

## **Friends of Princes Park annual report 2017-8**

This has been a mixed year for Princes Park.

We were fortunate to have grants from the Merseyforest and from the Austin Smith Foundation, and support from the Council to plant trees around the tennis courts over autumn/ winter. We started with a planting afternoon with St Silas Primary School, a Forest school. The children planted groups of whips near the courts, to slightly screen the courts. They were very enthusiastic and particularly enjoyed the very many worms we found! We followed this by planting loosely around the courts and we dedicated the trees to peace in Yemen. Liverpool Friends of Yemen and other local people helped us. Unfortunately, the weather this winter was atrocious, with rain, hail, sleet and wind. This dampened our spirits somewhat and may have affected the health of the trees. 3 Bhutan pines we planted were water logged from the start, but this probably helped them during the very dry weather. Unfortunately, the very dry summer weather resulted in several of the newly planted trees dying, despite heroic watering by FOPP members. We will be replanting them this winter. If you can volunteer to help us (we need you!) please see email request and website.

In spring FOPP was shortlisted for the ECHO Environmental awards, which involved a very nice dinner in the Isla Gladstone conservatory and a chance to thank those who have supported FOPP in the park. Sadly, we did not win, but we received great support from the organisations we work with. We produced a report on our tree work over the last 14 years which is on our website.

Various organisations have held events in the park including local churches, RSPB, Squash Nutrition (the fantastic Solstice day) and local Kurdish refugees who held Newroz, a new year celebration, in the park. FOPP held walks to look at wildlife and trees in February and May, each attended by over 25 people.

In August we held a picnic in support of the Nelson Mandela memorial campaign. Although rain was forecast it remained clear and we met many new faces, all interested in the park and the Memorial. We had a raffle and a local woman won two prizes. But sadly the money we raised (£25) was stolen, one of the hazards of inner city life. Currently the Mandela plans are with the Planning department and we await developments with baited breath!

Final surveys are being carried out on the lake prior to refurbishment, hopefully over the winter. Again, we are waiting with excitement. Sadly, this summer the lake water level was very low and our swans' 7 lovely cygnets all died, as did the female swan. It is likely that the died from Avian Botulism, due to the low water levels. Feeding bread to lake birds increases the danger of this condition. We hope to post a notice of foods which are safe for birds to eat.

Parkrun continues: 250-300 runners every Saturday. Some have volunteered with FOPP over the year, and we would like to thank them and all FOPP members who have volunteered with us this year, including our very active Tree group- for their enthusiasm and hard work. Thanks also to the FOPP Exec committee, to everyone in FOPP and all the people who have supported and worked with us over the last 12 months including Glendale, Council officers and local Councillors. We attend the Liverpool Parks Friends Forum to keep up to date on the future of Liverpool parks.

Our finances are in relatively good shape and we continue to apply for grants for our work in the park and to fundraise. Thanks very much to those involved.

For our AGM (Sept 13<sup>th</sup>) see website. We will be planting more trees and thinning existing plantations this autumn/winter and hope to do more planting with a local primary school. We are looking, as always, for people to help-whatever your skills we can use them: visit our website for more information.

Finally, and very excitingly, on October 5<sup>th</sup> the Giants will be coming to Princes Park to have a picnic. This should be a fantastic day. Please try to come! FOPP will be making dream catchers to decorate our Henge on 19<sup>th</sup> September and decorating a picnic blanket for the day at our AGM-see Website for details.

Katy Gardner

Chair, Friends of Princes Park

September 2018

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