

Friends of Groups Survey – Headline Results

28 October 2016

The Community, Customer and Organisational Scrutiny Committee of Chesterfield Borough Council has set up a project group of to examine how Friends of and Community groups work with the council to improve local parks and open spaces. We would greatly appreciate it if you would take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire. The information you provide will help us to update our information about your group and to collate how much Friends of Groups contribute to the local areas and wider community.

About your group

Name of your group:

- Friends of Stand Road Park
- Friends of Pevensey Green
- Friends of Whitecotes Playing Field
- Friends of Queen's Park
- Friends of Somersall Park
- Langerfield Park Community Group
- Friends of Spital Cemetery

Name of the area you support:

- Stand Road Park, Whittington Moor
- Pevensey Green, Newbold, Chesterfield
- Boythorpe, Whitecotes, Walton
- Queen's Park and the Annexe
- Somersall Park
- Langerfield Park
- Spital, Chesterfield – Cemetery

1. How would you describe the aims/activities of your group? (please tick all that apply)

- 5 (71.4%) Practical Work (e.g. Gardening)
- 4 (57.1%) New Facilities/Equipment
- 4 (57.1%) Events and Activities
- 2 (28.6%) Historical/Archaeological Projects
- 4 (57.1%) Healthy Activities
- 3 (42.9%) Wildlife/Biodiversity Projects
- 5 (71.4%) Green Space Improvement
- 2 (28.6%) Pressure Group
- 4 (57.1%) Awareness Raising
- 3 (42.9%) Consultation
- 4 (57.1%) Community Development
- 5 (71.4%) Fundraising

Other please specify (no answers)

2. Approximately how many members does your group have?

a) Number of Management Committee members	b) Total number of group membership
5	20
4	16
10	150
8	-
10	800
3	3
6	30

3. How do you promote your group and its activities?

Comments:

Through our facebook page, by issuing press releases and successfully getting effective media coverage of our activities and by engaging with visitors to our cafe in the park pavilion. When community events are held on the park we also have a stand with a display showing the community masterplan for the park and details of current projects at which we invite visitors to give their views by way of survey questionnaires.

With a letter box drop and posters when necessary

Via emails, group meetings, Streetlife, petitioning on the field, canvassing neighbourhood. Membership increasing all the time and is open to all.

Word of mouth and web site

Via the Friends of Somersall Park Facebook group (800 members). Also through posters displayed in the local community. We also use S40 Local.

The group is open access to all residents in Rother ward. Leaflets, social media, word of mouth, via schools, s health sub group network, CBC website, consultation events.

Via meetings and holding market stalls in town centre.

4. How do communicate with Chesterfield Borough Council?

Comments:

The masterplan for the park (which is in line with CBC's Parks and Open Spaces Strategy), and all of the staged projects towards delivering the masterplan have been discussed and agreed with CBC's Green Spaces Development Officer. We meet with the Green Spaces Development Officer at the ideas stage of each project and the project is developed in close liaison with him. Where broader issues of policy and strategy are concerned we discuss these with the relevant Cabinet member. We used to attend the regular Friends Group liaison meetings hosted by CBC. However, I am not aware that any have been held in recent months. They need to be reinstated.

<i>By letter and phone</i>
<i>Via emails, telephone and face to face.</i>
<i>E-mail and officers attending meetings</i>
<i>The main communication is via John Ramsey, who is excellent and our group would not be in existence without his support. We have other contacts within the council but John is the main point of contact and he directs us to others as required.</i>
<i>We liaise with the Parks and Open Spaces Officer using email, occasional meetings, by phone and site visits.</i>
<i>Via Bereavement Services at Brimington Cemetery. Angela Dunn and her team attend our AGM and meetings and invite us to their offices when appropriate.</i>

5. Does your group have any of the following? (please tick all that apply)

- 7 (100.0%) A Constitution
- 7 (100.0%) A Bank Account
- 3 (42.9%) Public Liability Insurance
- 1 (14.3%) A Child Protection Policy
- 2 (28.6%) Tools & Equipment
- 1 (14.3%) First Aiders
- 1 (14.3%) Risk Assessment Forms
- 6 (85.7%) A Website/social media
- 2 (28.6%) Agreed Master/Management Plan

