

## Members' Newsletter February 2024

A lot of rain! Watery scenes in the Park.



Of course, the major “flooding” issue in the Park was sewage leakage. The images are too disgusting to include here. There is more on this below.

A **FOBP Trustees’ meeting** was held on January 29<sup>th</sup> at the Hub on the Green. Seven trustees attended and three apologized for absence.

As of 19<sup>th</sup> January, there was just under £13,000 in the bank account. Much of this is committed to future youth work and related activities. Funds are still available for continuing Tai Chi sessions for a few more months and the Trustees are investigating how more funding might be secured. About £800 in General Funds was donated for a memorial tree and there is more news on this below. That leaves just over £3,000 not allocated to any particular purpose. Except for grants, our income is £10 per month, kindly donated to us by Birmingham Open Spaces Forum.

The 2022/23 accounts were externally audited by Alan Johnson and have been approved.

Stuart Hosfield reported on the meeting with **Severn Trent** held on Wednesday January 24<sup>th</sup> in the Park. ST sent their own officers and also present were residents, Council Environmental Health officers, and Sue Amey from the Parks Department.

The Trustees understand that this is not a straightforward matter but at least ST are now responding to our concerns. They should be fitting a smart monitor in the underground tanks to warn them when water levels are rising so they can take action to avoid further spills. Stuart Hosfield, Joan Hosfield and Cliff Allum also attended a drop-in consultation session run by the Environment Agency concerning some long-term plans to alleviate flooding in the Bourn/Rea valley (2027/8 at the earliest). The link between the underground tanks and the sewage system is not clear but there is no doubt that heavy rainfall triggers the spills.

*Note added on 7<sup>th</sup> February:* After another sewage “incident”, a lot of angry residents contacted ST. They did come to clear up and disinfect but we still need a proper resolution.

The most up-to-date information on the proposed **tennis court refurbishment** is that work should start in February. The Council has to sign off the proposal and retain contractors to carry out the work. As yet, the Trustees do not know the Council’s policy on cost of access. Our aim is to secure free access for all appropriate groups e.g. community groups, Tennis for Free, those in full time education or in receipt of benefits, and those with GP ‘sport’ prescriptions.

**Tennis for Free** will be restart on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. The Trustees hope to go ahead with extra tennis activities in the school holidays once funding is confirmed.

Rachael Manamley is working on **upgrading the noticeboard** at the Park entrance on Linden Road. She suggests that all Park notices now carry our logo (see the Header). She has some very good design examples which the Trustees can use to advertise all our activities, including the new tennis season, on that board.

Rachael Manamley and Joan Hosfield met a representative of Birmingham Tree People to choose a place for the **memory tree** and to discuss the possible planting of more trees in the area north of the brook, creating a woodland area. However, before any planting can take place, Birmingham Tree People need to identify the exact position of the underground tanks and the area where ST will be working. In any case, the tree cannot be planted until December 2024 when it will be dormant. The chosen tree is *Sorbus torminalis*, a Wild Service Tree. This will have edible fruit, good for birds.

To plant more trees, we will need to raise funds. Rachael has agreed to lead a **fundraising group** for this and other projects. However, the Trustees really need help on this. If anyone would like to volunteer to join the group you would be very welcome, especially if you have any relevant expertise and/or enthusiasm! Fundraising is probably going to be key to our maintaining and upgrading the Park in the long-term.



Image: [www.vdberk.com](http://www.vdberk.com)

Following the end of detached youth work in the Park, Joan Hosfield will write to the funders, **Awards for All**, to seek their agreement to spend the remaining funds in providing **alternative support for young people** in our area. Rachel Fasham, the newly appointed youth worker at St Francis Centre, is interested in working with us and the Trustees would be pleased for this link to be developed.

**Wild Lives Forest School** has indicated that they could provide further community sessions at £275 per session or £350 for two sessions on the same day. They can also contribute to school holiday activities. Trustees who know the work of Wild Lives remarked on the high

standard of provision. You can find out more about them on Facebook. It may be that some of the remaining Awards for All funding could be used for this purpose. However, this is another activity needing fundraising. Please volunteer!

Joan Hosfield attended the reconstituted **BVT Green Forum** on Wednesday January 24th. The initial meeting was purely aimed at deciding terms of reference etc. Sixteen people attended. It was agreed that the group was too large to be effective at dealing with all aspects of a 'green' BVT. It may well be divided into two interest areas with one looking at sustainability of housing etc. and one looking at green spaces. Although our Park is not owned by BVT, it might be useful if a Trustee liaised with the green spaces group. This is to be decided.

One of our members, Richard Sanzari, contacted the Trustees about the unfortunate amount of **graffiti** that has appeared on the sheds this winter. Some of his photos are below:



Subject to confirmation, the Trustees agreed to a painting session on Sunday February 25<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm. Meet in the Park by the huts. Wear appropriate clothing including gloves.

The Trustees discussed the forthcoming **AGM**, which will probably be in March. More details will follow later. All members are entitled to vote at the AGM, for example on election of Trustees. By the Constitution, at least three Trustees must stand down each year and be replaced or re-elected. Unless other Trustees wish to resign, the longest serving Trustees are required to stand down. If you wish to be a Trustee, please look out for notices concerning the AGM. As a member, you will get a specific invitation to this event.

We are already well into 2024 but this is the first Newsletter in which we can wish you a Happy New Year!