

Friends of Princes Park annual report 2015-16

Another great year for Princes Park with many more people commenting on how lovely the park is. The Henge continues to be an attraction and a place for people to walk and sit and reflect. We have planted more trees including magnolias and a Bhutan pine with beautiful silvery needles. We continue to coppice our existing plantations which are flourishing. In the spring and early summer they are a mosaic of blossom and colour. We will be doing more tidying, coppicing and planting this autumn. We need your help! See website for more details.

We held an autumn tree walk to look at our exotic trees, planted 2 years ago, with their autumn colours now starting to show as they grow (25 people attended). We also had a glorious spring wildlife walk (at least 30 people attended... I lost count!). Friends and visitors to the park helped to identify birds, butterflies trees and wildflowers. We were joined by a local representative of the RSPB and hope to collaborate with them on a wildlife trail in the future. We have also been in touch with a local school hoping to become a Forrest School and we are always keen to have contact with local schools.

Our Chatsworth visit 2 years ago introduced us to the Friends of Birkenhead Park, some of whom joined us on our walks. Fraser Robertson continues to update and improve the website he created for us and hopes to link QR codes for our exotic trees to our website. We hope to have a FOPP visit to Birkenhead park soon.

With Friends of Birkenhead Park we had a joint stall at the Big History show at St Georges Hall in April. There was lots of interest and many people telling us their childhood memories of being in the park including memories of the "cocky watchman" ringing the bell to close the park at night, rolling down the "roly-poly" hill, and eating ice cream old at the boathouse.

FOPP is delighted that Squash Nutrition has held several events in the park this year including breakfast at the Spring Equinox, and all day event at the Summer Solstice on 20th June starting with over 30 people doing yoga at 4.15 am and ending with breaking the fast at 9.48pm. With Squash we held a healthy breakfast and litter pick for Park-runners and volunteers in April which over 100 people enjoyed (and some did litter picking as well!).

Parkrun continues weekly on Saturday at 9am with over 200 runners regularly every week (record = 328 runners!). We are really pleased to have this regular event in our park and it has introduced many new people to Princes Park. We hope to have a mobile food van in future to offer breakfast to Park-runners on a regular basis. Also in future we hope we may be able to offer Walking for Health in Princes Park. Watch this space!

We await with interest further developments in the Mandela memorial project which is moving forward currently (proposal to create a space in the park to commemorate Nelson Mandela). We are having an update about this at our AGM on 20th September (6pm Crawford House L8 all welcome).

This year continues to be difficult for Liverpool City Council as it faces massive cuts. The independent parks and greenspace review has reported (website) and the council is considering several options for funding of parks (link to report).

Despite this the Council has found funding to investigate, maintain and improve the lake. Work is starting to explore options shortly. We look forward to working with the Council in imaginative ways to make our park even more wonderful over the next few years.

We would also like to thank all FOPP members who have volunteered with us this year on tree planting, coppicing, litter picking and leading walks. Thanks to our very active Tree group for their enthusiasm and hard work. Thanks also to the FOPP exec for their support.

Thanks to everyone in FOPP and all the people who have supported and helped and worked with us over the last 12 months including Glendales, Council officers and local councillors. We are looking as always for people to get involved, whatever your skills we can use them! We need a Facebook page! If you can help get in touch!

Next event: "What's great about Princes Park" –walk through the park 2pm Sat 20th Sept. meet at Sunburst Gates. See website and FOPP email for more details.

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