**Newsletter**

**No 33**

**July 2018**

*A round-up of what has been going on in Meadow Park since Christmas*

Friends of Meadow Park

**Corn marigold**

## Work done by volunteers

Volunteers meet on a regular basis once a month, and also in other sessions on an ad-hoc basis as and when necessary. A lot of thought and hard work goes into what we do in Meadow Park and we can be pleased with our efforts.

**January:** the willow bed was tidied up and the cut willow was sorted to be used in a variety of projects from its use by Forest School children and the weaving of larger structures like wigwam style plant supports (as demonstrated at the Carnival). The hawthorn and blackthorn in the Arboretum copse were cut back. The drainage system in Playfield was cleared and cleaned. The areas around the signs put up in Hall Field were cleared ready for the signs about the ground nesting birds. The site where a new bench was planned was cleared and made ready. Brash and branches from pruning were sorted ready for a bonfire. A new Bee World (4) was dug near the Bateman Road entrance and wild flower seeds were planted. This was under water in April and we wondered if any of the seeds would take. However, there has been a fine display of flowers in our new Bee World 4 this spring and summer.

***Our new Bee World 4 under water in April***

**February:** Turf was cut in Bee World 3 (near Bateman Road entrance). A hole in the hedge in Little Meadow was repaired and the trees in the Arboretum were inspected. A fallen tree in the Arboretum copse was pruned. We had a big bonfire.

**March:** Forest School children planted the 15 remaining shrubs and sowed the remaining wild flower seeds in the area around Electric Avenue. The signs about ground nesting birds in Hall Field were put up.

**April:** A deluge of rain caused flooding in the park and we had to cancel the April working session. Later in the month friends/ volunteers managed to tidy up a bit.

**May:** Kingston Brook was cleared of debris and willow was prepared for the Carnival willow weaving event.

**June:** We had a good turn-out of volunteers and a lot of tidying, pruning and clearing was done and rank weeds were pulled.

**July:** The grass growing around the trees in the Arboretum was cleared and the usual tidying was done. It was very pleasing to see the ox-eye daisies and corn marigolds in the bee worlds.

**Ox-eye daisy**

## Events

The **Meet Your Village** event on 7th April was very successful. Many residents took the opportunity to find out more about Friends of Meadow Park and what we do. 27 new members signed up and we raised £120 (£107 from membership subscriptions and £13 in donations).

At the **Carnival** on 23rd June we held a mini-beast session, looking at creatures scooped up in a bucket of water from the brook. This was very popular with children and adults alike. There was also a demonstration of willow weaving.

## Kingston Brook

The brook is not thriving. In fact it is at a tipping point and if nothing is done soon no wildlife will be able to survive in it. The problem of poor/low flow, sewage release, deteriorating channels and weeds/vegetation interrupting the flow needs to be addressed urgently. This is not a task that can be fully undertaken by volunteers as we need equipment, expertise and the backing of the Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board.

Committee members have looked at various 'pots' of money available for water channel improvement and are investigating how to apply for a grant. We are talking with the TVIDB about some 'light touch' work and two of their representatives came to our July committee meeting and some very positive ideas/aspirations were discussed. Watch this space! As ever, funding is difficult but our Parish Council is keen to back any suitable changes we think will make a positive impact on the water courses in the park.

**Arboretum sponsorship**

**Most of the trees in the Arboretum are now well established. Originally 33 native trees were planted.**

**We would like to develop the Arboretum and need your help.**

**You can sponsor a tree in multiples of £10.**

**Your gift is written up in our book of donations and you get a card thanking you for the sponsorship.**

**It is an ideal way of giving a present or commemorating a life or a family event.**

## Arboretum

Sadly there was some vandalism in the park this year. Four of the support posts for trees were uprooted and some of the labels on the trees ripped off. This damage has now been repaired. In future we might not use the labels on the trees as they are growing taller thereby making labels difficult to read. All but one of the trees are growing strongly. An alder died and will be replaced in October. We have been very pleased with the response to our Arboretum appeal. So far we raised over £500.

## Mowing the meadows

The fields were mown early this year because of the risk of fire. The margins and headlands were left unmown as far as possible to soften the effect and possibly help wild life, flowers etc. It was thought that in this exceptionally hot, dry summer the wild flowers will have set their seed and the early mowing should not be a problem for them.

