

# Friends of the Carrs Newsletter

Spring 2009



## Chairman's Message

This is my first chairman's letter and as it is also the beginning of a new year it would seem an appropriate time to get out the crystal ball, look forward and try to see what the future might be for The Carrs and "The Friends".

In 2003 Macclesfield Borough Council produced a parks implementation plan that foresaw improvements to The Carrs to a point where an application for Green Flag status might be made. The Friends have made progress with some of the smaller issues such as the provision of litter bins and clearing the invasive balsam, but lack of resources has meant no real progress has been made with the major issues that need to be addressed if the prestigious Green Flag award is to be achieved.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will see that work on the renewal of the bridges over the River Bollin is making progress but that is only the start. Action to deal with the steady erosion of the river banks is needed, drainage needs attention in several areas (without destroying the wetland habitats) and repair to bare areas that should be grassed is also required. At the same time a large project needs to be undertaken to devise and lay down an appropriately routed multi-use path and both the tennis courts and the playground areas need attention. In addition of course there is also a desperate need for toilets near the children's play area and a solution to the toilet problems at Twinnies Bridge.

Fortunately some funding exists. It is nowhere near enough but hopefully this can be used to attract additional monies for at least some of the work mentioned. In the immediate future FOTC will, I hope, be concentrating on some of these strategic issues by finding ways to obtain additional funding, working on the details and in some cases even doing some of the work! We hope to start on one problem on the 8<sup>th</sup> March "Litter Pick" day when we also hope to plant willow twigs along parts of the river bank to begin the long job of reducing river bank erosion.

A happy new year to you all.

Colin Shepherd, Chairman



**Our new Chairman gets his hands dirty!**

## Dates for your Diary 2009

It is envisaged that this year there will be another River Clean-up Day and a Balsam Bash.

River Clean up and litter pick	8th March 2009
Balsam Bash	14 <sup>th</sup> June 2009
AGM and Nature Walk	18 <sup>th</sup> October 2009

The meeting place for these events is normally the Parish Hall car park. However as you will see later in this newsletter the bridge over the River Bollin may be out of action for the River Clean-up. If so please meet at the Twinnies Bridge car park. Watch the web-site or notices on the Carrs for further news. We do hope you will come and join us at one of these events.

## Renewal of Bridges

By the time you receive this newsletter work should already have started to replace the bridge nearest the Parish Hall commonly known as "The White Bridge". It is expected that the work will take 3 months and will be completed by the summer. It is also known that work is needed on the other bridges crossing the Bollin. However replacement is not so straightforward as with the White Bridge. Discussion is on-going as to the best option for replacement and minimising erosion of their supports in the future.

## Mailing List

This newsletter is delivered to all those on our mailing list. If you are not on this list, but would like to receive this newsletter regularly please contact Ann Brown on 01625 529192.

## 2008 Events

### Wild Flowers October 21<sup>st</sup> 2008

One of the features of The Carrs is the many boggy areas. These provide ideal conditions for flowers such as purple loosestrife, ladies smock and meadowsweet. The committee is very grateful to Bollin Valley for donating some plants suitable for enhancing these damp areas.

Emma Houghton from Macclesfield Borough Council led an enthusiastic group from Gorsey Bank Primary School in the task of planting these. A very enjoyable, if muddy, time seems to have been had by all.



Children at the wild flower planting (note wellingtons!)

## Events 2009

Considering the large number of people who use The Carrs it remains remarkably tidy. However litter does collect and previous events have managed to collect two skips full of litter and rubbish from the park. Tongs and gloves are provided courtesy of MBC together with rather snazzy yellow tabards. For those who are prepared to drag things out of the river (subject to safety approval from the watchful rangers) wellingtons or even waders are a useful accessory.

This year at the River clean up we will also make a start on tackling the erosion of the river bank which is a serious problem. Willow is a native plant which is very helpful in stabilizing river banks. Amazingly a whole bush can grow from just a twig pushed into the bank. At the clean up we will start planting willow along the worst affected areas of the Bollin. The Committee will be watching the results with great interest.

Two previous balsam bashes have made progress in reducing this pest on The Carrs in some areas. Despite this, there are still considerable swathes of balsam down towards the Twinnies Bridge area. A couple of hours pulling balsam can be very satisfying as you can really see the results of your efforts.

The final event of the year will be a nature walk around The Carrs led by one of the rangers from Macclesfield Borough Council before the AGM in October. These are very enjoyable events and the rangers' knowledge of the

flora and fauna to be found on The Carrs enables them to point out details that would be missed by most people.

Why not come and join us at one of these events?

## Picnic Tables

The Committee are at present actively involved in evaluating options for replacement for the picnic tables on The Carrs. Last year Paul Jabore carried out a detailed survey of current state of all the existing benches and tables and produced a report which was considered by the Committee. It was decided that all are ready for replacement. Macclesfield Borough Council have suggested some options for replacement and a choice will be made taking into account durability and appearance. It is hoped a new picnic area by the river will be provided by the summer and the rest will be replaced in due course.

## Thanks to Ian

At our AGM in September Ian White stood down as Chairman of Friends of The Carrs.

Ian had been our chairman since the beginning of "The Friends" back in 2005 and it is thanks to his enthusiasm and energy that "The Friends" has achieved all that it has in such a short time and, as our new chairman has written, can look forward to an ever growing and important role in the future.

Our thanks go to Ian for all his hard work and we wish him and his family well in their new home in Macclesfield. We hope to see him often at future events in the park.

## Annual General Meeting

At the AGM of 28<sup>th</sup> September 2008 two new members of the Committee were elected, Julie Armstrong and Oliver Romain. The Committee now consists of:

Colin Shepherd (Chairman)  
Ann Brown (Secretary)  
Graham Beech (Treasurer)  
Julie Armstrong  
Tom Brown  
Richard Doran  
Paul Jabore  
Oliver Romain  
Chris Tonge

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