

# FRIENDS OF THE CARRS NEWSLETTER



Spring 2016

## Chairman's Message

Another wet winter put the drainage systems of the Carrs - both natural and man-made - to the test and on the whole they did well. The grassy areas clearly took a lot of wear from determined boots and paws, and in places there was little grass left visible, but experience has shown us they will recover, and once again the multi-use path proved to be worth its weight, if not in gold, certainly in hard core and tarmac, and visitors have been able to enjoy a walk, trot, ride or run through the park in all weathers. Amazingly in spite of so many other parts of the country being hit by floods, for the first time in many years the Bollin has not burst its banks and flooded areas of the park, although there have been one or two close calls.



The Bollin in full flow

What have we been up to recently? We were so pleased with the way the riverbank recovered from the erosion near the middle bridge that we were able to remove some of the protective fencing we had put up; thanks to a generous donation of 100 trees from the OVO Energy's Free Tree Planting Initiative we have planted a variety of saplings in different parts of the park, and we are managing to tackle the few remaining puddle areas along the path.

We were sorry to see Simon Hiley, Lead Ranger at Styal and our friend and colleague who has helped us so much with river bank work, invasive control and the organisation of our Dog Show, move on. We look forward to working closely with the new Lead Ranger, Colin Gorner.

Plans are well under way for our annual Dog Show on May 22<sup>nd</sup> and Matthew Jackson, Wilmslow Town Clerk, is working hard on the arrangements for the biggest events of the year, the Cinema in the Park and Party in the Park.

We are still keeping everything crossed in the hope of seeing the promised toilet block in the Parish Hall car park. The money has been earmarked by Wilmslow Town Council and Cheshire East Council, and the site, design and building plans selected and submitted for approval. We do seem to be getting there, thanks in no small measure to the tireless efforts of Matthew.

With the increasing financial constraints faced by Cheshire East Council we are having to push harder and harder to get things done in the park, and in many cases we have had to resort to doing things ourselves. But it's good to get out in the fresh air and do some not-too-taxing labouring with friends, so if you have some spare time and energy why not come and join us in some of our activities? The "Dates for your Diary" item overleaf is a starting point, but you can also see further details on our website, facebook page, twitter account and blog.

Ian Baillie, Chairman

## Birdlife on The Carrs

2015 witnessed a marked increase in the level of activity of kingfishers on the Bollin as it weaves its way through the Carrs. The adult birds were regularly seen fishing the stretch between the middle bridge and St Bartholomew's Church and we were hopeful that this was a sign of a successful hatching. Sightings of a juvenile kingfisher bolstered our hopes and in due course we were delighted to spot a family of four birds close to the middle bridge. Quite why 2015 was such a good year for kingfishers is a mystery, but it's great to see them thriving and we hope this will continue in 2016.

A thriving kingfisher population is a good indicator of the health of the river and fish stock. Two grey herons have also spotted this and have been regular visitors to The Carrs.

## Fitness on The Carrs

Is The Carrs helping Wilmslow to aim for the title of fittest town in the North West? Fitness and exercise groups are using the Carrs regularly and in significant numbers. The Saturday morning park runs attract an average of nearly 120 runners and joggers and have now expanded to include Sunday morning junior park runs, the park hosts an annual local primary schools cross-country race meeting, and there are plans afoot to install an outdoor adult gym near the tennis courts, where the nets are already up for the new season.

## Dates for your Diary 2016

The first event of 2016 has already taken place. On 17<sup>th</sup> April a select group gathered to tidy up The Carrs ready for summer. Bags (and barrowloads) of rubbish were collected, drains unblocked and willows cut back so the river can be seen again. A full report will follow in the Autumn newsletter. As in previous years we have two Balsam Bashes to consolidate our efforts of previous years. We couldn't miss out the popular Bat Walk and there is another event this year for the many dog walkers that use The Carrs. The year's events finish with the AGM.

Canine Capers on The Carrs	22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2016 12pm
Party in the Park	19 <sup>th</sup> June 2016
Balsam Bash 1	26 <sup>th</sup> June 2016 2pm
Balsam Bash 2	10 <sup>th</sup> July 2016 2pm
Bat Walk	6 <sup>th</sup> August 2016 9pm
AGM	16 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2016 2pm

## Website

Our website including the innovation of a blog ([www.friendsofthecarrs.org.uk](http://www.friendsofthecarrs.org.uk)) has news of all the latest happenings on The Carrs with lots of photos of events and information on how you can join in. For the techno-phobic watch the notice boards on The Carrs for further news of these events. We do hope you will come and join us.

## Snowdrops



Snowdrops seem to thrive in the soil of The Carrs. You should see many more over the next few years. The congested clump in the photo found hidden under a tree contained almost 50 individual bulbs. These and other clumps have been split and transplanted around The Carrs during the past few years.

Come January you should see many more patches of white glistening across The Carrs promising that the brighter days of Spring are on their way.

Sadly primroses seem to be fussier. The ones planted some years ago have now dwindled to two plants.

## It's Your Neighbourhood Award

On October 17<sup>th</sup> Ian Baillie, John Booth and Colin Shepherd headed off to Southport to collect an "It's Your Neighbourhood" award for the Friends of The Carrs. These awards are given by the Royal Horticultural Society to recognise organisations that bring members of the community together to make a positive impact on the place they live. The Friends of The Carrs was judged to be a "thriving" organisation, the fourth of the five levels allowing us to aim for "outstanding" next time!



Colin, Ian and John with the Certificate

## Committee News

Ian Baillie continues his sterling work as Chairman with support from our Treasurer, John Booth, Secretary Ann Brown and past Chairman Colin Shepherd. Simon Hiley, Lead Ranger for the National Trust at Styal, has now left the Committee and been replaced by Ann Hodson. We are also pleased to welcome Viveene Brooks as representative of Wilmslow Town Council.

The Committee now consists of:

- Ian Baillie (Chairman)
- Ann Brown (Secretary)
- John Booth (Treasurer)
- Barbara Cook
- Ann Hodson
- Emma Houghton
- Paul Jabore
- Ruth Lees (Publicity Officer)
- Sally Potts
- Colin Shepherd
- Chris Tonge
- Emma Varga

## Contact Names

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