

Spring 2020

Friends of Cuerden Valley Park Newsletter



Issue 2

Introduction from the editor

At this very challenging and unusual time we wanted to keep in touch. As we all know the Park is an asset to the area and those of us who are near enough to walk to it from home are certainly making the most of it. Being in close proximity to nature is so good for our mental wellbeing as well as the exercise we are doing for our physical health. As the partner of someone shielding I am walking early in the morning to reduce any risks. This has the advantage of being able enjoy the birdsong which is very loud! We have been blessed with some lovely weather and those able to walk have been sharing their pictures on the Park and the Friends Facebook pages for those who follow those. The Rangers have still been working to look after the park. Included on page 3 are some photos and captions describing some of the park conservation work that's been going on taking account of social distancing.

Thoughts from the Chair of the Friends, Jean Stainton

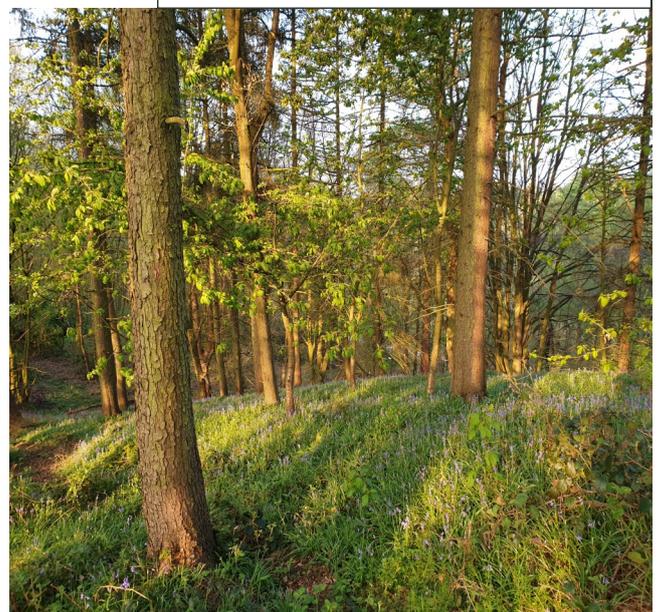
The Friends Committee had been planning some events for Friends which would both raise some funds and also provide opportunities for Friends to meet each other. In this way we hoped to build a community who could work together to promote the park in the community and encourage new members. Unfortunately, as with many other things, these plans were thwarted by Covid19. In the current situation we needed to take other things forward. I am pleased to let you know that there is now a dedicated page for the Friends on the Cuerden Valley Park website. It is accessible through *About Us* – please take a look. We are also hoping that we will be able to have a *Quick Link* from the Home Page. I hope this newsletter helps you to feel connected to the Park especially if you are unable to visit and that you are keeping well and safe.

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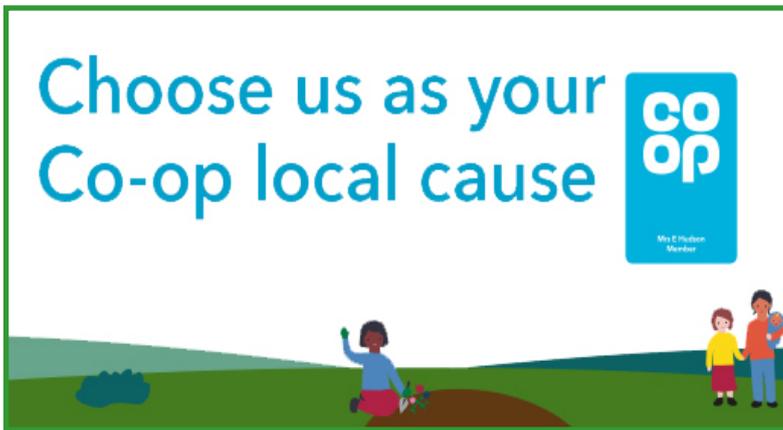
Tell us what you think?

If you have any ideas, comments or suggestions about the newsletter, fundraising events or volunteering please email newsletter@cuerdenvalleypark.org
Editor Sheila Tuffrey



How can we fundraise whilst following the shutdown guidance ?

We can do so by nominating the Park as our charity when shopping



Not going out — you can still fundraise when shopping on line. Easy Fundraising and Amazon Smile offer an easy option to register, nominate Cuerden Valley Park as your charity and shop as usual.

smile.amazon.co.uk

Co-Op Community Fund success

We're delighted to have received over £1,500 from the Co-Op as a result of members nominating 1% of their spend to go to the Park in the last 6 months. The scheme lasts until September so still time to join up and nominate us as your local cause when you shop at Co-Op stores.

Visit coop.co.uk/local-causes for more information

If you shop with Amazon there is an option to shop through Amazon Smile where you can nominate the park as your chosen charity. AmazonSmile is the same Amazon. Please select Cuerden as your nominated charity and start shopping at smile.amazon.co.uk.



