

#### South & South East in Bloom 2017

For the last four years FoGH has been entering the 'Its Your Neighbourhood' part of South & South East in Bloom. The competition is open to Community Groups and marked in three sections, on Gardening Achievement, Community Participation and Environmental Responsibility.

Each year we have steadily been improving our score and this year we reached the highest level and were judged to be Outstanding! We gained an impressive 88 points out of 100, with a massive 38 out of 40 for Community Participation. This recognises the huge number of events and activities that go on in the Park.



None of this would be possible without the Volunteers who work all the year in the Park. They manage the Local Nature Reserve (including Folly Shaw and Roundabout

Wood), have constructed boardwalk through the woods, put in numerous plants and bulbs, and brightened up the play area with colourful baskets!

The judge made many positive comments and offered advice on how to move forward. He left us with this final comment - "above all else continue with the excellent work, both physical and educational, that not only makes the Park a place to be proud of,

but also educates local people about the benefits of a well-managed green space".

If you are interested in getting involved, the Volunteers meet every Thursday at 10am by the Hub, and undertake a range of tasks throughout the Park. No need to book, just turn up and wear appropriate clothing and footwear. *Chris Hughes* 





Mulchina in

## **Chairman's Report**

Once again, the yearly cycle comes full circle and the Park has certainly proved its worth as a beautiful and much valued resource for our local community. This year an amazing diversity of events have been arranged for all ages and interests. Many of them were either free of charge or for a nominal donation to help cover costs. FoGH have organised fourteen events and invited the etchers from Seal Chart to put on a come-and-try workshop, while Steff has arranged nearly fifty



activities delivering a wide scope of interests. Additionally, schools have become more engaged with Park activities, coming to Forest schools sessions and as community volunteers.

The brilliant volunteer teams, led by Steff and Cally Fiddimore from KHWP, have continued their programme of habitat enhancement of the Local Nature Reserve and general maintenance of the Park's fabric, which makes so much difference. There was a good gathering at their thank you and BBQ on a sunny October day.

Throughout the year I have been fascinated to watch the constantly evolving 'legal wall', to which the younger groups contribute. This has become a vibrantly busy space on nearly every weekend that the weather allows. There has been some amazing street art, which has transformed this bleak piece of concrete walling into a fast-moving outdoor exhibition. By the time this goes to print, the Halloween spectacle may have been superseded, but I rather hope that the elephants and warriors on the railway bridge will be allowed to remain for a while. It entertains our visitors, especially the very young, who like to make a visit to see them. Thank you to everyone who has made their contributions, keeping this Park such a lively place to visit.

With so much going on in the Park, I really hope that more groups and organisations will see the attractiveness of using it as a venue. The ever-increasing numbers of Park users certainly generate a ready audience. On behalf of all the committee and volunteers, I would like to wish everyone a very Happy Christmas season and an excellent 2018.

## **Update from the Parks Department**

The area around Marnock Lake has now been repaired by Southern Waters contractors. However, after a closer inspection it was felt the standard of work was not acceptable, so Southern Water have agreed to bring their contractors back to carry out the work again. A survey of the sewers in the area has been completed by Southern Water, and any blockages removed. Hopefully, we should not see a repeat of the damage around the lake.



Sadly, over the recent weeks we have experienced vandalism to the toilets and the bowling green, all of which have now been repaired. We do have images from the CCTV of a number of youths around the Hub, which have been passed to the Police and the Community Safety Unit. If anyone sees or hears groups acting suspiciously, please call the Police on 999.

On a more positive note, Jonathan Buddington has returned to Sodexo to lead the sports turf team. He has started work on the bowling green, to improve the playing surface and remove the moss and thatch, which may deter the resident fox from digging up the green. Simon is continuing with the regular maintenance of the Park and will start the pruning of the pleached limes and box-headed trees over the winter period.

Blakedown have been back for a final visit to finish the final snagging issues, replacing some of the trees that are struggling, and the yews that have failed in the bowling green hedge. They still need to replace some of the boards on the boardwalk in the Wetlands, which will be completed in the next few weeks.