Other policies or procedures, (please specify)

Health and Safety Policy, Environmental Policy
Insurance to be arranged as and when required.
AGM Policy of protecting the Park
We complete risk assessment forms supplied to us by the council

Please enter your social media address / details

https://www.facebook.com/standroadpark/
whitecotesplayingfield@gmail.com
http://www.friendsofsomersallpark.org.uk but our main communication is using Facebook - we have a members only group established.
Langerfield Community Group
https://www.chesterfield.gov.uk/living-here/people-and-families/bereavement-services/cemeteries-and-churchyards/friends-of-spital-cemetery.aspx

Your Meetings

6. How often does your group currently hold meetings? (please tick)

0 (0.0%) Not Meeting

0 (0.0%) Weekly

0 (0.0%) Fortnightly

1 (14.3%) Monthly

6 (85.7%) Quarterly

0 (0.0%) Annually

7. Are the meetings open to local residents as well as committee members?

6 (85.7%) Yes

1 (14.3%) No

8. For a normal group meeting please estimate:

a) the average length of the meeting (in mins)

90
90
90
60
90
90
60

b) the average number of group members present

12
9
25
7
8
20
20

Your Activities

9. How do you engage with the wider community over and above meetings?

Comments:

When we prepared the masterplan for the park we undertook extensive and lengthy consultation by way of community fun day and consultation events held on the park at which we invited visitors to give their views and complete questionnaires, by going door to door to engage with residents of the streets surrounding the park, by delivering newsletters in the park catchment area with tear out returnable survey questionnaires, by holding public engagement workshops e.g. at the Peter Webster Centre. For each staged project since then we have used the same approach to community engagement except we have focused the effort on the particular section of the community most interested. For example, when we drew up the projects to put the multi uses games area, skateboard park and young childrens play area we engaged with the secondary, primary and infants schools in the area by visiting the schools with outline ideas and seeking the views of the pupils. We also engage with the local nursery, infants, primary and secondary schools by inviting them to participate in our activities including planting daffodil bulbs and trees on the park. We also engage directly with the junior football clubs who play their league matches on the park especially Chesterfield Town Football Club whose secretary is invited to our meetings and with whom we have, in the past, organised jointly run events on the park.

They are informed of our AGM which is open to the general public by letter box drop and posters displayed in local churches and on trees on Pevensey Green. When a newcomer moves to our area, we put a "welcome card" through their letter box, describing our group in the hope they will join us. For fundraising events - flyers are put in letter boxes in the area and posters as above.

See previous

Talking to people both within and outside the park, giving talks to groups

We used to have regular public meetings but the attendance was very poor and so we don't hold these very often. We do regularly communicate with the community via Facebook and the site has been used by the local community and park visitors. People post photos taken in the park and report items found etc. We provide updates on progress towards funding, publicise litter picks and promote our events through it.

Events. Consultation meetings, liaise with schools, volunteer groups via email, local police at meetings, leaflets.

Notification in Grassroots with updates of meetings. Talks given at local history groups. Membership of National Federation of Cemetery Friends

10. During the last 12 months what do you feel have been your groups 2 key activities?

Activity 1

<i>We have worked with the nursery classes of Highfield Hall Primary School to plant 3000 daffodil bulbs on the park</i>
<i>We plant our gardens twice a year, prune shrub bed and mow the grass every week. This on-going maintenance takes up quite a lot of time.</i>
<i>We are a newly formed group and are engaging with the local community for their feedback.</i>
<i>Campaigning about the old leisure centre</i>
<i>Raising funding for the new play area</i>
<i>Installation of outdoor gym, raising funds</i>
<i>Development of background work for information boards to be displayed in the Cemetery.</i>

