

FRIENDS OF GRAVES PARK NEWSLETTER MARCH 2004

Chantry Cottage

Twelve months ago this newsletter reported that Sheffield Council appeared to be backsliding on its promises to take legal action to end the unlawful occupation of parkland around Chantry Cottage. Twelve months on the situation has hardly changed. The Council is still sitting on its hands instead of taking the action it promised around 3 years ago. What has changed however is the situation regarding the Charity Commission. Following several unsuccessful attempts by the City Council to persuade the Charity Commission to grant a scheme allowing the sale of charitable parkland, the Council has finally run out of options following yet another refusal. All the time this was going on we were being promised that the Council had no intention of selling further land. Despite all this the Council still has not taken any legal action regarding this matter. Instead we are told that they are still looking into the options. FOGP will be contacting the Charity Commission to report on the situation.

Looking Back

Looking at the situation regarding Chantry Cottage it is very easy to get dispirited and wonder if we are wasting our time. It is easy to forget what has been achieved in the 7 years since the foundation of the group that became Friends of Graves Park: -

- Prevention of the sale of 7 acres of parkland for housing at Norton Nursery.
- Prevention of the sale of parkland around Bole Hill Farm.
- Prevention of the sale of parkland around Chantry Cottage.
- Providing funding for an information centre at the Animal Farm
- Return of 1.5 acres of land to Graves Park.
- Planting of thousands of bulbs and dozens of trees.
- Promotion & participation in many major events such as Highland Fling.
- Scheme launched to improve the Cobnar Road play area.
- Raised awareness throughout the city of the threat to our open spaces and parks.

Take a look at the new flats being built on half an acre of land by the Cobnar Road park entrance. Imagine a development 15 times that size at Norton!!!



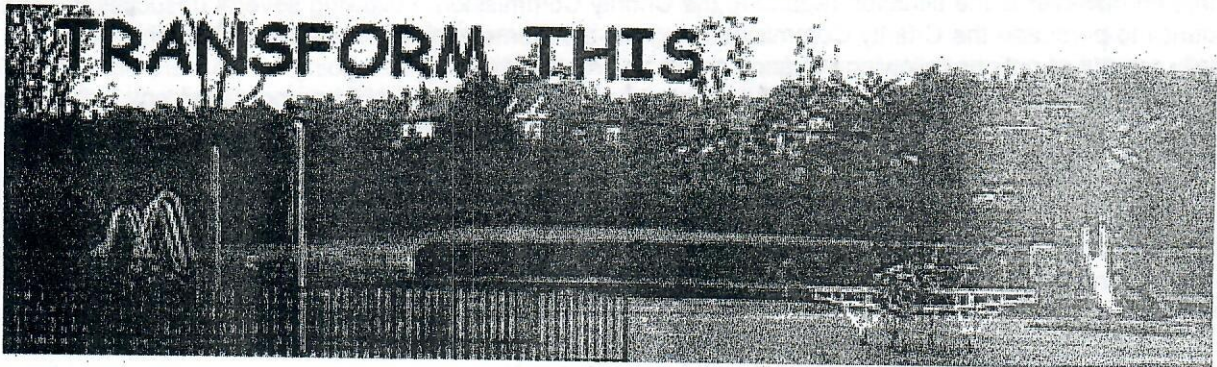
We now have a membership of around 350. It is vitally important that this is maintained to allow us to continue to protect our park.

Events

Following its success over the last two years, another Highland Fling will be held in Graves Park on May 3rd. It is likely to be an extended version of the previous popular and successful formula, and may even be extended to be a two-day event. Last year's Fling was a raging success, its traditional theme being far more acceptable to local people than the highly commercial Sheffield Show, which will not take place at all in 2004.

Cobnar Road Play Area

A year ago we also reported on the dire state of the Cobnar Road play area. Again this is an area where we have been pushing the Council to act for a considerable time. However on the run up to Christmas we embarked on our own scheme to redevelop the area using the Living Spaces Initiative. Already much has happened and Living Spaces has provisionally approved a £40,000 grant towards our scheme. The Graves Trust has granted a further £5,000, and other funding is promised from the Council. There is much work needed in order to complete the project and it is vital that we have participation from local people. Help is required with liaising with local people to find exactly what type of equipment would be best suited to their needs. A further £12,000 also needs to be raised.



Full details of the scheme are available on our website at www.gravespark.org and we would welcome anyone who would like to help in any way. A fundraiser's pack is available from the address below.



Norton Nursery

It is now more than 18 months since the first part of Norton Nursery was returned to the park, and the area is now looking less like a building site. We will shortly be making plans regarding phase 2 of the Nursery's return to the park. This phase should allow through access to the paths around Norton Church.

Fundraising & Finances

We urgently require volunteers to help with fundraising and other activities relating to the Cobnar Road project. Anyone willing to help in any capacity should contact Kay at: -

25 Matthews Lane
Sheffield
S8 8JS

Tel. 0114 2747028 or email your details to friends@gravespark.org