

Friends of Wollaton Park

Members Newsletter / October 2024

Kevin Steps Down as Chair



After four years of dedicated service, at the Annual General Meeting Kevin stepped down from his role as Chair of the FoWP.

Since the very early days of FoWP, Kevin has been an invaluable member actively participating in and leading numerous volunteer initiatives.

His passion for preserving the park's heritage was evident in his commitment to maintaining Lodge One, the gateway to Wollaton Park, and his involvement in hall tasks and the upkeep of the 508 War Memorial. He was the original "Task Master", organising many regular task days.

Kevin took over as Chair during the autumn of 2020, during the pandemic, and was instrumental in successfully steering FoWP and its activities in the park and walled garden during that challenging period. The importance of this to our volunteers and the wider community should not be underestimated.

During his tenure as Chair, Kevin sought to foster stronger connections with the wider community by actively participating in volunteer projects, engaging corporate groups, and supporting young volunteers through the Duke of Edinburgh scheme. A significant achievement under his leadership was the registration of FoWP with HMRC, enabling us to use Gift Aid to increase donations by up to 25%.

While Kevin is stepping down as Chair, his dedication to FoWP remains unwavering. He will continue to serve on the committee, providing guidance to the new leadership team and taking on various future volunteer tasks.

Nottingham Award

At the 2024 Goose Fair Dinner and Nottingham Awards, Friends of Wollaton Park were announced as winners of a Nottingham Award in recognition of its contributions to Wollaton Hall & Park.

Helen Mitchem, commented, "It was such an honour to collect the award and I want to thank everyone who contributes to our group, to our park, to our events and tasks and to the stunning volunteering work that we undertake, we are community champions ❤️"



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Message from Helen Mitchem - FoWPs new Chair.



In September I was elected as Chair of our fabulous group at our AGM. I was very proud to take the baton from Kevin who has done a sterling job, very big boots to fill (with my little feet!)

Oh my goodness, what a first month... 1 week in I received an invitation to the Annual Goose Fair dinner where FoWP won the first ever "Group" award in the dinner's 700-year history! Then 2 weeks later our brilliant team held the first ever fashion show in the Hall, where many a fine outfit has been paraded over the years. This was our first fund raiser for the fountain appeal - more details below.

Who knows what the next few months will involve, I'm excited to see!

Volunteering Update



Conservation activities in the park focused on Derby Road field, where invasive plant species were cut back to preserve the acid grassland, the war memorial cleaned, and

at a second session, the grass was raked to allow light to get to the wildflowers.

In the Walled Garden, there was construction work on the damaged outer wall.



Volunteers also contributed to a Hedgehog survey involving 30 wildlife cameras in the park. The results of the survey will be shared in due course.



For more information on volunteering activities undertaken see our activity blogs:

<https://friendsofwollatonpark.org.uk/news/>

Park News in Brief

- Splendour will return in 2025.
- The scaffolding has been removed from the Hall



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Formal Garden



During September the garden was closed to address safety concerns with several trees on the Cedar Lawn. A few of the trees were removed due to a fungal disease to prevent it spreading.

The planting in the formal garden this year was restricted due to council funding challenges. The good news is the Wednesday gardening team has worked alongside staff to come up with alternative, more

cost-effective, planting plans based around hardy perennials rather than annual bedding plants. The design of the new beds has been agreed and re-planting will happen over the coming months. The Hardy Plant Society and Walled Garden group also provided valuable feedback on the design.



Wollaton Walled Garden Open Days

The Walled Garden Open days are going from strength to strength with the garden on for the City's Heritage Open days as well as holding an Autumn Fair.

For more about the Walled Garden Project, see our website:

<https://friendsofwollatonpark.org.uk/walled-garden/>

Fashion Show



The fashion show held to raise funds for the fountain restoration, was sold out, raising over £750 from ticket sales, raffle and refreshments.

Many thanks to the team of volunteers who took the 1200 items of clothing up the hall steps into the hall. Thankfully a significant number were purchased, so there were fewer to return at the end of the night!

Do you have any other suggestions for a fundraising event?
Could you help us organise it?



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Fountain Restoration

The plans to restore the fountain and ornamental pond are progressing. The team has engaged several suppliers to assess the restoration options, establish the design and environmental choices that will need to be made, as well as get budgetary costs. More information will be provided as soon as we have news to share. If you are interested in helping the project team, please do get in contact with us.

Park Walks



Colin Robbins hosted a members' tree walk looking at the 10 species of Oak tree in the park, and learning some of the history of how they came to be there.

We hope to run more members walks in 2025 – if you are passionate about an aspect of the park, and would be happy to lead or work with us in putting a walk together to share knowledge with members, please do get in touch.

FoWP Committee

At the AGM the new committee was elected as follows.

- **Chair:** Helen Mitchem
 - **Vice-chair:** Rob Kirkwood & Colin Robbins
 - **Treasurer:** Chris Daniel
 - **Minutes Secretary:** Peter Green
 - **Walled Garden Lead:** Andy Jackson
 - **Membership Secretary:** Jane Parfitt
 - **Members:** Kevin Beswick, John Astil, Shobna Bazzaz
- If you would like to join us, please get in contact.

Open Meetings

We will be holding 4 open meetings this year, which are free to attend and will be open to all FoWP members. The meeting will be an informal opportunity to meet the committee, park staff and local councillors to discuss matters related to the park.

They will be held at 6PM in the Royal British Legion in Wollaton on the following dates:

- Wednesday, December 4th
- Wednesday, February 5th
- Wednesday, April 2nd
- Wednesday, June 4th

Membership

Have you remembered to renew your membership? In September, the annual membership of £5 was due. The simplest method is to point your phone camera at this QR code, which will take you to a PayPal page to donate now.



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