Activity 2

<i>We have transformed a boggy part of the park into a designed wetland feature planted with wet loving plants and a path (park seats, an interpretation panel and bird nesting boxes will be installed in the next few weeks.</i>
<i>A Summer Garden Party held in the garden of one of our volunteers, included plant stall, bric-a-brac, raffle, baking and lots of washing up.</i>
<i>We have been communicating with the Borough Council and local friends groups.</i>
<i>Representing local people</i>
<i>Holding events e.g. Turn Up and Play events, lantern parades</i>
<i>Raising funds; play area, consultation over equipment, assessing bids and ensuring accessibility and inclusivity.</i>
<i>Growing and broadening the membership so that relationships can be improved and the group is more coherent.</i>

11. What has been your most successful achievement to date?

<i>Developing a regeneration scheme, including a masterplan, that is owned by the community, for the improvement of the park in order to create a park that is safe and enjoyable for everyone and something the community will be proud of and delivering five staged projects that take us a considerable way towards delivering this.</i>
<i>The whole project of making the area into a place that the public like to walk through. We were successful with "Britain in Bloom" awards twice. The daily interaction between neighbours, school children and our volunteers. The area is no longer a muddy mess where footballs were kicked into people's gardens and their cars.</i>
<i>To set our constitution which we hope will enable the future generations of the community to enjoy the green space which we currently have.</i>
<i>Persuading the Council to consult people about the future of the leisure centre site</i>
<i>Raising funding and the community events - both have been very successful (especially the lantern parade)</i>
<i>Getting muga and the outdoor gym</i>
<i>Bringing in more members.</i>

12. Has your group raised funds in the last 12 months?

6 (85.7%) Yes

1 (14.3%) No

13. If you have raised funds in the last 12 months please tell us about:

a) Fundraising events

<i>We have a cafe in the park pavilion, run by our volunteers, that opens on Saturday mornings during the football season. All profits are used towards park improvements.</i>
<i>Garden Party see above</i>
<i>Giving talks</i>
<i>None other than through donations, which has been <£100. Keith Morgan has been supportive and we have secured funding through him. However the ceasing of the minor grants and community chest awards means that the events we hold may no longer be able to proceed due to insufficient funds.</i>
<i>None</i>
<i>Market stalls. Talks and walks.</i>

b) Application for grants

<i>We were awarded £13,000 by Viridor Credits under the LCF scheme with the mandatory third party contribution of 10% being awarded by CBC from the Community Chest. This is to fund the wetland area project that will cost circa £17,000. The balance will come from cafe profits.</i>
<i>Awaiting a £250 grant from the Community Leadership Scheme - D.C.C.</i>
<i>Pending</i>
<i>We have secured £8000 through Tesco Bags of Help. We have two other funding bids submitted. One with DET for £30K and another with OneFamily for up to £25K.</i>
<i>Public Health - to put in outdoor gym Labour Group - to fund a plaque Just put in a bid for a play area from Viridor</i>
<i>None.</i>

c) Approximately how much have you raised

<i>In total, circa £20,000 in the last 12 months. Since we were first established in 2002 we have raised in excess of £220,000 and made capital improvements to the park to this value.</i>
<i>Garden Party £293</i>
<i>£75</i>
<i>£8,300</i>
<i>£25,250</i>
<i>£150</i>

14. How often in the last 12 months has your group held practical activities or volunteer days? e.g. gardening, tidy ups, litter picks, bench making, etc (please tick)

1 (14.3%) Not done any

2 (28.6%) Weekly

0 (0.0%) Monthly

4 (57.1%) Quarterly

15. Do you feel that your group can influence decisions relating to the area you are friends of?

6 (85.7%) Yes

0 (0.0%) No

1 (14.3%) Not sure

Comments

We are disappointed at the lapse of the regular Friends Groups Liaison meetings organised and hosted by CBC. These provided the opportunity for the representatives of various friends groups to meet each other and share information and best practice while at the same time affording CBC the opportunity to provide advice, guidance and support.

The group was formed in 2005 and through the years we have maintained good support from Chesterfield Borough Council. We are happy to meet with any new group wanting to try the same scheme, to give advice, (although due to the lack of time and our ages we are unable to give practical help).

We try!

Will expand at meeting.

This has been possible up to a point as we are aware that the Council is operating within a limited budget.