

Friends of Wollaton Park

Members Newsletter / October 2025

Message from Helen, FoWP Chair

I'm writing this welcome note after returning from the Autumn Walled Garden event. It was shortened by Storm Amy to 1 rather than 2 days, but as always, our dedicated volunteers adapted plans and worked with the weather. Autumn is a beautiful time of year there's fun (for all ages) to be had with the leaves – I enjoyed watching some swirling around in the storm and hedgehogs etc use them to hibernate in. We've put the hedgehog cameras out around the park again this month, please do help filter through the photos when they get downloaded and do your bit for citizen science and enjoy the wildlife you spot... will you gain the accolade of finding Wollaton Park's first hedgehog?

Thanks to all, Helen

Editorial note: Details on how to view the images will be circulated once they are ready for review.

AGM



September saw us hold the AGM in the Hall. As we assembled, Wendy Smith played the Hall Organ. In her Chair's report, Helen took us through the highlights of the

year, during which you have contributed over 16,000 hours of voluntary work to the Park, with the activities covered in these newsletters. We will provide more details on the volunteer numbers in our next newsletter.

Helen also paid tribute to Chris Daniel and Rob Kirkwood.



Chris (left), who is stepping down after a phenomenal 12-year tenure as Treasurer! Chris's dedication goes beyond simple bookkeeping—he engineered the financial stability we rely on today. He was the force behind securing our Gift Aid status, establishing our banking, launching EasyFundraising, and meticulously managing every donation, membership payment, and project budget. His service has been invaluable, and we are profoundly grateful

Rob (right) has been with the Friends of Wollaton since the very idea of a volunteer group to support the park was first mooted. He was the natural choice for the position of chair



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of the group in its first year and was instrumental in drawing up our constitution. After those early years he stepped down and has stayed as vice chair ever since. He has been key to keeping the group on track with procedures and has represented us on external groups like the Open Spaces Forum. He has been a regular at our guided walks in the park and contributed, sagely, at our monthly committee meetings. He has decided that it is now time to take a step back and we are delighted that he has agreed to stay on as a committee member.

Chris and Rob's hard work and dedication have been invaluable, helping create the foundations for what FoWP has become, and we thank them both for their years of service.



We welcome Adam Wright to the team as Treasurer, who will be taking over from Chris.

The committee for the next 12 months was elected as follows.

- **Chair:** Helen Mitchem
- **Vice-chair:** Colin Robbins
- **Treasurer:** Adam Wright
- **Minutes Secretary:** Peter Green
- **Membership Secretary:** Jane Parfitt
- **Walled Garden:** Andy Jackson
- **Committee Members:**
 - Kevin Beswick
 - John Astil
 - Shobna Bazzaz
 - Geoff Pennington
 - Rob Kirkwood
- **Ex Officio:**
 - Wollaton West Local Councillors
 - NCC Wollaton Park Management Team

Bat Walk

Following the AGM Lynn Victor from Nottinghamshire Bat Group led a group of about 20 members on a walk down to the lake, where we saw several species of bat - Videos of some of the bats have been shared on our social media channels.



Membership Renewal

If you have not already done so, please renew your membership for 2025/26 now to ensure you don't miss any future newsletters and invitations to future activities.

As a volunteer-run organisation, we rely on your cooperation to keep things running smoothly. Timely renewals allow us to focus our energy on improving the park instead of sending out reminders.

You can renew easily online:

<https://friendsofwollatonpark.org.uk/join/#renew>

If you decide not to renew, please let us know so we can update our records.

Park News in Brief

- Age UK and Ramblers have concluded their regular weekly Friday morning walks in the park. The final walk took place on September 26th, as changes in funding made it unfeasible to continue the program.
- The scaffolding on the west side of the Hall, to enable window and gutter repairs, has been removed.

