



Friends of Basingbourne Park



Spring 2017

Issue 10



Annual General Meeting & Bat Talk

At our Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 18th October 2016, the current committee was re-elected, as no new volunteers stepped forward.

Our new Police Community Support Officer Ben Bales introduced himself to the attendees and answered members questions on security measures for properties which back onto public land and explained what powers the police have to deal with anti-social behaviour.



Pippistrelle Bat

Our speaker for the evening was Chris Doubell, a member of both Surrey and Hampshire Bat Groups and a registered 'Bat Carer'. He told us about the bats found in the UK and other more colourful bats around the world. He explained about the bat lifecycle and what they eat and drink, how their wings and feet work and how they find their food. This was all done in a fascinating and entertaining way.

Chris explained that if you find an injured bat, you should always wear gloves to handle it, as a few can carry a virus similar to Rabies. If you ring the Bat Conservation Trust they will get a bat carer like Chris to collect the bat. They will then care for it until it is healed and ready to be released. Occasionally bats don't recover fully and can't be released. Chris brought along two of these bats to show us. One was a Pippistrelle and the other a Serotine. It was amazing to be able to observe these bats at such close range.

Chris also explained that when bat boxes are put up, such as those placed in Basingbourne Woods a couple of years ago, it can take a long while for bats to use them. Bats will only look for a new place to live when there is a problem with their current home. However it is good to have bat boxes ready, so that any displaced bat will find a new home quickly.



Serotine Bat

Our chairman Dave Harrison gave a summary of the events in the park over that last year.

The revised plans for a woodland trail from the park to the canal were presented. Residents were given the chance to ask questions about the proposals and to give their opinions on them. The plans were presented to Fleet Town Council at their meeting on Wednesday 4th January 2017.

There have been a number of comments (including from our new Police Community Support Officer) about the current low level of litter in the woodlands, so thanks to everybody who has helped us either during "official" litter picks or just by picking up rubbish while out and about in the park.

The Bat Conservation Trust are currently looking for extra volunteers to help man the out of hours bat helpline. See their website at www.bats.org.uk for more details.

Development Plan Adopted



We are delighted to report that following recommendation from RLA (Fleet Town Council's Recreation, Leisure and Amenities Committee) the Basingbourne Park Development Plan including the Canal Side & Woodlands Walk was adopted by Fleet Town Council on 4th January 2017.

The Development Plan puts forward ideas about the future development of the Park, and proposes a programme of works to achieve this. This includes things such as the plan for an improved playground for over 8's and ways for the park to be maintained.

It is an important document, as it gives Fleet Town Council the information and proof it needs to apply for grants from Hart District Council and other bodies for improvement works to the park.

The inclusion of the Canalside and Woodlands Walk means that now it has been adopted the work can start —See article on the Volunteer Day.

Canalside Woods Volunteer Day



Woodland Walk

The Basingbourne Park Development Plan including the Canal Side & Woodlands Walk was adopted by Fleet Town Council on 4th January 2017. This allowed work to start on the planned Canal Side & Woodlands Walk.

Many thanks to everybody who turned out for our first Volunteer Action Day of 2017!

It was a beautifully sunny but frosty morning. Despite the cold, seventeen Friends of Basingbourne volunteers and half a dozen Explorer Scouts from Calthorpe Park turned out; ready to start the daunting task of improving the woodland & canal side track which loops around from Coxheath Bridge, along the Canal and eventually to the end of Wickham Place.

The group split into two working parties: one worked from Wickham Place and headed towards the Canal, and the second group worked beside the Canal embankment and up towards Coxheath Bridge. The enthusiasm and hard work of both groups was fantastic, and amazingly the work which we had feared may take several weekends was completed by Saturday afternoon.

While the majority of the volunteers sliced through the Brambles, Holly and Rhododendron that overhung the walk way, a few of the other members litter picked along the way. Several sacks were easily filled and novelty items this time included car wheels, bicycle tyres, a burglar alarm, a toy triceratops and a giant cushion.

The track is still very much work-in-progress, and if you try it out, please wear wellies and take care. It is a rough and ready woodland track with bumps, holes, roots and all of the normal hazards, but there are a number of stumps which still need to be removed. There are also a number of places where we plan to install bridges, but for now you will need to paddle across in wellies.

