

Spring 2021

Friends of Cuerden Valley Park Newsletter

Issue 6



Introduction from the editor

We have recently produced some car stickers which we hope will help to raise awareness of the Friends as part of a campaign to encourage people to join us. All current members of the Friends will be given a car sticker like the one pictured here. I recently emailed to let members know that members could collect theirs from the Friends stall at the recent Food and Craft market. We will gradually be delivering those not collected.



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Thoughts from the Chair of the Friends: Jack Spickett

Reflecting with my brother the other day on the things that we used to get up to as kids reminded me of how much enjoyment we got out of the 'nature' that was around us. We would search for the 'giant' horned caterpillars of the Privet Hawk Moth which we would then keep (well fed) in shoe boxes until they turned into chrysalis. At this stage we promptly forgot all about them until they re-emerged, the next year as the most fantastic, beautiful, huge moths.

Experiences like these are still available to our children today, they just need the opportunity to find and explore what is all around us.

Thanks to the efforts of Clare Thompson our Education Officer we have already restarted our Schools Programme following an amazing response from schools all around the region

eager to get their pupils back to Cuerden Valley Park. Over the years we have enjoyed visits from schools from Merseyside, Greater Manchester and the Fylde as well as our local schools.

We are fortunate to have the mixture of habitats Cuerden Valley offers, enabling us to offer a variety of educational experiences for children of all backgrounds. As Friends of the Park you should be proud of the efforts you have made to maintain and improve this environment. The recent Wildflower Meadow initiative (see page 2) is just one example of the many ways we can all get involved in bringing positive change to the Park.

I hope you all continue to enjoy everything that the Park offers throughout the summer.

The Rangers have been hard at work protecting the river banks

The Rangers have installed revetments using willow grown in the Park. This structure is a natural way to provide stability and protection for the river bank and reducing the impact of fast flowing water on the fairly new bridge near Town Brow car park.

The natural materials used



to create this also provides a potential habitat for water voles and nesting birds. This photo above was taken when the work was completed back in March.

The other photos show how the willow is already starting to grow.



Soon to Launch - Wildflower Meadow Project

We are currently working on the launch of a new fundraising initiative to raise sufficient money to plant a series of wildflower meadows across Cuerden Valley Park. In doing this we will establish essential travel corridors for bees, butterflies and insects to use. At the moment, there are wildflower areas all around the outside of Cuerden Valley Park which the local council have planted, but very little inside the 650 acre park itself. The intention is over the next 3 years to plant over half an acre of wildflower seeds over various locations around the Park.

How can you help?

We will be selling virtual bags of seed for just £3. This will cover the cost of planting 2 square metres of wildflower seeds inside selected areas within Cuerden Valley Park. These will provide a vital link for butterflies and bees to cross the Park. We would like to plant over 1/2 an acre of wildflowers and are aiming to raise £3,000 in total towards the cost of this essential project.

Keep a look out for the launch!

We will be posting promotional material on the Friends Facebook page and the Cuerden Valley Park website with a link to a Donate button. We will be placing posters around the park and you will also be able to buy a virtual bag of seed in the café.



Update from our Wildlife Officer, David Beattie

The longer daylight hours and birdsong would suggest that spring has arrived. However, with temperatures in the first few weeks of May being 13 degrees I'm doubting it. Last year at the same time it was 25 degrees. I have noted many wildflowers are a little later than previous but a welcome sight anyway. Wood Anemone, Wood Sorrel, Dog Violet, Bluebells and Cowslip are in abundance, as are Garlic Mustard and Cuckoo Flower. The butterflies have been taking advantage of the occasional sunny day, especially Orange Tip. I have also noted Speckled Wood and Peacock. The cold nights have also meant a drop in moth numbers, though this Herald was good to see.

Herald Moth



Next Food and Craft Market

23 May 2021

10am to 2pm

Look out for our stall!

