

FRIENDS OF THE CARRS NEWSLETTER



Autumn 2018

Chairman's Message

This year the Carrs has enjoyed one of the best summers most of us can remember. The number of visitors to the park, especially children and family groups, has broken all records, and the kiosk, toilet block, outdoor gym, playgrounds and tennis courts have all been heavily used and much appreciated, especially during the school holidays.



In fact the only downside has been the problem of parking, with limited accommodation for all the visitors' cars in the Parish Hall car park and surrounding streets. In spite of heavy usage there has been little evident wear and tear, although some of our splendid new recycled plastic picnic tables were damaged by disposable barbecues (we are in contact with the manufacturers about this, and have recently put notices on the tables asking visitors not to put their barbecue trays on them). It has been wonderful to see so many children (and adults, and dogs!) paddling and swimming in the river, and the picnic area has been like Blackpool beach on a Bank Holiday.



Fortunately we have recently obtained some smart new litter bins - and there are more on the way, and there has been very little litter to spoil the park, so thank you to our visitors for your cooperation and to Cheshire East Council for emptying the full bins so quickly.

Under guidance from the BEACON River Guardian scheme we test the water in the river regularly and

are happy to report that, whilst not perfect, the water is safe for children (and adults, and dogs!) to play in, although we advise against drinking it especially when there are so many delicious drinks on offer at the kiosk. The sun has done wonders for our apple trees in the mini-orchard and they have been laden with fruit.



Our big annual events - the Dog Show and the Cinema in the Park - were great successes in the fine weather, although we have seen a new look in the Carrs when the grass turned brown and hardly needed cutting for months, the wildflower turf that we planted so carefully was scorched and produced very little, although the suppliers assure us that the seed will survive until next spring and then germinate, a lot of the smaller ponds and wet areas dried up, and several trees developed diseases or became unsafe and fell or had to be felled. Amidst all this, the RHS came to judge Wilmslow and the Carrs for their In Bloom and It's Your Neighbourhood awards. We are delighted to have just heard this November at the awards ceremony that the Carrs was categorized as "Outstanding"! Our autumn working party was a tidying-up session after a very busy summer and we received plenty of encouragement from passers-by and their dogs although we would have appreciated a few offers of help. We really do need to find a way of bringing in more volunteers.

This year we have concentrated our efforts on improving and extending the amenities in the park, for the benefit of the public and in particular the residents of Wilmslow. In the coming year we need to work on improvements to the natural aspects of our "countryside park". There will be plenty to do: careful preparation and planting of wildflower areas, planting young, healthy trees and trimming the rampant willow along the river, and repairs to the river banks are just a few of the jobs to look forward to. And this is all healthy, outdoor work, so look out for our notices and working parties, and join us when you can - all you need is a pair of gloves and a wish to help others enjoy visiting the Carrs.

Ian Baillie, Chairman

Dates for your diary 2019

The AGM took place on 14th October 2018 in the Parish Hall. Dates for events in 2019 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.

2018 Events

Canine Capers 20th May



Best in Show Perra with runner up Monty and their proud owners

The dog show was back on 20th May with a new agility course run by Alex. This proved very popular with many owners wanting to show off their pooches skills. As last year over 100 dog owners joined The Friends for a fun day again expertly organised by John Booth from The Friends with help from Stuart and Lawrence from Styal National Trust.

Balsam Bashing

Our struggle against the invaders continues, and we were helped by the dry weather which restricted the growth of the Himalayan balsam. We have had a couple of good Balsam Bashes and thanks to the efforts of Sal Potts (BEACON) we hired contractors to tackle the huge infestation of Himalayan balsam in the wet area at the back of the old Twinnies bridge picnic area, where they made a dramatic difference.

A late resurgence of the Himalayan balsam due to the wetter weather at the end of the summer has reminded us that we mustn't rest on our laurels and the battle must continue. The small amount of Japanese knotweed has been treated with professional skill by Sal and Emma Houghton, and we hope we are winning that battle.

Wild Flower Area

Sadly our efforts to create a wild flower area were thwarted by the unexpectedly hot and dry summer. An area beside the multi-purpose path had been selected and strimmed and raked in preparation last Autumn. With great excitement and high expectations we purchased and laid some wild flower turf at our Spring Working Party. This was immediately followed by the start of the hottest, driest summer for many years and despite the sterling efforts of John Booth, rising very early to carry buckets of water from the river the area dried

out and results were disappointing. But we were not disheartened! We are very grateful to Alan Crank, the gardener at Well House on Dean Row Road (open for the excellent Garden Day in aid of Wilmslow Wells for Africa) for donating seed from his established wild flower meadow. We also surrounded the area with rustic fencing to protect the seeds and hope for a better display next year. Bulbs were also planted around the Carrs..



Bulb Planting at the Hawthorn Lane entrance

Dog Control Orders

Dog Control Orders were implemented on the Carrs some time ago and recently there have been regular visits from wardens. Fines of £100 will be imposed for a person in charge of more than 4 dogs, failing to clear up after your dog and not having a dog on a lead in the area from the Chancel Lane car park up to the first bridge. Dogs are only allowed off-lead in the area beyond this bridge.

Nature Notes

The long hot summer of 2018 certainly stimulated the established wild flowers and led to a record crop of apples and blackberries. The scorched short grass recovered remarkably quickly and is now as lush as ever.

Regrettably our horse chestnut trees continue to be ravaged by disease and it seems inevitable that several will be lost very shortly. It is fortunate that the sweet chestnut trees appear far less affected.

Following successful breeding in 2017 our dipper numbers continue to grow with new settlements upstream in Wilmslow Park and downstream in the Carrs. This is a good indicator for water quality and we hope that their population continues to prosper.

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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