## Hall Field

Wildlife in Hall Field would benefit from it being designated a dog free zone – especially between March and the end of August when birds nest and raise their young. We always tread a fine line when balancing wildlife and resident's requirements. A compromise was arrived at, asking that dogs should be kept on leads in sensitive areas and the access to these areas should be only via designated paths, rather than the more general 'roam' approach in most areas of the park. We blocked off some 'holes' in the hedges around Hall Field to keep access only via designated paths. So far this year it has worked well.

## The Big Butterfly Count

You might have seen David Attenborough on the tv news encouraging people to take part in the Big Butterfly Count. It runs until the end of August. Spend 15 minutes in a sunny place and count butterflies. Submit your findings to www.bigbutterflycount.org. You can download a free app. Last year July and August were dominated by unsettled weather and above average rainfall.

**Comma**

Overall it was one of the wettest UK summers in over a century. January to June 2017 saw above average temperatures, which encouraged butterflies to emerge early. Thus the weather impacted on the butterfly population and numbers were severely reduced last year. This year we are seeing large numbers of butterflies, but the problem is the lack of green leaves for their caterpillars so we are likely to see a big drop in butterflies next year. It helps wildlife experts to have data to work on so if you have time please count some butterflies.

## Young People in the Park

Forest School (Year 3 pupils from Lantern Lane Primary) is going from strength to strength. The children have planted more shrubs and sown wild flower seeds in the area near their log circle in Bateman Field. They continue to enjoy building dens and weaving willow – along with other woodcraft skills. They have help recognising the wild flowers/trees and naming the butterflies and birds. They meet every Monday on a regular basis and on Friday 20th July nearly 90 children from Lantern Lane had a whole day in the park doing lots of exciting things (the highlight was the mini-beast session). They really enjoyed themselves and we are delighted that the children are learning more about the outdoors and using this local facility.

**Log circle used by Forest School**

## Change in Membership Conditions and data protection

We still have an individual membership (for a minimum subscription of **£3**) but we have added a family/household membership for **£5** which covers all ages.

New laws now apply with regard to how we store your data. Although we are not a charity, or bound by these regulations, we think it is sensible to keep in line with preferred policy. Our new membership forms have a tick box to be filled in to show your preferences and your details will not be kept on any data base should you decide not to renew your membership at any point in the future.
Our privacy policy can be viewed on our designated pages on the village web site.

**Work session January 2018**

## Constitution

Our constitution was found to be out of date. Members of the committee carried out the necessary updates and it has now gone to the Parish Council and Rushcliffe Borough Council. Both seem happy with it so it will be put forward for a members' vote at the AGM in November for approval.

***We now have two trolleys. The old one will be used for lighter tasks as it is heavy to manoeuvre.***

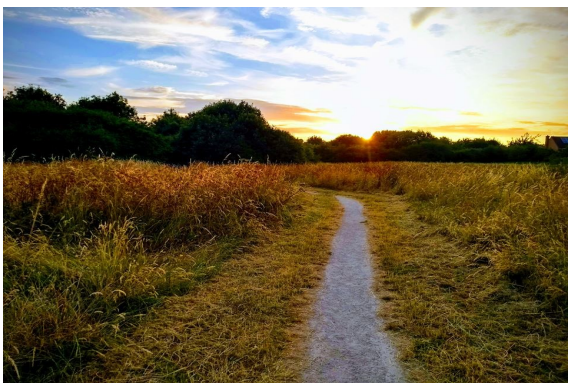
## Donations

So far this year the collecting boxes in the local shops (greengrocer, flower and butcher) have raised £63. We were given £104 from the Dog Show at the Carnival and Manchester Airport (EMA Community Fund) gave us £700. We intend to buy a new trolley to replace our old rusting (but faithful) trolley with some of the money, and perhaps a wheelbarrow. There is no shortage of things to spend the remainder on – seeds, loppers etc.

## Remaining Work Sessions for 2018 (no work morning in August)

**September 8th October 13th November 10th December 8th**

We meet at the depot, behind the Parish Office, at 9.50 am the second Saturday in the month (except August). We work till noon (but there is no need to stay for the whole time). We collect tools and discuss the work to be done. All skills and abilities are needed, from the more physical cutting and digging to the lighter clipping and litter picking. There is something for everyone to do. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.



*Have a look at our Facebook page to keep up to date with what is happening in the park. You can go direct to Facebook and type in* ***Friends of Meadow Park East Leake,*** *or you can access Facebook via our webpage on the village website.*