

**FRIENDS OF
ELLINGTON
PARK**



FRIENDS OF ELLINGTON PARK

ANNUAL REPORT

MARCH 2015



A hearty welcome to all our members, old and new, and we hope you will enjoy reading our Annual Report.

This report, and the work of the Friends, is structured around the Aims of the Friends of Ellington Park, as per our Constitution. These are:

- To support and encourage the use of Ellington Park
- To promote awareness of the history of the Park
- To support and develop an improvement to facilities for recreation and education
- To encourage a sense of community around the area of the Park
- To provide a safe environment for wildlife and to promote such schemes as will benefit and nurture wildlife
- To keep all members of the Friends informed and consulted regularly and to encourage Park users to join and become Members
- To affiliate with any Body whose objectives may be of benefit to the Park
- To raise funds through grants and fundraising activities to support the Park
- To represent the interests of the users of the Park in consultation with the Local Authority and other bodies

AIM: *To support and encourage the use of Ellington Park*

All activities and events we do are to promote the continued use and appreciation of the Park.

The most significant item is the toilet that we had put in the Park as part of the Wildlife Garden Project; groups of children as well as families and others now have access to a (disability) toilet. It has not been open very much yet, but once the shops are officially opened on the 11th of April, it will be open more often and for longer periods.

This year we had groups of school children planting poppy-shaped flower beds for the WW1 Commemoration Day in July; some also made fabulous banners with poppy designs that were displayed on the day. We also used park space to assist Ramsgate Arts to make a huge hanging which then went above the entrance to the Ramsgate Tunnels.

There were also children seed scattering in the wildlife garden. Now there is an outdoor classroom in the wildlife garden area we are assured that local schools will be holding nature study and pond dipping classes. There will also be a 'Teacher's Throne' made by Nirav Patel installed in March.

We have held several Litter Pick mornings which not only makes the park inclusive for those that participated, but also more attractive for visitors. It is hoped that the very small minority of park users that drop litter (and leave their dog's mess) will become more aware of this issue and stop their antisocial behaviour.

AIM: *To promote awareness of the history of the Park*

We have been in discussion with the Heritage Lottery Fund and TDC and between us negotiated a new bid, which was submitted at the end of February, for £1,000,000 with TDC support. [Unfortunately we were unsuccessful in our bid last year as TDC did not feel able to support the bid.] We will know if we are through to Stage 2 in June ... so we will let you know developments as they occur.

It has not been an easy task to let people know of the history of the Park whilst we do not have an area in which to display memorabilia, photos or artefacts, although plenty of people tell us about how they were brought up on stories of various ghosts in Ellington Park! We are grateful to local historian, Catriona Blaker, who has researched the history of the Park and we have included her history in our Heritage Lottery Fund bid.

We have also produced our own “potted” history which has been distributed to all our members and will be available from our shop from Easter. You will have seen the fabulous dog sculptures in the Wildlife Garden which are a direct link to the savage murder of Catherine Sprackling and so to the fascinating history of the Park.

We are also gathering Ellington Park memorabilia so that, when successful with our Heritage Lottery bid, an area will be created for display. Our loveliest object to date is a pink lustre Ellington Park teapot, circa 1895.

AIM: *To support and develop an improvement to facilities for recreation and education*

Towards the end of 2014 the Friends secured funding from the Community First Fund to install an outdoor table tennis table which will be free for all to use and we hope that it will create recreation for a whole new group of Park users. As outdoor equipment it is fireproof, graffiti proof, theft proof and hammer proof. It will be situated in a discreet position which will neither detract from the beauty of the Park nor make players feel self-conscious.

Our Community First grant (2013) allowed us to commission the magnificent 3D Art in the Park; Steve Andrews of TribalAnimal has carved a fairy toadstool, owls, a squirrel, butterflies, snake and much more into dead tree stumps. We are also very grateful to a private donor who paid for a sailor and a badger. Steve also created “Tommy” for our WWI Commemoration Day last July. People from all over the area and beyond are coming into the Park to admire these unique carvings which not only enhance a public area of Ramsgate but help fulfil our aim of recreation and education.

AIM: *To encourage a sense of community around the area of the Park*

A sense of community around the Park is never so obvious than at our events. The May Fayre in particular is always so very well attended and the atmosphere is always so friendly and inviting. The WWI Commemoration Day was very well attended despite thunder, lightning and heavy downpours; the banners made by local school children were especially admired.

The Friends feel that once the Ellington Emporium is open there will be even more community togetherness as people will gravitate towards the books and bric-a-brac and have a chat whilst helping us raise much needed funds for the Park.

Without our own weatherproof community area, it is difficult to reach people but we have triumphed with our Community Coffee Mornings which are held in the Flying Horse Pub every Thursday morning from 11am. We are overjoyed by the way it has taken off and look forward to another year with an average 20 people at each - with rarely the same faces each time. Firm friendships have been made, information swapped, cakes baked and restaurant meals arranged. It takes enormous courage to walk into a pub alone but many have done it and now feel less isolated.

