

Friends of Stratton Park

'a greener space for everyone'



Newsletter December 2013

It's been too long...since we last issued a newsletter in June.

The problem has been too much work and too little time!

If anyone would like to give a helping hand - just a few hours every now and then it would help no end.

We held our Annual Meeting at the end of October—something we are obliged to do as a community group supported by the Borough Council; to which no-one except the loyal committee members who do all the work came—it's a shame!

Since October we have been busily organising the annual bulb planting and park maintenance schedule and arranging for the community team who do our dead hedging and other heavy work around the park.

The Scouts and Guides have completed their bulb planting tasks—that leaves just one final session on **Sunday 8th December 10.30 – 12.30am.**

We need **YOUR** help on that day to complete the planting of crocus and narcissus bulbs. More details on the bulbs on page 2.

The community team will be working in Stratton Park each Saturday until Christmas (weather permitting) dead hedging, ivy cutting, hedgerow maintenance and clearing the edges of the Main Car Park.

What else is in this newsletter?

- ***More details of what and where this year's bulbs have been planted,***
- ***Progress on getting trees removed — what has happened so far and what you can do,***
- ***Next year's developments in the park***
- ***Suggestions for the future—we need your opinion...***

Date for your diary...

Saturday 14th June 2014 from 12.00 to 3.30pm

will be

Picnic in the Park 2014

- lets see if the weather is any better this year -

This is the community event for everyone who lives near or regularly uses the park. Planning starts now so we will keep you posted on what will be happening.

For the last 2 years we have planted crocuses, daffodils and aconites in the park. This year we are adding more crocuses— particularly the purple ones,



white narcissus



and vivid blue squills:



Many people have said how much they enjoy seeing the Spring colour in the park. Watch out for the yellow aconites under the lime trees on the walk beside the tennis courts, the snowdrops beside the old hedgerow on the walk down to the bench, the squills and crocuses beside the Main Car Park, narcissus, daffodils and crocuses under the trees at various spots and the main crocus show in the tree avenue beside Cleveland Close.

A diagram of where the bulbs are planted will be on the park notice board.

Those darned trees...

If you live on the north side of the park— in Cleveland or Cambrian you will have noticed that some of the Norway Maples have been felled—the first 5 have gone and 3 more are scheduled to go in the New Year. The improvement is dramatic, I am sure you will agree.

There are another 10 trees around Cleveland which potentially could be removed if local residents felt they were very significantly shading their house and garden— BUT THE AFFECTED LOCAL RESIDENTS HAVE TO APPLY FOR THE TREE REMOVAL.

The application form and guidance notes on how to apply can be found on the Council website at: <http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/browse/environment-and-planning/conservation/tree-management/council-owned-trees.htm>

If you need help in applying, please ask your neighbours or give us a call on 01256 470171.

Progress Report on enriching the wildlife of the Dellwood Hedgerow and Holy Ghost Field

We are not as far into our 4 year project for increasing the quality of the wildlife areas in these two areas as we had hoped—this is partly because we are dependent on the Borough Council doing some of the preparatory work, and cannot complete the job if the preparation is delayed.—Some of this work has to be done at specific times of year—and if it does not happen we have to wait 6— 12 months before we can schedule the work again.

As we write the outstanding work is on treating parts of the Dellwood hedge, grass removal and rotavating in Holy Ghost Field ready for wildflower planting—lets hope for 2014...

Meanwhile, the meadow patch in the middle of the Dellwood Walk is largely under our control. This should look more interesting in 2014 than this year, but even so it has had an effect ... we spotted a Common Blue butterfly working the area this summer—which would not have been there if it was plain old grass.



What's missing in the park?

One of the primary reasons why the park is unattractive to wildlife—birds and insects — is that there is nothing for them to eat!

There are more flowers providing nectar and berries for the birds in your gardens than in the park itself!

What would help is the planting of new shrub areas providing food for nature and colour for visitors. For example:

Guelder Rose



Spindle



Holly



Hawthorn



Suggestions for Future Projects

We will be planting a small strip of new young bushes and small trees on the south side of Holy Ghost Field in 2014 but we are very much aware that , apart from the Spring bulbs, not a lot has changed on the north side of the park.

First priority is to get more of the Norway Maples removed—and that needs your participation.

Then what and where can we add back more interesting and useful bushes and trees?

Two suggestions have been put forward:

A community Orchard in Buckskin Triangle— below the children's playground

There is plenty of space there for an orchard— with apple, pear, and plum trees, soft fruit trellises etc.

The great thing about community orchards is that they are very low maintenance— yet produce fruit after a few years which everyone can enjoy.

Tell us what you think.

A new area of bushes— including those shown above— at the top of the slope from the sports field to the Dellwood—Buckskin path

This is a windswept spot with very little purpose so shrubs on the upper part would act as a wind break when more mature.

After a few years it would look like Down Grange Park where shrubs have been planted at the top of the slope between the upper and lower level pitches.

However, we would be sure to get a better selection of shrubs than in Down Grange.

It's a year since we asked for your input and opinion on future projects — so please let us know what you think. See Over >>>>

Winter 2013 Opinion Survey

We need our members and friends to tell us what they think, what their priorities are, what they think is working and what is not. After all, it's your park—lets look after it...

1. Future developments to enhance the green spaces in the part.
Please indicate those suggestions you support :

More Spring Bulbs

More wild flower patches

A Community Orchard near the children's playground

A new shrub bank at the top of the slope from the sports ground to the Dellwood—Buckskin pathway

2. Picnic in the Park 2014 : Do you have any comments or suggestions about new activities, things from last year to be repeated, new ideas etc.?

3. Finally, do you have any comments or suggestions on any other aspect of the park?

To make it easy for you to give us your opinion a spare copy of this survey is attached to the email, For those receiving a paper newsletter a spare survey sheet is attached.

Thank you for your input.

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Assisted by
*Basingstoke
and Deane*

Friends of Stratton Park is supported by and works with Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council to enhance the ecological and amenity value of this green space.