

FRIENDS OF HARTHILL AND CALDERSTONES PARK

41st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

FRIDAY MARCH 10th 2023 at THE MANSION HOUSE, CALDERSTONES PARK

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AGM 2023

First of all I would like to propose a vote of thanks to all the Committee Members who have worked so hard and given freely of their time, and without whom the Friends group would not exist. Energy has gone into recruiting more members, rebranding the group with a new logo, and holding activities on weekends including Open Days in the Nature Reserve.

Some of the highlights of this year have been the activities that have taken place organised by The Friends. First of all, the Tree Walk guided by our President, Colin Twist around Calderstones Park. He is so knowledgeable and made the walk very interesting and enjoyable. We are indeed lucky to have a park that has, according to The Tree Register, the most interesting and varied collection of trees of any public park in the whole of the UK.

The two weekends of Open Days in June at the Nature Reserve also proved to be popular with really large numbers coming to see how the area is developing and in particular to see the Wildflower Meadow now in its second year.

The “Gardening Galore” event which we held in this Mansion House was indeed very successful even though numbers had to be limited due to Covid. We had a really enjoyable time with an expert panel for our Gardeners’ Question Time and Anne Harrison, a Kew trained lecturer, who gave us an interesting and informative talk about plants that would encourage wildlife into the garden. Aigburth Hall Nursery also provided plants for sale. This was so successful we do hope to repeat this event next year.

Our informative talks including “Leech Craft: 10th Century Medicine” by Diane Goodier and “The Birds and the Bees!” by George Pilkington also proved popular in the Mansion House on a Thursday afternoon.

Another very enjoyable event that was held in December in the Theatre room was “Christmas with the Friends”. I was very upset to miss this meeting because of Covid but I understand that it was a really successful afternoon. There was entertainment from Eliza and Irene Fennell, a fantastic musical interlude. There were demonstrations of garland making by people who had had years of experience decorating Speke Hall for a Victorian Christmas. The Manager, Tom from a local florist “Flowerbug” demonstrated brilliant ways of decorating your home with floral art and table decorations at Christmas.

Another great boost for the Friends group this year was the award of over £23,000 from the Postcode Neighbourhood Trust for the park’s Nature Reserve. Only this week we have been spending time watching the Civil Engineers bringing a digger and dumper to the Reserve. A huge amount of work had been completed despite the adverse conditions. Two ponds have been created and nine tree planting holes excavated in the reinforced concrete which has now virtually disappeared under raised beds of substrate.

The Nature Reserve has also seen the Friends liaising with other experts and groups including a bat expert who advised on Bat Boxes to place in the trees inside the Reserve. We have also worked with John Moore's University to enable a study of beetles on site. We have consulted with Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Childwall Woods for pond advice. We have had donations from John Lewis and the Guiding Associations to purchase items for the Nature Reserve.

I would also like to propose another vote of thanks to all the volunteers who help at the Nature Reserve. This group is absolutely fabulous! Everyone works so hard and gets on so well together. We all enjoy our time spent there. We have a Nature Reserve artist, a Nature Reserve woodchip enthusiast and a Nature Reserve hedgehog champion to name but a few! My personal thanks also go to two people who recently joined the group and have taken on extra responsibility making my job considerably easier. Massive thanks to Paul Harris who is training to be a garden designer. His design for the reinforced concrete slab, turning it into a fabulous dry garden punctuated with deep tree planting pits will surely make the most amazing display. I would also like to mention Steven Ralph has recently joined the group. I would like to thank him for all his efforts in researching and supervising the construction of the two ponds and for becoming the link person with J E Jones Tree Nursery. He is in the process of choosing and arranging delivery of nine standard trees for the tree planting pits that will be paid for with a grant from The Northern Forest that Ben from The Mersey Forest has helped us source.

Work has also gone on in the main body of the park outside the Nature Reserve the work assisting with the upkeep of the park. We have also made our usual grants to the park for its upkeep. The Friends are very concerned about the Harthill Vestibule that has recently been damaged by fire and we have met with the Head of Street Scene to discuss its future. Hopefully this will be something that we can work on in the future.

On a more worrying note, we are very concerned about the future of the park and we feel that the Friends will have to take a more active role in its maintenance. Budget cuts to the City of £47 million has meant that the City's Parks Budget have taken a real cut. This will mean all parks in Liverpool will see less mowing, less planting of flowerbeds and fewer gardeners employed. On a more positive note for Calderstones there has been money already allocated to the park by Liverpool City Council. £90,000 is to be spent on the Children's Playground and £120,000 has been allocated to dredge the lake. Sixteen new trees have been planted with one being provided by The Friends to add to The Queen's Canopy. I think going forward The Friends are going to have to try and plug the gap that the cuts will create, both with contributions and actual physical work, to ensure the park has the necessary attention and maintenance to make it the beautiful and enjoyable green space that it is at present.

CAROLINE WILLIAMS

Friends of Harthill and Calderstones Park

Receipts & Payments Accounts for Year Ending 31st December, 2022

Charity Number 512692

	2,022	2021
Opening bank balances:		
Current	27,348	21,750
Saving	4,750	4,746
Combined	32,098	26,496
Income		
N.S. & I. savings - interest	4	1
Subscriptions	1,993	1,655
Visitors, donations & coach trip	944	22
Mayoral Fund	2,000	1,000
Donations for NR	2,548	1,597
Mersey Forest	1,239	
PC Lottery	24,319	
John Lewis	500	
Friends of Guiding	50	
Queen's Canopy	70	
Sale of Plants		68
	33,667	4,343
Expenditure		
Printing of newsletter	415	418
Growmore (2)	2,317	293
Mersey Forest	1,239	
Mayoral Fund 2019	2,000	399
John Lewis	500	
Friends of Guiding	50	
Coach trip	420	
Chess ICT	239	216
Insurance	129	129
Postcode Lottery	2,315	16,753
Speakers & room hire	996	
Sundries	129	35
Gift vouchers	375	
NR P'ments from Friends		1,207
P'ments from NR donations		1,647
Plants		187
Total Expenditure	11,124	21,285
Profit/ Loss on Year	22,545	-16,941
Closing bank balances:		
Current	27,348	4,808
Saving	4,750	4,746
Comb	32,098	9,554
Change	22,545	-16,941

Signed:- ROBnice

On:- 02/03/23
Rosemary Bryce, Hon. Treasurer

Having examined the books of the Friends of Harthill and Calderstones Park and the records, statements and information provided confirm that the above Accounts, Records, Receipts, and Payments reflect an accurate statement of the Society's Financial Position as at 31st December, 2022

Signed:- WAGG

On:- 2 03 23
William A Ogle, Hon. Auditor