

FRIENDS OF THE CARRS NEWSLETTER



Autumn 2017

Chairman's Message

An eventful summer began with the long-awaited arrival of our smart new toilet block at the end of April. This was followed by another long wait, this time for the utilities to be connected, until the toilets finally opened for business on July 21st. To date, after 3 months, they have been visited over 3,500 times, so they have clearly answered a great need! After much bureaucratic delay, the refreshment kiosk also began trading on September 14th, and the proprietors Caroline and Paul are already establishing a reputation for high quality snacks and excellent coffee. We wish them well in their venture. A useful bonus has been the installation of a defibrillator on the building. This is one of a chain through the town. We hope it will never be needed, but it is reassuring to know it is there.

The ROTARY-sponsored outdoor gym was installed at the end of June and has proved popular particularly with the younger visitors to the Carrs. It will be accessible and usable in all weathers, so there will be no excuse for not using it right through the winter.

In July the Carrs was included in the tour of Wilmslow by the RHS judges for the North West in Bloom and the It's Your Neighbourhood awards. The tour concluded with an excellent outdoor buffet in the park organised by the In Bloom committee and featuring Carrs elderflower cordial and flowers from the Carrs on the tables.

We are eagerly awaiting the results which will be announced in early November.

May saw a successful Dog Show, now a popular fixture in the Carrs calendar, but on the down side, the disappointing summer weather led to the postponement of the Cinema in the Park until September, when only the keenest filmgoers were prepared to brave the damp and cooler temperatures. Nevertheless we hope this was enough to confirm the event in our calendar for next year.

In spite of the weather, bird life in the park has flourished, and we are delighted to report sightings of kingfishers, dippers, grey wagtail, mallards (and chicks), goosander (and chicks) and our resident heron who loves to loiter in the Carrs even on the busiest of days.

This is all a good indication of the quality of the environment in the park, confirmed by our participation in the Bollin River Guardian water monitoring programme which has given the river a clean bill of health. However, mild, damp weather has meant we have struggled to contain the Himalayan balsam, and Japanese Knotweed has made an unwelcome return. A big thank-you to all those who organised and participated in the numerous balsam-bashes over the summer. We may never win, but neither will the invaders! We

also held two very therapeutic working party days when we tackled drainage problems, litter, fallen trees and river bank maintenance.

For the next twelve months we will have plenty on our plate. We are planning more balsam bashes, more drainage improvement work and more litter picks. Maybe a few fitness sessions on the outdoor gym will need to be arranged! On a more gentle note, we are planting more wild flowers - seeds and plugs - and preparing a wild flower bed (maybe those who did the strimming and the raking would argue with "more gentle") near the middle bridge. We're looking forward to a floral spring in the Carrs. We shall also be looking forward to improvements in two of our main areas of concern: the car parking problems seem to be being resolved by visits by the parking wardens - we hope they continue their good work; and dog fouling and loose dogs in the play and picnic areas, which have become more of an issue recently, will be under closer official scrutiny following the appointment of Tony Forrest, our new Community Enforcement Officer, and Cheshire East's opinion poll and proposed Public Space Protection Order.

With so much to do we do need help from anyone who can pull a weed, lift a spade or plant a bulb. Please look at our calendar of events, keep an eye on the notice boards in the park, and follow us on Facebook. We look forward to seeing you.

Ian Baillie, Chairman



The kiosk arriving by crane

Dates for your diary 2018

The AGM will take place on 15th October 2017 in the Parish Hall. Dates for events in 2018 have not yet been selected. Please watch the web-site www.friendsofthecarrs.org.uk or the notice boards on The Carrs for details. The list will also be in the Spring newsletter.

Refreshment and Toilet Facilities

The Friends of The Carrs have campaigned for several years for the provision of toilet facilities on The Carrs. Finally, after a long, frustrating wait, the new block came into use at the end of July.

The toilets are open from 8am to 6pm daily. They will be monitored by CCTV and there will be a 20p charge for using the toilets to fund the ongoing cleaning and maintenance.

What is more, in September came the opening of the refreshment kiosk Café Azul at the end of the block facing the children's play area.



A cappuccino is always welcome after a dog walk

The café is run by Caroline and Paul Checkett and serves hot and cold drinks, excellent cakes (the chocolate brownies are highly recommended!) paninis, soup, toasties and pasties. Caroline and Paul are very familiar with Wilmslow as they provide hot drinks at the Artisan Market. The new café will be welcomed by all who use the Carrs,

2017 Events

Canine Capers 14th May



The rescue dogs show off for the judge

The dog show was back bigger and better than ever this year on 14th May despite a cloudy start to the day. As last year over 100 dog owners joined The Friends for a fun day. The day was expertly organised by John Booth from The Friends who did all the work, built the agility course, and not satisfied with that, also supplied the hot sausage rolls.

Dancing "The Bollin" by The Bollin

On May 13th The Mockbeggar Ladies Morris Dancing Group based in The Wirrall visited The Carrs. The visit was organised to celebrate their 25th anniversary during which they had organised a tour of Cheshire and Greater Manchester to visit some of the places after which their dances are named. They chose to start their tour dancing "The Bollin" in The Carrs by the River Bollin.

Nature Notes

This Spring we were very surprised to record for the first time a pair of dippers on the Bollin within the Carrs. The dipper is the only British bird able to walk under water and is not known to frequent this part of the UK. After raising two clutches the family now has five juveniles. This is an excellent indicator of improving water quality as the bird feeds on crustaceans in the river bed.

The kingfishers have also bred this year despite predation by the local mink. Perhaps the only disappointment is that our local heron has not yet found a mate - perhaps it will have more luck in 2018.

Outdoor Gym



Users arriving as the gym was set up!

An outdoor gym has been added to the amenities of The Carrs with a formal opening on the 4th June. It is situated next to the tennis courts and is open to anyone over the age of 14 to use. The rotagym was financed jointly by Cheshire East Council, Wilmslow Dean Rotary Club and Wilmslow Town Council. The ten pieces of equipment are ski stepper, air walker, trinity cycle, lateral pull and chest press combo, rower, leg stretch, twin sit up, bench and dip station. The aim is to help the people of Wilmslow to keep themselves active and help their well-being.

E-mail Addresses

If you receive this newsletter by post, but have an e-mail address, please contact ian.baillie@friendsofthecarrs.org.uk.

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