



# Friends of Basingbourne Park



Spring 2019

Issue 16



## New Playground for Over 8's



The installation of the new Over 8's playground has been completed. You can see photos of how the installation progressed on the website. Thank you to everyone for your fantastic support in raising the funds for this project. The playground was officially opened at the Carols in the Park on 14th December by Fleet Town Council Chairman Bob Schofield.

Minor improvements have since been made, such as the extra surfacing and the height extension to the spinner. It's been lovely to see this being put to good use before & after school, on the weekends and during half term.

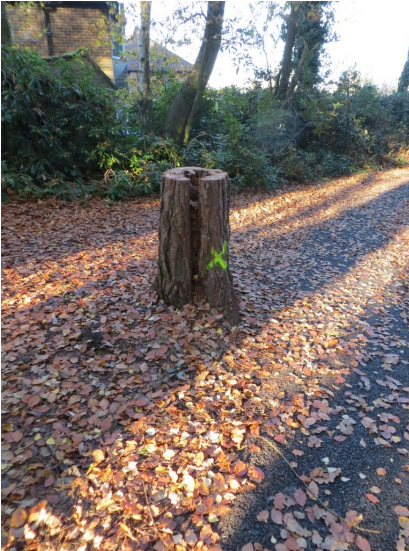


## Members Trip to Wisley

Twenty-five members and their friends came on our trip to the RHS gardens at Wisley. We could offer this free trip as affiliate members of the RHS. It was a lovely day for both young and old: the younger members were able to enjoy outdoor play areas, tree climbing and the Lego Safari animals; and whilst the older members were also welcome to participate in these, there was also access to the extensive grounds, glass houses and of course to the tea rooms.



## Dots and Crosses



Several people have raised questions about the dots and crosses on many of the trees in our park. Unfortunately, as they are not a fun trail to follow, nor are they Valentine's kisses left on the trees. They were placed on diseased, dying or dead trees, during recent tree surveys. They mark trees which need to be felled or trimmed to minimise risk to the general public. The dots indicate branches to be safely removed (rather than being left to fall naturally, but possibly dangerously, in the future). The crosses indicate that the tree needs to be felled. The highest risk trees have already been felled with Priority 2 being addressed now. Priority 3 and 4 will be addressed later. Whilst it is disappointing to see so many trees marked with crosses, this work is necessary to protect park users. To try and minimise the immediate environmental impact, we have asked Fleet Town Council to try and ensure that trees are "totem poled" where possible. This means that

the top and branches are removed, reducing the risk and danger to the public, but leaving some standing wood as habitat for bugs and for birds like woodpeckers, tree creepers and nut hatches. We will investigate if there is a way to utilise cut wood to improve facilities in the park. And in the longer term, we'll see if a programme of replanting is required (rather than waiting for natural regeneration).

If you have any specific questions or queries please feel free to contact [dave.harrison@basingbournepark.org.uk](mailto:dave.harrison@basingbournepark.org.uk) or the facilities manager at Fleet Town Council. If you have any ideas for wood usage, or would like to help with transplanting saplings or other conservation work within the park, please contact [info@basingbournepark.org.uk](mailto:info@basingbournepark.org.uk).

## Pool Creation on Basingbourne Heath

Basingbourne Park's Heathlands have been designated as a SINC, due to some rare wetland species which reside here. Unfortunately, increasing drainage in the surrounding area have caused a reduction in the number of these plants and some species seem to have disappeared.

To try and reverse this decline and to encourage greater biodiversity, the Friends of Basingbourne Park have undertaken some dam building and pool creation. The new pools (created in 2016) proved to be a massive boon for the local wildlife. Within months, they were packed with water weed, newts, damselfly & dragonfly larvae and many other water creatures. However, the pools still largely dry out in the summer months and their location meant that they were often in shade. To address this, FoBP has undertaken further work recently (Jan/Feb 2019):

- Cutting down birch and willow on adjoining heath (reducing shade and water absorption)
- Improved the existing dams to increase the water retention
- Enlarged the existing ditch pools, increasing the surface area receiving sunlight and overall water volume
- Created an extra dam (creating an additional new pool in an area susceptible to drying out)

Going forwards, FoBP will continue to maintain the dams, expand the pools and encourage water retention within the heathland area. Increased water retention will encourage the growth of sphagnum mosses, which in turn act as a sponge to further help capture and retain more water and slows its release into drainage networks (reducing the risk of flooding).



If you would like to help with future work parties or with wildlife surveys, please contact [info@basingbournepark.org.uk](mailto:info@basingbournepark.org.uk).



## 5th Birthday Survey

Friends of Basingbourne Park is now 5 years old. Look out for the posters around the park to see some of the great things we've achieved. Hopefully we've contributed to the wellbeing of all our members and park users along the way. Help us make our second half decade even better than the first. Let us know what's important to you by completing our survey at: [www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SGLLFHZ](http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SGLLFHZ)

## Forthcoming Events

### Easter Egg Hunt - Saturday 6th April 2019

Free Event! (Voluntary Donations will be used to improve the Park)

Come and join us for a children's Easter egg hunt in the park. Collect your clue sheets from the pavilion between 2pm & 3pm, follow the trail and then collect your prize. (Prizes for non-chocolate eaters also available.)

Two trails for different age groups - one for Pre-schoolers/Infants and one for Juniors.

Refreshments will be available at the finish.



### Bat Walk - Wednesday 10th April 2019

Join our April bat survey, meeting at the pavilion at 8pm, then then walking around the woods listening for bats.

### Wildlife Walk - Saturday 20th July 2019

Join us for a Wildlife Walk with local expert Tony Mundell looking at flowers, butterflies and creepy crawlies. Meet at the pavilion at 10.30am.



### Picnic in the Park - Saturday 20th July 2019

Join us for a picnic in the park (directly after the wildlife walk) if the weather is favourable. Meet on the sports field from 12 noon.



Enquiries: [info@basingbournepark.org.uk](mailto:info@basingbournepark.org.uk)

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

[www.basingbournepark.org.uk](http://www.basingbournepark.org.uk)

Membership of Friends of Basingbourne Park costs £2.50 for an individual or £5 for a family membership per year. Members are kept up to date with all the events in the park. 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 volunteer sessions and organising social events.

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