Please register to use easyfundraising when you shop online. Over 4,000 shops and sites will donate to us, including all the big names like eBay, John Lewis & Partners, Argos, ASOS, Expedia, M&S, and many more! This means you can raise FREE donations for us no matter what you are buying

This link will take you to the site to register
<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/>

Food and Craft Market goes online

Our monthly Food & Craft Market has moved online with details of all the regular stallholders who are selling and delivering their wares.

Please take a look and support them. Please like and share the page.

www.facebook.com/CuerdenFoodandCraftMarket/



Update from our Wildlife Officer, David Beattie

Despite all the gloom and doom around it's good to note that spring is on its way. Colt's foot, cowslip, Golden saxifrage, marsh marigold and wood sorrel are all bursting out. Bees and hoverflies are feeding on the nectar and I've already heard my first chiffchaff.



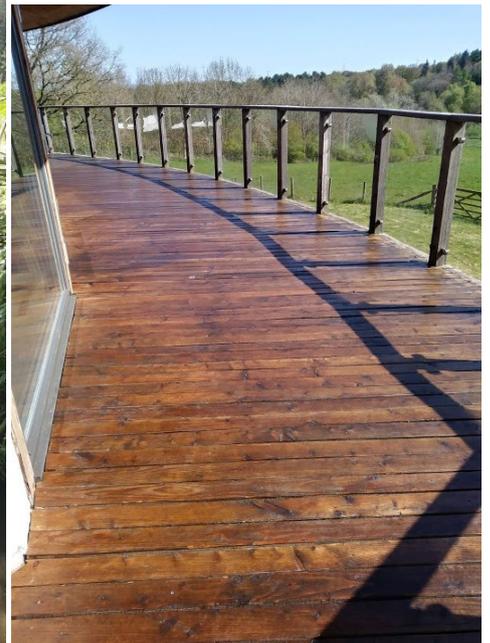
Another welcome returnee is one of our local hedgehogs come out of hibernation and using one of our feeding stations. This year we were going to have a project encouraging us all to do a variety of practical things to help this lovely creature.

The reason for this is not only has the hedgehog been voted the number one natural history icon, but they are also in serious decline. We realise that circumstances beyond our control make this impossible, so we will hopefully do this next spring. Wildlife continues to thrive in the Park with the welcome return of House Martins and swallows. Thanks to all those who live close to the Park, and the Rangers, who continue to let us know what is going on.



We had to fell an old oak tree in the Pinetum, which was in poor health and a hazard to the public in Berkeley Drive car park - see how the view has changed on your next visit.

Willow revetment work to restore and protect the river bank from erosion by flooding at the stepping stones and Town Brow footbridge.



Treating our Café balcony to much needed oil after 2 years

Update from Simon Thorpe, General Manager of the Park

The Trustees and myself are working hard to ensure the survival of the Trust which, like most UK charities, has seen a huge drop in income during the Covid19 pandemic. Our situation mirrors that of many charities during lockdown; cafés and visitor centres closed, volunteers confined to their homes; fundraising events cancelled; but demand for services still strong.

The challenge we face is nothing compared to those charities working on the frontline to support and care for the most vulnerable people in society. In our case we have committed to keeping the Park open (something which the Government recently said was essential) for the health and wellbeing of our community.

To do this we've prepared an Emergency Budget and while we have cut our costs where we can, there are still bills that have to be paid to keep the Park safe and meet our legal responsibilities to the public, tenants, and employees.

Our income has fallen by 80% but we are grateful for the support measures the Government has provided which are helping to keep us afloat for the next few months. 75% of our staff are furloughed and we will get their wages reimbursed by HMRC; we're eligible for the grant support for retail, leisure and hospitality businesses which the Chancellor announced and the business

rates holiday that Chorley Borough Council are administering. Several staff including myself have taken voluntary pay cuts of 20% to help reduce our costs further.

Fundraising events cancelled

We recently announced that our Valley Vibes music festival scheduled for June 2020 has been cancelled due to Covid19. This was our biggest fundraising event of the year combining the May Fair and Beer Festival into one large event for up to 3,000 people. The loss of income will hit us hard and we know lots of people are disappointed. Full refunds have been given to those with advanced tickets. The good news is that we're working on plans to hold the event in May 2021.

Warning over fake car park signs

Recently someone placed a bin bag over the payment machine at Town Brow car park with the words "Don't pay Corona risk". Unfortunately over 40 car owners were duped by this fake sign and did not pay before our Ranger patrol spotted and removed the bag.

The actions of that individual generated £4,000 worth of parking fines which is the last thing anyone needs at this time. We understand that some people may feel worried about touching a payment machine due to Covid19 in which case they have the option to use the RingGo mobile phone app to pay, or use gloves to touch the machine.

Like many charities, we're missing our cohort of volunteers who provide much of the man-power and are the life blood of the Park. I know many of our visitors are missing the Café and the staff are also missing the regular customers. We know that recent hot weather has brought people out in fairly large numbers. The Police have been patrolling the Park daily and will use their new powers to discourage gatherings and encourage social distancing. Visitors have been encouraged to take litter home with them to reduce the strain on the Rangers and allow them to carry on with conservation and safety work.

Thank you for your support as a Friend of the Park. I hope that you all stay safe and we'll see you out in the Park soon.