

Friends of Lowndes Park

Newsletter V—April 2008

The Chairman Writes

As someone who joined the Friends of Lowndes Park last year you have a lot to be proud of.

Without a viable Friends of the Park group the lottery bid was dead in the water.

We had set ourselves a target of 101 members in order to impress on the Heritage Lottery Fund that we were a credible group and when the bid was submitted on March 31st we had 120 members.

We helped with the application offering our views and suggestions and using your comments to take the hard decisions as to what was a priority and what was not.

We knew all along that we may not be successful and competition would be keen. However what we wanted to ensure, was that it was the best bid it could be, and that any bad news is not a reflection of any apathy.

We drafted a management plan that the Town Council will be able to use for the next five - 10 years so that the park can develop. Most of the material arose from the consultants' report, but now it will not

be lost regardless of the outcome of the HLF bid.

And when one of our members raised the issue of the domestic geese on the pond we were able to raise it with the Town Council who have now adopted a policy and the geese are reducing (quite amicably) in numbers.

So if this were an end of year school report it would say something along the lines of "Good solid work and significant progress" rather than "could try harder".

But we cannot stop there . We have new challenges to face and there is no shortage of work to be done.

Thankfully some more people have volunteered to join the committee and that should help to spread the load.

I hope that you will continue as a Friend and support us where you can whether that is responding to calls for volunteers or simply joining us on a walk.



National Cycle Network milestone in Lowndes Park

Corporate members

- **Lucia's Delicatessen**
- **the Environmental Group**
- **the Lowndes Park Model Boat Club**
- **the Chesham Society**
- **the Bucks Examiner**

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Bid

A lot of applications are rumoured to have been received as this is the last but one chance to get money under this scheme and so we are in a very competitive process.

There are two stages to the process. HPF first delete bids that are not acceptable for whatever reason and then those deemed to have sufficient merit go through to stage two. HLF are keen to say that it is not automatic that all stage two applications will be successful, but if we can satisfy them we are in with a great chance – so keep those fingers crossed. We expect to know if we have been successful in the stage one in September.

The Lottery Fund will supply 75% of the funding for the scheme which means of course that the applicant has to find the other 25%. This has the effect of limiting the size of the bid.

This has led to some tough decisions when the steering group had to recommend the priorities for the park and no doubt some people will not agree but the advantage of a deadline is that there comes a time when the debate has to end.

The building in the park did not make it into the bid. This was not due to the cost although that would be a factor, but the final nail in the coffin was that we could not get the business plan to stack up and if we couldn't prove that it would work HLF were never going to fund it.

However what stayed in the bid was better footpaths, a lot of work on

Skottowes pond, and the refurbishment of the play areas. We are also hoping to relocate the skateboard ramps so that they can be used beyond the current 8pm closure. Improvements are also planned for the entrances and to the Rue de Houilles.

The entire bid has a value of over £1 million pounds and as we have already said, there is a need to find the 25% and there is a shortfall of £12,000 - £15,000 which is where we come in.

Our next task is to raise this amount and we need to start making applications for funding. We have made a start by applying for some money to develop a web site. It at least gives us some practice for the bids that we will have to make if we are to be successful. If we don't get the HLF award then we have some serious fund raising to do. So as the song say's its not where we start but where we finish and we intend to finish in the park.

At the last Ordinary General Meeting Janet Rodhouse very kindly offered to step into the breach. However she made the stipulation that it was not to be as a fundraiser as that was too daunting but rather she has agreed to join the committee as a form filler. And very grateful we are too.

Friends Committee

Michael Rowan (Chair)

Javad Malik (Secretary)

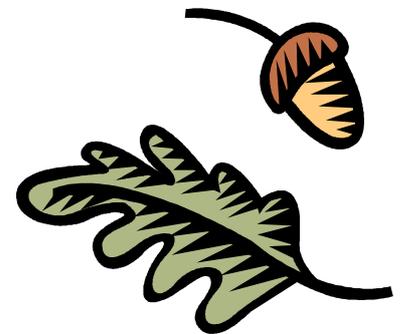
Phil Folly
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Janet Rodhouse
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We have a challenging year ahead, but I get the impression we are up for the challenge

Walk, Work, Volunteer

The Friends spring walk will take place at 2pm on Sunday, April 13th leaving from the iron gates to St Mary's Church in the park and heading up to Chesham Bois. We expect that it will take two hours and you should bring suitable clothing, and footwear and a drink. At the end of the walk we will go for a coffee. We hope that you can join us and if it is as much fun as the last one it will be well worth the effort.

We are taking out some of the Oak from the upper park on Sunday, April 20th. Volunteers should meet at 10am at the church gates inside the park. If you can help, please bring spades and forks and stout footwear with you.

We are still looking for someone to coordinate the volunteers and if you think that this could be you please contact Michael Rowan on 01494 785146.