



Friends of Basingbourne Park



Spring 2021

Issue 20



Permanent Orienteering Course

Basingbourne Park has unveiled a permanent Orienteering Course situated in the park and woods. Why not give yourself a bit of a challenge by printing out one of the orienteering maps on our website and finding your way around?

The objective is to use the map to locate a series of control points (marked with a red and white square) and then get back to the start/end as quickly as possible.

You can choose either a suggested course or use the complete map. You can make up your own routes or just see how quickly you can find all the controls. You can compete with friends or family and can also record the codes from each Checkpoint to prove you've visited them. The website has full instructions and also extra information for any groups who wish to use the course.

Obviously due to the current prevalence of Covid-19 please respect social distancing rules and be prepared to wait or give way to those less agile/mobile than yourself.

We would like to thank the following organisations for their support in developing this orienteering course: Southern Navigators Orienteering Club - All maps are produced by Southern Navigators and distributed by permission. Special thanks to Mel Slade and Alan Wallis for their assistance, guidance and support.

Hampshire County Council and Councillor John Bennison & Councillor Steve Forster - For providing funding for equipment and materials

The Committee and Members of the Friends of Basingbourne Park - for installing and maintaining the course.

Grants

We have been every lucky to receive the following grants:

- Orienteering course materials
- Equipment such as a gazebo for events, a post digger tool (which was used to good effect when installing the orienteering posts) and 2m long litter pickers for awkward places.



Basingbourne in the Snow



SINC Renewal



Heathland Heather

In recent years you may have noticed improvements in Basingbourne Park's heathland glades. The Longdown Heath now has much more varied heathland plants including heather and gorse growing across it and has several small new pools which are teeming with wildlife. The Grange Heath has been cleared of scrub, restoring it to most of its earlier size and providing much more pleasant views for walkers using the resurfaced paths. If you're lucky you may even have caught a glimpse of our resident roe deer. This is largely thanks to the hard work of volunteers from the Friends of Basingbourne Park. However, the changes are much more important than meets the eye.

In 2019 Hampshire County Council undertook a wildlife survey of Basingbourne Park and as a result, in 2020 they reconfirmed the Park as a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC). This is primarily due to some "red listed" wet heathland plants which survive in our two heathland glades. (Red list plants are considered to be at risk nationally due to habitat loss and environmental change.)

Early surveys of plants of Basingbourne carried out by Chris Hall in the 1980s record thousands of sundews – tiny, insect eating plants! Unfortunately none were seen by the HCC survey in 2019 although FoBP have managed to find a handful of specimens still clinging on, despite warming and drying conditions. There have been similar reductions in all our red list plants, with some not having been found at all in recent years. The damage has been caused by drainage for residential development lowering the water table locally, and by encroaching scrub and woodland absorbing more water. However the 2020 report paid tribute to work undertaken by FoBP volunteers to clear scrub on the heath and to even restore some areas of heathland previously lost to silver birch and willow saplings during previous surveys.

Surprisingly in these times of reforestation, the 2019 report and other expert conservationist have recommended further removal of the trees encroaching on the glade edges. This is because Lowland Heath habitats are rarer and more valuable ecologically than new woodlands. Also, increasing the size of the glades will help them to recover after adverse events like drought and fire and will keep the areas wetter during hot summer months. FoBP plan to undertake more of this work in the coming years.

The 2019 report also praised the heathland pools we have created. When an old drainage ditch was erroneously dredged in the heart of the wet heathland in 2015, FoBP volunteers leapt into action to build dams to reduce water run off. Within months several new pools had been created and populated by newts, dragonflies, damselflies and many other water creatures. Since then volunteers have expanded & improved these pools and dams to further increase water retention.

The report stated that the area would benefit from more water but this was unlikely to be possible. However, FoBP proposals would retain water in the Park which would normally drain away via the stream. We would build a weir to retain water in the stream, and redirect this to slowly seep across the heathland. We also propose creating bunds. These are small banks of earth which cause rainwater to pool and to be absorbed rather than running straight off into local drains and streams. These would be made by scraping a small area clear of vegetation and the very top soil layer. This would not only slow drainage, but it would also expose the historical seed bank, allowing space for old seeds to grow and encouraging some of our locally threatened plants.

It is inevitable that the area may look unsightly for a short time and some plants may be damaged by such works. However, we hope that you agree it will be worth it to enjoy a much healthier heathland in the years to come. If you would like to help us improve our local environment email: info@basingbournepark.co.uk



Family of Common Lizards



Transplanting Scots Pine Saplings

Despite the restrictions back in October, a few of our volunteers (employing Covid secure practices) managed to transplant around 30 Scots Pine saplings from our heathland areas (where they aren't wanted) to areas of woodland (where they are needed). Many of the pines in our woodlands are quite old and starting to show signs of disease, and younger saplings are targeted by wildlife for food and by generations of children for recreation. FoBP have decided to try and transplant as many pine saplings as possible from our heathland areas to the surrounding woodland.

Forthcoming Events

Please note that unfortunately we have had to cancel the Easter Egg Hunt this year

Family Bat Walk - Wednesday 24th April **TO BE CONFIRMED**

Join our bat survey walk, meeting at the pavilion at 6.15pm, then walking around the woods listening for bats. If possible, please let us know if you plan to attend - in order to provide enough bat detectors.

Dawn Chorus - Sunday 2nd May 2021

Join us for a Dawn Chorus Walk meeting at the pavilion at 4.30am.

To book a place email Friends of Basingbourne Park.

Spring Nature Walk - May 2021

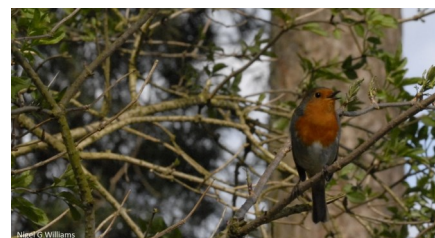
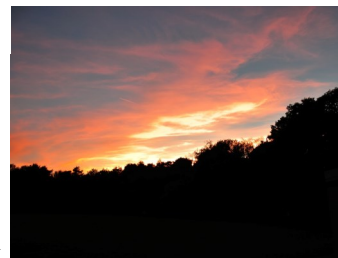
Children's Fun Run - Saturday 12th June 2021 **TO BE CONFIRMED**

Children's Fun Run around Basingbourne Park on Saturday 18th July 2020 at 10am. Suitable for ages 4 - 12 (Parents can run with their children) . £3 entry includes medal. Please register in advance to guarantee medal availability.

Registration opens at 9.30pm, then take part in the warm up, ready for the start at 10am. Course length options of 1km, 2km & 3km available. No dogs or pushchairs allowed on the course. Refreshments will be available for supporters during the event. This event is weather dependent.

Summer Nature Walk - July 2021

Join us for a guided Nature Walk meeting at the pavilion.



Enquiries: info@basingbournepark.org.uk
Follow us: Twitter: @FOBP1
Facebook: @BasingbournePark

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.

www.basingbournepark.org.uk

We do this by liaising with the council, holding volunteer sessions and organising social events.

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.

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.