

The Friends of Therfield Heath and Greens Chairperson's report 2021

The year 2020 to 2021 has seen us all facing the covid 19 pandemic.

The "Friends" however have continued to hold events whenever and wherever possible endeavouring to be covid rules compliant.

We became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation after the efforts of our Secretary Alex Prosser Snelling.

We can now claim gift aid more easily thanks to the efforts of our Treasurer Ray Munden. There is now a donation section on Paypal thanks to Sally Marchant our membership and IT co-ordinator. (Although you can still donate directly to our bank account).

Committee meetings have been held virtually which seems to work well.

Our membership has risen, now standing at 87 members plus 5 honorary memberships given to the Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire his wife and those that visited Church Hill on 26th June 2021.

At our last committee meeting our funds stood at over £5000 which our Treasurer's report will give in more detail.

We have been able to resume litter picks usually held on the second Sunday in the month, meeting outside The Heath Cafe, who have generously donated drinks. We have combined this with 'Meet The Friends' as this seems more appropriate now. The picks are usually led by David Bubbins, we provide the equipment to try ensure everyone is safe, litter pickers and stout rubbish bags so we can dispose of the litter collected, recycling what we can. Our thanks go to all our wonderful volunteers for turning up so regularly.

A lovely surprise this year was being given The Volunteer Green Achievement Award by NHDC, for our work in support of Therfield Heath and volunteer and community building. We have an engraved glass plaque to treasure, and £200 Amazon voucher which so far has been partly spent on Litter picking sticks.

The events of the last year have included:-

A Bat walk organised and led by Sally Marchant in September on the Heath with Bat expert Chantal Helm

Bear Hunt in October on the Heath

New Year quiz held via zoom

Easter Egg trail April on the Heath

Bird song identification of the Heath led by Ray Munden with Bird expert Doug Radford.

Landscape Painting sessions led by Joan Munden (another to be held soon)

Wildflower Identification Walk led by Ray Munden and Janet Rossignol-

Bubbins with Claire Beale Conservation Ranger Magog Down and wildflower expert.

Last week end saw the visit of the Vice Lord Lieutenant Richard Beazley his wife and deputy Lord Lieutenant Dr Richard Woolfson to look at The Coronation Meadow which is Church Hill on Therfield Heath. The party also included Clare Swarbrick Chair of The Conservators John King conservator and Cheryll Whaley -Wilson , myself Ray Munden and Alex Prosser -Snelling The "Friends" awarded a year's honorary membership to our visitors. We received very kind emails in appreciation of their visit and look forward to welcoming them at future events. The point of the visit was to see if a suitable site could be found to plant a tree for the Queens Green Canopy scheme for her Platinum Jubilee in 2022. Discussions are on going as to where a tree will be planted, with the Conservators and scheme organisers.

Projects currently in hand;- we are about to resume the group designing a new sign for Church Hill now that Cheryll Whaley Wilson has been appointed as the Head of Development and Conservation for the Conservators. We are in discussion with the volunteer group that look after Sun Hill common, and the conservators about providing a bench for Sun Hill common.

Sun Hill Common is being regularly used now as there are goal posts again kindly donated by Martin Lewis.

Ann Smith and I are currently preparing a new leaflet about Therfield Heath and Greens, being greatly helped by Don Shewan.

Ann and I plan some further leaflets about Therfield Heath and Greens, possibly even a book at a later date. We would like to thank all those people who have already given us their time talking about their memories and showing us where more information can be found. We would greatly appreciate anyone else who thinks they have information, that could be useful to us if they get in touch.

We have been talking to Cheryll Whaley -Wilson about setting up a volunteer group from among the members and others who may wish to join in to help with conservation projects/work too.

I hope we are moving in the right direction as a Charity and I would encourage members to step up to the committee or if they don't feel able to do that, possibly just run an event with the committee's help. We are looking for two new members to join the committee to inject new ideas.

Finally thank you to everyone on the committee for their dedication and support and to you, our members without whom this charity could not survive.

J Rossignol-Bubbins July 2021

