

Friends of Graves Park

Charity no: 1080407

Winter 2012

Graves Park Animal Farm Shop

The shop was opened on Friday 26th October 2012 with a short ceremony including sharing of a special cake and drinking of cups of coffee by a considerable number of participants.

Philip and Cyril Goldsborough have funded this building and left it as a legacy to the mutual benefit of the animal farm and to people with learning difficulties who will manage the shop and small cafe.

The shop will sell feed to the animals, items of woodcraft, pencils, books, plants and hopefully bags of organic soil improver from the organic composting area developed by Peter Fletcher and his team at the farm.

Further uses include as a learning centre for school groups to create a better understanding of the farming

processes, animal husbandry and the resultant food production, ie milk comes from a cow, not from a supermarket!

Grey water collected from the roof into a tank will be used for watering plant containers. The elegant timber building also has well insulated walls and is very comfortable inside.

Philip Goldsborough passed away in December 2009 and through his generosity we have this wonderful shop for use by the community. Well done to a special person.



The New Animal Farm Shop



Ash Tree Dieback Disease (Chalara Fraxinea)

To All Members: During your walks through the parks and woodlands, please begin to observe more carefully the state of any Ash trees you pass. Should you see new leaves and stems browning, wilting and dying

Action to take: note where the tree affected is

Photograph if possible, ring parks and countryside 0114 2500500

Leave a message for Gerry Gunton Tree Manager about your findings.

DO NOT: handle the infected tree or break off or carry samples. Doing this will aid the spread of the disease.

Thanking you in anticipation of your help.

Useful websites:

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/chalara>

<http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk>

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Cliffhanger Event

As you probably know, the Cliffhanger event which was scheduled to take place this summer was cancelled because of the wet weather (Although one or two activities already set up did take place). When FOGP heard that an "even better and bigger" Cliffhanger event was being proposed for summer 2013, we decided to find out the cost to the council tax payer of the plans for the event in 2012, and compare this with how much money was made in 2011 when the event went ahead in Millhouses Park. Net losses for 2012 were £37,121. Net losses for 2011 were £44,895. Our point is simple: when we are being asked to make economies in these days of financial hardship and visitors to the park are being asked to pay for parking, how can the council justify losing this amount of money each year?

Highland Fling

Peter Fletcher reported it was his intention to go ahead with the Highland Fling event in 2013.

After discussion with FOGP indicating concerns about the poor state of the grassland condition in the deer park area, Peter said he would raise with park managers the need to undertake some surface drainage operation before the event next year.

Sheaf Training

John Abson and his team of trainees based at Norton Nursery are working in Graves Park within the waterfall woodland below the lower dam, clearing the much neglected area of debris. Wood piles are being built and some new planting is taking place.

Sheaf Training are also using a section of the large glass house to propagate cuttings and plants for use in the park FOGP have asked Sheaf Training to undertake some ground clearance in woodland adjacent to the new arboretum.

Dedicated Helpers

We still need adult members who are interested in undertaking ecological horticultural works to maintain the Chantreyland Meadow and Arboretum (Sunday mornings throughout the year). *If interested please phone 07817 263817, Ernest Brewin, to make arrangements. NB You must be members of FOGP to be covered by insurance.*

Bridges and Watercourse in the Ravine

SCC Parks and Countryside have made an excellent job of re-constructing two bridges crossing the bold stream which passes through the ravine to Cobnar Road.

However, FOGP have some concerns as to the state of the stream banks over the whole length. There is considerable erosion and a build-up of debris within the stream bed. The stone pack-horse bridge at the head of the ravine has suffered some damage to the stone support.



Ravine Bridge

Chantreyland Meadow and Arboretum

A continuation of the wet weather conditions through spring and well into the summer of 2012 has prevented completion of the arboretum development.

All the trees planted between 2009 and 2011 are becoming well established and are beginning to flower and fruit.

Areas sown with annual wild flowers proved very successful and were a huge attraction to wild and hive bees during the summer.

Other areas planted with fox & cubs will flower spring /summer 2013; 320 cowslips will flower spring 2013; 200 oregano, 100 thyme, 50 sage, 10 woad, which flowered

in 2012, were a massive attraction to bees and are becoming well established. 20 field scabious and 400 foxgloves will flower spring/summer 2013.

The whole pathway through the arboretum has been topped with granite chippings and sown with beet and fescue grass seed mixture which is now germinating and will when established create the green walk. A further area has been sown with wetland perennial mix which includes amongst many others yellow flag iris, purple loosestrife and meadow buttercup.

Two areas have also been sown with a legume and clover mixture which has now germinated and should flower spring and summer 2013.

The downside to the arboretum development is the massive growth of unwanted herbage on the whole site and the ability of the small team from FOGP to keep topside of the growth; only now is headway being made to bring things under control.

Composting and Recycling Operation

Due to the very wet spring and summer of 2012 the windrow containing the results of composting 2010 has now decomposed to a rich organic medium. (Trials have shown when added to soil, it has grown January King cabbages successfully without any further additions of fertiliser.) Parks and Countryside still need to obtain a certificate of content from an analyst before it can be made available for sale.



Composting Area from the Nursery

The 2011 final windrow has now been farmed for decomposition.

The ground preparations comprising of animal waste, bedding hay and straw, bark mulch, leaves and last summer's hanging baskets and tubs, is in the process of being laid ready for the Highland cattle to overwinter on the site.

An improved access and hard standing has been constructed to enable a more efficient delivery and collection point to operate, moving the raw materials in and the compost out of the site. A design is being produced to include for improved drawings and some surrounding tree planting to make the area more aesthetically pleasing.



Composting Area Looking North