

Friends of Eaton Park Annual Report, November 2008 – November 2009

Overview

Friends of Eaton Park works with local residents, user groups, Norwich City Council and others to protect and enhance the environment of Eaton Park, and to celebrate and raise awareness of the park, helping make it accessible to everyone.

This is the second year that the group has been formally constituted. Meetings are held on the last Thursday of the month with the Annual General Meeting being held in November. All are welcome but only members can vote.

Income from annual subscriptions is used to support our work, helping Eaton Park to thrive so that it can continue to give pleasure for generations to come.

Events organised by Friends of Eaton Park

Moth Hunt; on Saturday 13 June the Friends organised a free Moth Hunt. Fifty people attended the talk given by Naturalist Peter, who bought some thirty moths for people to look at before setting up a moth trap. The event started at 8.30pm and finished at 11.30pm with at least forty people staying on for the moth hunt, and twenty staying until the end. The friends received positive reports before and after the event in the local press. Findings have been added to those of Norfolk Wildlife Trust, and contribute to a greater understanding of the wildlife of the park.

Talk: on Thursday 25 September the Friends organised a talk by Norwich and District Society of Model Engineers.

Stalls: the Friends took stall at two events in June in the park, Refugee Week and a Brass Band concert. The stall comprised a display about Eaton Park and the Friends and a fundraising tombola, raising £130.41.

Health Walks: The Friends continue to run regular Friday Morning Health walks in the park.

Wildlife and Conservation

In July The Friends received confirmation of an award of £300 from the BBC and Norfolk Wildlife Trust's Breathing Spaces fund. The award also gave the group three days' mentoring by David North of Norfolk Wildlife Trust and this was used to audit and produce a report and recommendations into wildlife in the park.

A sub-committee of three members was set up to oversee the group's environmental work. On their advice, the Friends acted on three recommendations from Norfolk Wildlife Trust's report.

- A selection of bulbs were bought and planted by the top car park.
- Plug plants and wild flowers seeds were bought and planted for a new wildflower meadow.
- An information folder with information about wildlife in the park was put together and placed in the café. It included pages for members of the public to record wildlife they had seen themselves.

Litter picking

Five members of the friends took part in a litter-picking morning. Six black bin bags of rubbish were collected along with a bicycle frame and a tyre.

Communication

The Friends website continues to be developed and has become the most authoritative source of information about groups using the park and events and activities. We have received several photos of the park taken in the late 1920s and during its construction. The vice-Chairman has made recordings of older people's memories of Eaton Park and these have been added to the website. Press and publicity has become even more central to our work and the Honorary Secretary has taken on this role, producing press releases, posters and fliers as required. We have also acquired some display boards thanks to a donation from the winding up of the Friends of Earlham Park.

In July Eaton Park was chosen by the judges of Norwich in Bloom to be included in the places visited. They were impressed by the park.

In October, a TV company, Objective Television, filmed in the park for a forthcoming series on British parks to be shown in May 2010. Dan Cruikshank is the presenter.

Research

The Vice-Chair and one member attended a presentation by Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, which included details on how to undertake community research. Using ideas from this session and local knowledge a questionnaire was prepared and made available for self-completion in the café. 70 members of the public completed surveys and findings are to be made available in November 2009.

Fundraising

Friends of Eaton Park was one of three charities chosen by Waitrose to receive a proportion of its monthly charitable donations - £231 was received. Harry Herring has continued to make and sell cards and bookmarks, with proceeds going to the Friends. Funds have been raised from the tombola and £300 from the Breathing Spaces award.

In July the Friends set up a fundraising sub-committee, which met for the first time in August 2009.

Other

The Eaton Park park-keeper retired during the year due to ill health. It is not clear yet whether he will be replaced.

The Future

Building on the success of its environmental programme the Friends plan to undertake more planting programmes and to promote three wildlife walks.

With the environmental sub-committee well established it is hoped that the new fundraising sub-committee will be successful in raising income from new sources. Findings from our public research will be used to inform our future work.

Finally, the website is certain to be central to the group's communication plans and fulfils a useful community role. We hope to develop it further.