As I write there have been no reports of damselfly, but maybe when you read this, Large Red damselflies will have emerged. Our migrant birds respond to longer daylight so they have been arriving despite the temperatures, with sightings of Blackcap, Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Swallow and White-throat. It was exciting for me to note Lapwings displaying over a field in the south of the Park and a quick visit by a couple of Wheatears as they pass through on their way to breeding areas. I don't know if we have any breeding Mandarin Ducks, but some of us certainly saw a pair mating. Our Herons and Canada Geese have young as do

some of our rabbits. Hopefully the young rabbits will try to avoid being spotted by the buzzards.

Black Cap - photo by Lynne Booth



May I take this opportunity to remind you to stay away from any nesting birds, especially kingfishers as any approach could make them abandon their young.

The Food and Craft Market is back!

We were delighted that the Food and Craft market was able to recommence in April. The sun shone and there was a fantastic turnout from volunteers and stall holders alike, both new and returning. With the park collecting over £500 in pitch fees and the Friends raising over £250, it really makes all the work that goes into hosting the event worthwhile.

As we continue to develop and build upon what has become a well-established and well-loved event, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Friends for all their effort and support in making the market what it is today and express that I am very much looking forward to working with you all moving forward.

Dan McCarthy : Operations Manager

Update from Simon Thorpe, General Manager of the Park

Spring has been a little slow in coming forward but at least we are enjoying some greater freedoms as the Government ease the Covid lockdown rules. I thought I would update you on some of the preparations we have been making for the new 'normal' at the Park: What's happening at the Park as lockdown restrictions are lifted?

Monthly Food & Craft Markets returned in April and are set to continue.

School groups have resumed and we are now fully booked till the end of summer term. Big thanks to our education volunteers for making themselves available to help.

Healthwalks are resuming from 8th June, but are now run in house by the Trust following the demise of Walking for Health. We're delighted to be able to continue this important wellbeing activity and welcome old and new participants.

Parkrun will not be returning as the Trust made the decision to end the agreement for this organised event to take place. Plans for a new regular running event will be developed over the summer.

Temporary portaloos for visitors, which were initially funded by Heritage Lottery, will be taken away on 17th May and due to Covid Risk Assessment the toilets in the Visitor Centre will be restricted to staff, school groups and Café customers for the time being.

Our revised Orienteering trail will be launched in June – a free activity aimed at younger visitors, with funding from Asda green tokens awarded last April 2020.

Café indoor and outdoor table

service returns from 17th May. The Café has been open almost constantly throughout Covid lockdowns, evolving into a take away service and I would like to thank the staff who have been innovative and adapted the business. I would also like to thank the thousands of customers who have supported us without whom we would have closed.

Stag Lodge car park is to re-open by the end of May after being closed for 3 years. The car park was closed due to ongoing antisocial behaviour and concern over safety. A start has been made on clearing woodland around the car park to open up visibility, and ANPR cameras have been installed. These measures are the start of improving this area of the Park.

In mid-May solar ANPR cameras were also installed at Lower Kem Mill car park to encourage payment for parking.

Personnel changes

With the likelihood of fewer tables and reduced sales in our Café for some time, our Team Leader Shane Marsden who has been here since Cuerden View opening in March 2018, has unfortunately been made redundant and we wish him well for the future.

Our Senior Ranger Bill Sanders retired in March after many years of service spanning 20 years at the Park. Bill was a good teacher and instructor and his knowledge will be sorely missed. We'll be recruiting shortly for a new Parkland Manager to lead on conservation and maintenance.

We are also recruiting for three vacancies to join the Board of Trustees. This is a voluntary position with an important governance role, setting strategy and direction for the Park and ensuring we continue to meet the needs of our communities. We're recruiting through the website Trustees-Unlimited.

I am constantly heartened by the fantastic photographs posted by Visitors on the Friends Facebook page, a real reminder of the wildlife and beauty to be found in the Park and great to see so many people appreciating this and skillfully capturing it. Thank you for supporting our work by being a Friend.

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
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