to grow and flower during 2017, with yellow flower of witch hazel now showing during January 2018. Mahonia Bealei have also flowered in profusion from October to January; seeds taken in 2017 have been raised and potted ready for planting during the autumn 2018.

The drowning of Ginkgo biloba! (Maidenhair tree)



Drainage Trench

It had been noted that the Ginkgo Biloba was not growing properly. Investigations proved subterranean water had tanked up in the area of planting. It was resolved to excavate for and install a drainage trench

to both intercept and lead off the water. The area comprised numerous large stones mixed in with a very heavy yellow clay holding up to 400mm depth of water; only time will tell if the Ginkgo will survive. NB Fossils of Ginkgo Biloba have been found and dated at 270 million years old.



Drainage Trench Completed

Herbaceous Plants shrub beds and new trees

Some existing, extended and new beds have been prepared amongst the planted trees, these have been heavily bark-mulched. Rudbeckia, which began with 4 plants has now been increased to 90 plants which have been spread over 4 beds. Ten new herbaceous plant species now in the nursery stage will be ready to plant in the spring; such names as phlomis, inula hookeri, helanium, dierama (wand flower) and fennel.



View North January 2018

The existing spectacular cornus flaviramea (Dog wood) will be expanded into 3 new beds next autumn. Four new trees, a yew, a mulberry and two variegated female hollies have been gifted, planted and are now making progress.



View South January 2018

Black knapweed plants have been transferred from the meadow into the arboretum and white flowering marguerites have been transferred into the meadow from the arboretum.