

Greenfingers Project

Greenfingers Project based at Norton Nurseries is currently selling Autumn/Winter bedding plants including Volas, Polyanthus, Pansies, Wallflowers, Sweet Williams and Primroses. Also available are a wide variety of perennials and shrubs. Now is the time to order your Christmas wreath or table arrangement and your Christmas tree from the nursery. Grave posies, real and artificial wreaths are available in colours of your choice.

Also available to order at any time of year are fresh flowers for weddings and funerals. Ring Steve on 077111-53528.

For more information you can telephone Greenfingers on 077111-53904

Cricket Club

Norton Woodseats Cricket Club finished a very credible 5th place in the South Yorkshire Division One last season. 2009 will be harder as some players have been lost to rival clubs, but recruitment of new players goes on throughout the winter period.

Once a year all Primary Schools in the area are invited to compete in a Kwik Cricket Festival. Runaway winners were Greenhill School who were runners up in a final against 15 other schools. For the first time a girls' festival was also run, with Greenhill becoming runners up in the final.

With help from a 16 mile sponsored walk around local cricket clubs and £10,000 from Awards For All (a small Lottery fund) work on improvements to the Pavilion have commenced.

The club are also hopeful of landing a drainage scheme that will help combat the wet summers we seem to get these days which have a negative influence in terms of safety, games played and revenue. Work will continue over the winter on these projects which will be a benefit to all Park users. All this means more games can be played for more people, expand the junior section to have fun, get active, learn the discipline of sport, make friends and do it all in a safe environment.

If you want to know more, would like to play or help out or perhaps introduce your children to the sport, then please contact Andy Cross on 07800-696008.

Committee

The committee is always looking for new members to join them and this year we are looking for any of you who have a little time and expertise to help us. Roger Rose, our treasurer for the last 10 years, is standing down at the next AGM. We also have vacancies for ordinary members of the committee. The demands on time are not particularly onerous (under normal circumstances!). In most cases it involves half a dozen meetings per year. If you are interested in joining us, please contact our e-mail address or drop us a line.

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Newsletter

Winter 2008

Norton Nurseries Site

As you are all now probably aware, the immediate threat to this part of Graves Park has been removed thanks to the current Liberal Democrat Council. *"Sheffield City Council and the Trustees of St Luke's Hospice have agreed to progress an application for the relocation of St Luke's to the site of the former Bluestones School in the Norfolk Park area of Sheffield."* (St. Luke's website) The Friends of Graves Park would like to thank all of you for your efforts over the past year or two. It has been a hard and long struggle, again, not least because of the sensitivity of the threat to the park. Throughout all this you have given us the strength to continue and to stand firm and for this we are very grateful.

Of course the Friends of Graves Park are immensely relieved that the most recent threat to Graves Park has been resolved. We shall now work towards the restoration of the whole of the Norton Nurseries site to parkland, as was originally agreed by Sheffield City Council more than 8 years ago. The next area for development will be the middle section; Friends of Graves Park intend to put forward proposals for this section to the Council shortly. We need to restore this area so that it is put beyond the scope of future developers.

As another result of the events of the past two years, some of us will be working with other groups in the city to set up a "Friends of Sheffield Parks and Open Spaces". This group will be able to support all of Sheffield's parkland; hopefully with the support of the Council. At the time of going to press there appear to be no future immediate threats to Graves Park. We know from the experience of the last 10 years that December is a very dangerous month, however, when Council officers choose to announce "urgent" requests for immediate action, or arrange short notice meetings for a conclusion by the beginning of January. This year we are hoping that we can approach Christmas without the added stress of such meetings!

Amalgamation of Land

Those of you who wrote in about the Charity Commission proposal to amalgamate the land in Graves Park will have received the response sent out. This is a complex document that aims to clarify and modernise the existing trusts within Graves Park by merging these into one unit of charitable land. Changes have been made as a result of comments sent in to the Charity Commission; the document is now to be reviewed independently before acceptance and issue.

Chantreyland Meadow - Graves Park Wildlife Area - 2008

During 2008, the Friends of Graves Park have been involved in enhancing the biodiversity and wildlife habitats in Chantreyland Meadow with the generous support of a £10,000 Breathing Places Grant in association with the Big Lottery. Starting work on the site reclaimed from part of the Norton Nurseries had, unfortunately, been delayed through different issues particularly the uncertainty over the possible relocation of St Luke's Hospice to Graves Park. With this issue resolved and the weather improving, the bulk of the tasks were carried out by the June deadline.



The site was a veritable quagmire in January and February but that didn't stop a hired JCB from digging nearly 100 tree holes across the site, flattening other areas for wild flower sowing, digging out the pond area, placing large logs for seating and habitat around the borders, distributing wood chippings and moving soil for back-filling the holes. Pipes were laid to capture rain water and bring it from existing drainage courses in the area to the pond. Trees were judiciously thinned and pruned with the larger leaning trees

tackled by professional tree surgeons. Following the heavy duty work, the planting of shrubs and trees was undertaken, the wood chippings were spread around those planted in the central meadow and 10 tons of sand was delivered to form the base of the pond. Throughout this work a lot of ex-nursery plant pots and uncovered bricks were continuously piled and removed and the



partly toppled dry stone wall along the Serpentine was made good. As the site had been very muddy throughout February, March and April, seed planting (Flower seeds from LANDLIFE Wildflowers) was not started until later than planned at the end of April and was completed by mid May. The pond was created with a gravel top layer and a gravel approach channel that creates an area for future planting with bog and marsh plants, such as bull-rush, iris and ferns. An impressive information sign has been installed which describes key

features of Chantreyland Meadow. Most recently, the path has been topped with 30 tons of crushed brick to level out the unevenness created throughout the year.

2008 was a very good year for flowering plant species. What appeared like a wrecked muddy wasteland at the beginning of the year was transformed during May, June and

July to reveal 113 species of flowering plant with the total number of flowering plants identified there since 2006 standing at 128. July was the best month for flowers with 90 species recorded. It was clear that some of the 31 new species seen flowering in 2008, originated from the wildflower mixes (e.g. Ragged Robin, Scentless Mayweed, Cornflower and Corn Marigold) or may

have arrived in the soils brought in to enhance the area (e.g. Sun Spurge, Scarlett Pimpernell and Small Toadflax). Other new species, such as Imperforate St John's-wort, Good King Henry, Fig-leaved Goosefoot, Redshank, Cut-leaved Crane's-bill and Small-flowered Crane's-bill, were probably present but not recorded or not flowering in previous years and were uncovered by the clearing of the border areas. The best find, however, was the first orchid for the area – a single flowering Common Spotted Orchid (*Dactylorhiza Fuchsii*).

The bird species total seen in the area for 2008 currently stands at 44. Highlights this year include Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler and Blackcap passing through on migration and new species; Grey Wagtail and Bullfinch in October.

The pond had filled with rain water on 5th June and was already being inspected by several Mallard. Butterfly numbers were much reduced for the second year running – a direct result of the very wet years – with just 14 species in total, the best months being July and August. It is worth noting that the rainfall to November 2008 (over 930 mm) has exceeded that which fell in the year to November 2007 (900 mm). Southern Hawker and Brown Hawker dragonflies were seen in the late summer and kept up hopes of recording more species in the area in the future. Chantreyland Meadow will continue to be managed and monitored to show how the diversity of wildlife has changed by the transformation.

