

Lancaster Green Spaces

Registered UK charity, no. 1046701

Annual Report for the Financial Year ending 31st August 2016

In November 2015, Simon Gershon and Kamilla Elliott attended a 'Defending Your Park' Workshop, organised by the North West Parks Friends Forum. This has been set up to help all Friends groups in the region. We heard some horror stories of other local authorities selling off public land to developers, and learnt about techniques for helping public spaces remain in public ownership.

Only two Greenspace Groups Fora were held, in November 2015 and March 2016. The November 2015 session covered 'Local Green Space' designation and Simon Gershon (trustee) subsequently joined an advisory group to help the City Council evaluate nominations for this planning designation.

Fewer applications were made to us this year under our grants scheme. Grants were awarded (to be claimed in next financial year) to:

- Friends of Moorside Fields - £1,000 towards legal costs to fight the appeal by Lancashire County Council against the award of Town Green Status to the fields
- Friends of Scotch Quarry Park - £1,000 to extend the current raised bed decorative and edible planting in the park.
- Friends of deVitre Gardens - £200 towards start-up costs for the group

Kamilla Elliot joined us as a trustee, bringing the number of trustees to four. Kamilla has been actively campaigning for the rights of residents around Ryelands Park in Lancaster, and has helped park's Friends group in enhancing the area.

In July 2016 we organised a one-day conference for Friends groups. The theme was '*Protecting and Enhancing our Green Spaces*'. The event attracted some 32 participants, and was well received by all. Speakers included representatives from both Friends groups, organisations such as the Wildlife Trust, and Lancaster City Council.

Simon attended a conference in Sheffield on the theme of (Re)wilding, and through the year, helped Paul Bullimore (Community Forester) in recruiting volunteers and sites for the Coppice Group. This project continues to develop.

Lancaster District continues to generate new Friends groups and the trustees gave advice to several fledgling groups. We are pleased that there are several Friends of play areas, as many of these facilities are under threat of closure due to reduced funding. Kamilla raised concerns over inequalities between districts with City Council officers, and elected representatives (including Cat Smith our MP)

Our market stall was borrowed for several events, and the strimmer was borrowed by the Friends of Greaves Park. Our forestry tools were well used by Coppice Group volunteers.