AIM: *To provide a safe environment for wildlife and to promote such schemes as will benefit and nurture wildlife*

This time last year we were thrilled by the fact that, thanks to the Big Lottery and the amazing support of the people of Ramsgate, we won the People’s Millions and our Spring Newsletter showed Bev signing the Licence from TDC which gave the Friends the freedom to go ahead with the Wildlife Garden Project.

2014 saw Ellington Park get its first expanse of water since the time of the First World War with the installation of the magnificent well stocked pond, which was followed by a bog garden. Also installed are insect hotels, over 1,000 native shrubs which will form a thicket, thousands of native wild seeds scattered and even a posh hedgehog house installed.

Still to come are the plants for the Sensory area as well as flowers and herbs; we have to wait for the appropriate weather conditions, so this will happen during the spring and early summer.

We thank our army of volunteers who have been out in all weathers digging away for the benefit of and to encourage immigration of wildlife into Ellington Park's. When officially opened on April the 11th, it will be a tranquil spot to sit and enjoy the beauty that is Ellington Park.

AIM: *To keep all members of the Friends informed and consulted regularly and to encourage Park users to join and become Members*

Our newsletters are sent out four times a year and have grown in size from one double-sided sheet to four pages! It could easily be eight pages as there is always so much interesting local information, both old and new, which we would love to include. This would necessitate increasing the membership fee, so we feel it best to leave things as they are for now. Therefore we are considering introducing an "Ellington Park Year Book" and would very much like to include oral histories, so please contact Bev on 580990 if you would like to be involved.

We thank all our very loyal members for sticking with us and we can't wait for the day when we can announce work on the bandstand will begin!

We do not aggressively seek new members but we do find that having spare newsletters to hand out to interested Park users does pay dividends as they invariably want to be kept in the loop and so they join! If you would be willing to deliver some newsletters to your local streets please contact Dianne on 279275.

We also keep our two Park noticeboards up to date with Park and community news and we are part of the electronic display in the Custom House.

AIM: *To affiliate with any Body whose objectives may be of benefit to the Park*

The Friends of Ellington Park love working with other Bodies! The list is long and apart from TDC we also work with Ramsgate Town Council, the Ramsgate Society, Ramsgate Event Organisers, Newington Community Centre and St. Lawrence Church as well as the Police, Fire Brigade, local schools, the Fegans, and the Broadstairs Shed. We have an active Facebook group and information is regularly swapped with other groups such as the Friends of Ramsgate Seafront and Ramsgate Town Facebook.

AIM: *To raise funds through grants and fundraising activities to support the Park*

Our big events are major fund raisers and we think that last year's May Fayre was the busiest ever and with a lovely atmosphere. We had our WWI Commemoration Day in July and gave half the profits to the Poppy Appeal. We must thank Clive Richards for his support and help in organising that event.

In the old days one would apply for a grant by writing a letter and perhaps be called in for an interview but, these days, one needs a degree in form filling to negotiate the minefield that is grant applications!

Luckily our Chair, Bev is happy to do this difficult form filling process and, as already mentioned, we have been successful with the People's Millions, two Community First Development Grants and one from Debbie and Andrews Sausages towards our World War One Commemoration Day.

We also thank KCC and Tony Ovenden for their grants towards beautifying the containers.

The Friends are exceptionally lucky to have the support and endless hard work of John Walker, Vice Chair of the Ramsgate Society. With the formation of the Ellington Park Regeneration Trust, John has spent nearly three years working on the Heritage Lottery Fund application for restoration of the bandstand, flint wall and Pulhamite rock area and reinstatement of toilets and refreshments. Special mention must also be made of the hard work and contribution from Neil Camp, Ken Read, Catriona

Blaker and Owen Frame; not forgetting hours of contribution from Bev Perkins and Joseph Dance from the Committee of the Friends of Ellington Park.

We hope that all the above explains how the Friends of Ellington Park Committee has been working away through the last year and always with our Constitutional aims in mind.

AIM: *To represent the interests of the users of the Park in consultation with the Local Authority and other bodies*

It is sad to report but in 2014 the children's playground was attacked by arsonists on two occasions. Due to TDC insurance procedures it is not known when this will be reinstated.

The Friends met with Laura Sandys MP, TDC, the Police and Fire Brigade and, together, we are exploring costs and practicalities of CCTV and other security measures.

The Friends of Ellington Park Management Committee

The current Committee comprises of Bev Perkins - Chair, Pat Scutt - Treasurer, Dianne Reilly - Volunteer Co-Ordinator, Sue Martin – Minutes Secretary and Advisor, Joseph Dance and Alan Linfoot. Although not a committee members, Chris Scutt supports the Friends by taking responsibility for Communications, and Peter Scutt looks after Membership.

We bid a fond farewell to Trevor Shonk who left the Committee last year to pursue his political ambitions. He was our “man with a van” for five years ...

... and a fond welcome to Alan Linfoot who joined the Committee last year and is already proving to be most helpful and committed.

We were bitterly disappointed last year when the company we ordered a container from went into insolvency and all our hard earned money was lost. We cannot thank Ramsgate Town Council enough for coming to our rescue and helping us to get new “shops”.

Last but not least

There are too many people to thank everyone who has donated their time, effort, goods and cash in 2014 towards a better Ellington Park individually, but you know who you are and we would like you to know that we are very, very grateful.