For the latest on these news stories, see:

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

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Open Meetings

There was a fantastic turnout for the October open meeting at the Head Gardener's Cottage - our largest open meeting attendance to date! Many thanks to Rachel for answering all of our questions, covering plans to coordinate volunteering across the park, collaboration with Park and Open Spaces / Green Guardians, and supporting volunteer rangers out of hours. New opportunities for small grants in the Walled Garden were also covered!

Next year, the park marks a major milestone in its 500-plus-year history - 100 years of Wollaton Park being open to the public under council ownership. We discussed ideas for "Century of Wollaton Park" celebrations.

Do you have any suggestions for marking this centenary?

Also, let us know if you'd be interested in helping out—perhaps even by attending an event dressed in 1926 fashion!

Future open meeting dates (subject to confirmation)...

- 3 Dec 2025
- 4 March 2026
- 6 May 2026
- 1 July 2026
- 2 Sep 2026 (AGM)

Walled Garden Artist Residency

An artist residency is taking root, as local artist and independent curator Jennie announces the formation of the Walled Garden Artist Residency at Wollaton Park.

Jennie, who has been a regular visitor to the Walled Garden since the pandemic, describes the space as having evolved "into something truly inspiring." The artist noted she had "long hankered to inhabit the space myself as a place for creating art." After connecting with the garden team, she offered her expertise to create a bespoke residency program for artists.

The project is still in its infancy, and Jennie states that "no funding has been secured, and no official plans are in place." She has created an Instagram account to document

the project's journey, hoping to "begin having conversations with folks who might help me to make this happen."

More: <https://www.instagram.com/p/DN-VsI2DFbY>

Archaeology

An Archaeological excavation took place on the Cambridge Road field in September. They searched for the boundary wall of the Prisoner-of-War Camp and a medieval field boundary and uncovered barbed wire, shreds of clothing, and a possible boot heel plate that may link to the 1945 camp, which housed German and Italian prisoners. They also recovered artefacts dating back to the Medieval period!



Photos: York Archaeology

<https://bsky.app/profile/yorkarchaeology.bsky.social>

Calendar

2026 Calendars with seasonal photographs from the park are available from Russ. These calendars raise vital funds for the Walled Garden Project.



They are on sale in the Walled Garden, or there is an order form on the shop page of our website:

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

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Deer

During the summer, there have been many reports to FoWP, Volunteer Rangers and Park Staff about visitors getting too close to the deer and feeding them. This can be dangerous and causes the deer to lose their natural fear of humans, leading them to seek out picnics and other harmful human food.

We're working with park staff, volunteer rangers, and local councillors to find solutions and we welcome your suggestions. One recent initiative is a deer information pop-up stand, which is open during busy times. At the stand, you can chat with volunteers about the deer and even handle antlers.



Thank you to Gila for coordinating the great deer information displayed at the stand, and to all the fantastic volunteers who spent their time there talking to park visitors. Your support made a real difference!

For more information about the deer, please visit our deer information page and blogs

<https://friendsofwollatonpark.org.uk/wollaton-park-wildlife/deer/>
<https://friendsofwollatonpark.org.uk/tag/deer/>

Botanic Garden

The Nottingham Hardy Plant Society, who maintain the Botanic Garden (the walled garden in the stable block), were awarded the Hardy Plant Society President's Team Award, for all the hard work that goes into maintaining the garden and showcasing hardy plants. Well done everyone.



Walled Garden



In September, a coffee morning was held in the garden, raising £450 for the Macmillan Cancer Trust.

The Walled Garden Heritage Open Days saw over 200 visitors. The Autumn Festival was limited to Sunday after Storm Amy closed the park on Saturday. Nevertheless, 700 visitors attended, greeted by two gardeners, helping to raise £3,000 for the Walled Garden Project.



Work has begun on the early stages of the bothy restoration.



For the latest news on the Walled Garden, follow the blog...
<https://friendsofwollatonpark.org.uk/walled-garden/blog/>