

## Mini-Golf Course

The 9 hole mini golf course is to be improved. An automatic irrigation has been planned to include the bowling greens and the parks department is seeking advice on how this can be carried out in a phased scheme with the budget available.



## Membership

We would again like to thank you all for your ongoing support. FOGP membership is currently around the 450 mark. Do you know anyone who would be interested in joining? It is vitally important that we maintain a high membership (of local residents and park users) to allow us to continue to protect and develop the park for future users. Prospective members should contact us on the numbers shown below.

### FRIENDS OF GRAVES PARK

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## Graves Park Land - charitable status

We are still waiting for confirmation of the ratification of all the land in Graves Park being recognised as charitable. This has been signed by all concerned and now has to go through council as a formality.

## Cricket Pitch

A scheme to improve the cricket pitch is being explored. Currently the ridge and furrow nature of the site, coupled with the poor drainage make it difficult for the outfield in particular. Possibilities of improving the pitch and of getting funding are being explored. We have also included a separate article contributed by the cricket club with this mailing.



# Friends of Graves Park *Newsletter*

Autumn 2007

## St. Lukes Hospice

Since the AGM in June, the Friends have received firm confirmation from the Charity Commission that permission for St. Luke's proposals to use part of the park to build a new hospice is highly unlikely to be granted. We have now had several communications with the Commission, who have explained that the objects of the two charities (St. Luke's and Graves Park Charity) are so different as to make agreement to such a move extremely difficult and financially unbeneficial. It



*Plants growing in the recently refurbished greenhouses on the Norton Nursery site*

has been made clear to the Friends that this is a situation between the two charities mentioned above, and as such we are leaving it with the Charity Commission and Sheffield City Council. We shall, however, keep a close eye on

any developments and endeavour to let members know should there be any change in the situation. We would like to express our many thanks to Ian Auckland, councillor for Graves Park ward for his hard work and positive support for our cause. We also thank Meg Munn MP who has also supported us in our fight to protect the park.

## Animal Park

The Animal Park would like to put an additional covered area in the animal park to contain small livestock. The initial plans were turned down by planners but they may allow improvements to the wooden huts. Funding is being sought.



# Nursery Meadows' - Graves Park Wildlife Area - 2007

*T*he Graves Park Wildlife Area is located on an area previously occupied by Norton Nurseries at the western end of the current nursery site in the south east corner of Graves Park. The total area is approximately 1000 m<sup>2</sup>, backing on to cow pastures to the north and Serpentine Walk at the southern edge. The central area defined by the path is primarily sown with a summer meadow mix. The borders contain a more diverse selection of flora.

*O*f best news for the site was the successful award to the Friends of Graves Park of a £10,000 grant from the 'Bill Oddie Breathing Spaces fund with the Big Lottery' in May 2007. This award will help to improve and transform the area. The focus for the FOGP, in conjunction with the Sheffield Rangers and members of the public, will increase wildlife diversity by: Improving the wildflower and tree diversity, judicious thinning of self-sets and sapling trees, enlargement and lining of the pond in order to make this an important and permanent feature of the area, creating habitat log piles, installing bird and bat boxes and an information point. Activities need to be completed within 12 months of the award and will mostly take place over the winter months. It is hoped that this award will form a further step towards obtaining a Local Nature Reserve status for the Wildlife Area, proposed here as 'Nursery Meadows'.

*A* total of 95 species of flowering plant have been identified during 2007 and their locations mapped. It is hoped that this will provide a basis for comparative studies in future years. 42 species of bird have so far been recorded around the area this year. Highlights included Blackcap and



Chiffchaff setting up territory in the spring and 2 Jays seen in late September. Great Tits and Nuthatches again showed interest in the nest boxes put up last year. A total of 16 species of butterfly were recorded during 2007 with the site total now standing at 20 species. Although the number of species was higher, the individual numbers were much lower than in 2006, probably due to the very dry April (10 mm) and exceptional rainfall in June (262 mm (75 mm on 25<sup>th</sup>)) and July (131 mm). Southern Hawker and Brown Hawker dragonflies were both observed in the Wildlife Area over the summer months.

*M*aintenance so far carried out this year includes: Clearance of dumped rubbish (January), regular litter picking, mowing of the central meadow (February) with the Sheffield Rangers, raking and clearance of vegetation to the periphery of the area, regular summer mowing of the path by the park keepers, tree thinning and the formation of habitat piles along the southern boundary (September) with the Sheffield Rangers.

*S*uggested nature events for the site include: Improvement of the site as part of the Breathing Spaces grant with the Big Lottery, school party visits organised by Sheffield Rangers, Cub Scout conservation badge work, use of bat detectors and bug surveys to determine species present.

*I*f you would like to get involved or have knowledge/expertise from which everyone can benefit, then please get in touch, preferably via e-mail. As soon as we know when the events are taking place we will let you know quickly.

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