Going forwards, there is still plenty to do. We need to continue clearing the legacy rubbish & fly tipping in the area, to build the bridges, to plant hedges, to arrange for new bins and signage and to finalise the last stretch of track back to Basingbourne Park. There is a long way to go before this project is completed, but what a fantastic start! The next stage of this project will be The Great British Spring Clean on Saturday 4th March 2017 where we will tackle

Christmas Social and Quiz



Quiz Room

Thank you to everybody who turned out for our Christmas Social and Quiz night. We had 5 teams (and a bit of support from the Morris Minor Owners Club) and everybody appeared to have a great time! Not only that, but our Raffle winners must have thought Christmas had come early with a great selection of prizes to choose from! We raised just over £100 towards our new play equipment fund.



The Winning Team

Thanks to Paul for being our Quiz Master; to Ruth & Lindsay for organising the event; to Crookham Street Social Club for hosting us and of course to everybody who donated prizes for the raffle or contributed in other ways.



Winter in the Park



Have you taken a great photo of some wildlife in the woods and heathland of Basingbourne Park? We'd love to see them and share them on our website and in this newsletter.

The Great British Spring Clean



Our event for 'The Great British Spring Clean' was held on Saturday 4th March. This is a national initiative by Keep Britain Tidy following on from the great response to last year's 'Clean for the Queen'.

The main focus for our litter pickers was the new Canal Side & Woodlands Walk and several bags of rubbish were cleared from this area by our determined team.

People enjoying the progression of the Woodlands Walk will now find that the major pieces of rubbish have been removed.

Spring Cleaning the Woods

Bird Boxes in the Woods



Bluetit Nest

In November the bird boxes that have been installed in the woods were taken down and cleaned out. As well as making sure they remain hygienic for use by the birds, this allows us to know more about the birds that are using them.

These pictures show the round nest of the blue tit - made from grass, moss and feathers and complete with 10 unhatched eggs. The parents had obviously abandoned this nest for some reason.

The bird box pictures show a box occupied by a nuthatch. It has built the nest inside with pieces of bark and even a fir cone and has started to seal up the front of the box and inside the entrance hole with mud.

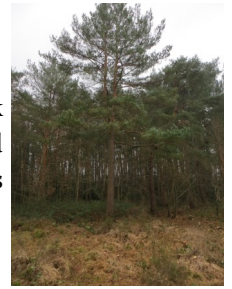


Heathland Scrub Clearing



The Volunteers

Saturday 12th February was our Heathland Scrub Clearance. This work involved clearing scrub from the heathland bordering Award Road and having a controlled burn of the cut materials afterwards. Many thanks to our volunteers including the Explorer Scouts from Calthorpe Park.



Part of the cleared area

Forthcoming Events

Saturday 8th April 2017

Easter Egg Hunt

Come and join us for a children's Easter egg hunt in the park. Collect your clue sheets from the pavilion from 2pm then follow the trail. New for this year - two trails for different age groups: one for Preschoolers/Infants and one for Juniors.

Tuesday 25th April 2017

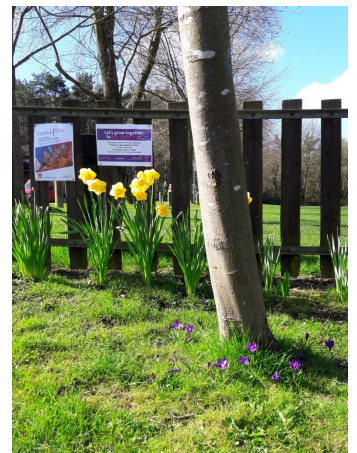
General Meeting

General Meeting at 8pm at Crookham Baptist Church Hall. Our guest speaker will be Susanna Hope talking about Emergency Planning and Flood Prevention.

Saturday 22nd July 2017

The Big Lunch

Come and join us for a picnic and family fun day in the park as part of The Big Lunch initiative.



Our Purple4Polio Crocuses



Enquiries: info@basingbournepark.org.uk

Follow us on Twitter: [@FOBP1](https://twitter.com/FOBP1)

www.basingbournepark.org.uk

Did you know you can become a member of Friends of Basingbourne Park? You will be kept up to date with all the events in the park. It costs £2.50 for an individual or £5 for a family membership per year. We are a not for profit organisation. The membership fees are used to cover our modest overheads and administration costs and provide insurance cover for working parties, volunteer days and social events.

Friends of Basingbourne Park is a not-for-profit organisation set up in 2011 by a group of local residents keen to support the regeneration of the park.

Our areas of interest represent the wide variety of areas within the park and include improving the children's play area, reinvigorating the pavilion, and protecting and improving the environmental aspects of the park including the lowland heath areas.

We do this by liaising with the council, holding action days and social events.

We have talks about the woodland and its wildlife, remove invasive plants from the heathland, clear away litter and paint the playground equipment. There is so much more we would like to do and we welcome anyone who would like to join us.