

FRIENDS OF THE CARRS NEWSLETTER



Spring 2010

Chairman's Message

I know we are some weeks into 2010, but I would nevertheless like to begin by wishing you all a happy new year.

For the Friends 2009 certainly went out with a bang - and I am not referring to the weather! The weather has, however, caused more problems with the river bank and it became necessary to close the wooden bridge as a safety measure for a short time. Although the bridge has been reopened after further action to protect the river bank and discussions are still taking place regarding a replacement bridge and long term protection for the river bank, it is likely to be some time before any work is undertaken. On the positive side however there is a lot to report:-

The notice boards have at last been put in place and are in use. The next step is to have an information plate regarding The Carrs attached to the board.

A modest tree planting exercise took place in the Styal Road/Grange Park Avenue area as part of the BBC Treetathon.

The scruffy hedge around the parish hall car park has been replaced by some smart new railings. Not only do the railings look smarter, it will make it much easier to keep this area clean and tidy.

Work has been completed to remove the "small pond" on the path just to the West of the wooden bridge on the South side of the river.

Two grants have been received to help us with our work. Thanks to local residents we received a grant of £500 from Waitrose under their Community Matters Scheme and we are most grateful to them. We also received the Unilever Dragonfly Award 2009 consisting of a grant of £1000 and a fine trophy. Both of these grants will be used to provide a more varied habitat for wildlife which we hope will lead to an increase in the different species of birds, insects and plants that can be found on The Carrs. We are currently talking to the Cheshire East Countryside Rangers as to how we might best achieve our aims.

Overall we start 2010 in a positive fashion and with a number of events planned for the year (covered elsewhere) we should have an interesting summer. I hope you will be able to join us and give us your support.

Colin Shepherd, Chairman

Barbecue Stands

Two barbecue stands have joined the new tables in the riverside picnic area. These are a welcome addition to the facilities of The Carrs and, given a little sun this summer, will be well used.

Awards

As Colin says in his message we were lucky enough to be selected as one of the Waitrose charities of the month in December 2009.

We were also delighted to be recipients of a 2009 Unilever Dragonfly award of £1000. This award is given to projects which support the aims of the Mersey Basin Campaign to improve waterside regeneration and community engagement.



Colin Shepherd holds the Dragonfly award while accepting a cheque from Waitrose

Dates for your Diary 2010

As in previous years there will be another River Clean-up Day and a Balsam Bash. There will also be two additions, a special event – a Celebration Day to commemorate the establishment of The Carrs as a public park and a bat walk. The year's events finish with the AGM and a nature walk led by one of Cheshire East's rangers.

River Clean up and litter pick	10th April 2010
Balsam Bash	27 th June 2010
Bat Walk	31 st July 2010
Celebration Day	21 st August 2010
AGM and Nature Walk	17 th October 2010

Watch the web-site (www.friendsofthecarrs.org.uk) or the new notice boards on The Carrs for further news of these events. We do hope you will come and join us.

2009 Events

Bulb planting Autumn 2009

Despite constant showers and rather soggy ground, several groups of volunteers managed to find time to plant 1000 naturalizing daffodil bulbs on The Carrs. This should result in a brilliant display this Spring. However it remains to be seen how many of the bulbs will survive the very wet autumn and the subsequent hard winter.



A proud, if wet, group of bulb planters

World Record Attempt

The Friends of The Carrs also took part in "Tree o' Clock", an initiative organised by the BBC as part of National Tree Week. The aim was to break the existing world record for the most trees planted in multiple locations in one hour. This previously stood at 653,143 so it was always going to be a tall order to break it. The Committee only became aware of this event at a late stage, but it was too good an opportunity to miss and so at very short notice 6 native trees were secured to plant on The Carrs. And so three intrepid members of the Committee joined many thousands across the country and ventured out on a wet, grey Sunday morning in December to plant the trees provided by the BBC, three hawthorns, two rowans and one mystery tree which had lost its label! Photographs were duly taken as proof of planting and e-mailed to the BBC to add to the count.

Overall it's estimated that although the world record was missed, over 500,000 trees were planted as a result of the event leaving lasting benefits for the environment and for wildlife. We will wait with interest for the mystery tree to come into leaf so we can identify it.

Events 2010

There will again be a litter pick in the Spring to spruce up The Carrs ready for summer. Tongs and gloves are provided courtesy of Cheshire East Council. Wellingtons are also a useful accessory!

Although previous events have reduced the spread of balsam on the Carrs it is still threatening to overwhelm the area. This year the Committee aim to get serious and gain control. We started last year by locating and mapping the balsam

infestation. We are considering using chemical treatment of the worst infested areas as well as the usual hand pulling of smaller areas.

2010 will be the 75th anniversary of the establishment of The Carrs opening to the public. To commemorate this, a Celebration Day is planned in August. This will build on the success of previous Nature Days having, hopefully, an even wider range of fun activities for all the family.

An innovation this year will be an evening bat walk to get to know the different varieties of bats that make The Carrs their home.

The final event of the year will be a nature walk around The Carrs led by one of the rangers from Cheshire East Council before the AGM in October. Why not come and join us at one of these events?

Dogs

It has been noticeable this year that the number of dog owners using The Carrs has increased markedly. This is causing concern to the Committee on two fronts - the extra damage to the already rapidly eroding river bank caused by the increasing number of dogs and the increased fouling. The majority of dog walkers are considerate people who pick up after their pets. For those who don't a control officer is patrolling The Carrs and will issue fines where appropriate.

Bridges

Discussions have been underway for some time regarding the best method of replacement of the second bridge over the Bollin. These discussions became more urgent in Autumn 2009 when it became necessary to shut this bridge for some weeks while urgent work was undertaken to put a halt to the erosion of the river bank which was threatening the bridge supports. This approach has bought us some time for the experts at Cheshire East and the Environment Agency to come up with a lasting and effective solution.

Annual General Meeting

At the AGM of 18th October 2009 two new members of the Committee were elected, Ian Baillie and Peter Mainwaring. The Committee now consists of:

Colin Shepherd (Chairman)
Ann Brown (Secretary)
Graham Beech (Treasurer)
Julie Armstrong
Ian Baillie
Richard Doran
Alison Gallen
Paul Jabore
Peter Mainwaring
Chris Tonge

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