The Council are currently holding a consultation exercise on the introduction of the Public Space Protection Orders. This is an opportunity for local communities to express their views: please follow the link below to find out more and to complete the survey, consult.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/portal/comm\_safe/pspo

Enjoy the Park over the winter period and best wishes for Christmas. As always, if you have any questions, please do contact me on parks@tunbridgewells.gov.uk Peter Every - TWBC Parks & Sports Team Leader

# Camden Road Education, Arts & Theatre Enterprise

For full details: www.camdenroad.org & www.facebook.com/createTW

A Victorian Christmas......Thursday 7th December 6.30pm The CREATE choir will be singing as part of this talk & seasonal display.

At Tunbridge Wells Museum & Art Gallery.

Carols from the CREATE Choir.....Saturday 16th December On the Pantiles 11am & outside the Oxfam bookshop 12pm

The next Lantern Parade will take place during the 2019 February half-term.

As this fantastic community event has grown, so have the challenges for the organisers. To develop it properly and safely, CREATE need help: please see www.camdenroad.org for more information.





The Cafe at the Hub

Light Meals Cakes & Biscuits Milkshakes & Ice Cream Hot & Cold drinks Daily Specials Open Daily 9am – 5pm

#### Graffiti in the Park

Since the Wind in the Willows mural was defaced in January, this part of the railway bridge has again become a target for random graffiti. Local artists Josh (aka Mr Skosh) and Hugh Whitaker decided to add a mural, in the hope that people would "respect the artwork" and refrain from tagging it.

The result is the brilliant "Elephants & Warriors" piece, which has given so much pleasure.





Josh and Hugh also painted the recent Halloween mural on the legal graffiti wall. Sadly, someone had tagged over the face of Emmett, which had been so well respected. They added the gas mask, both to hide the tag and hopefully discourage copycat tagging.

The multicoloured bear, a previous feature of the legal wall, was Josh's work. *Mary Hughes* 

To learn more, see: www.mrskosh.com/ www.facebook.com/H.WhitakerArtwork/

## **Events Roundup**

### Heritage Open Days 8th – 10th September



This celebration of heritage, community and history takes place every year in early September. Some 40,000 volunteers run nearly 5000 events. The Friends group join in by setting up displays of information on the history and regeneration of the Park in the Hub. This year we included new information on the swimming pool, charting its decline and eventual closure.

It's always fun to talk to visitors and to hear memories of the Park. Over 100 people visited over the course of the weekend. On Sunday, Chris Hughes led a guided walk on the history, wildlife and landscapes of the Park. Mary Hughes



Hard at work



# Bird, Bat & Bug House Building



This annual event took place on Saturday 16th September and proved a great success. Volunteers had already cut the wood to size and made up 'kits' ready to be assembled. Once the event was underway, a steady stream of children (and parents) hammered their chosen box together. Then the boxes were decorated, resulting in colourful designs.

Many thanks to Kent High Weald Partnership who organised the day, provided the materials and tools, and were on hand to offer advice. A big thanks to the volunteers who made the kits and helped on the day. Chris Hughes



### Children's Halloween Party







Saturday 28th October saw crowds of children, dressed up as ghosts, witches and other scary creatures join us in the Hub for our annual Children's Halloween Party. They picked spiders out of slime, decorated cakes and masks, made pom-poms and plate ghosts, toasted marshmallows and kept three face painters busy all afternoon! There were also two outdoor trails thrown in for good measure. We do hope you all enjoyed yourselves and sincere thanks to our hard-working volunteers and to the face painters. Mary Hughes

#### **News from the FoGH Committee**

At our meetings we have mainly been concentrating on event planning. We have debated whether to hold our annual May Funday, but have decided to have one in 2018.

Our current thoughts are for a scaled down day, to help keep our costs down. As we are in a public park, we are can't charge an entry fee, but need to provide portaloos, first aid cover and insurance. Please get in touch if you would like to help, or know someone who could sponsor the event. Please contact editors@fogh.org.uk with any ideas.

The photo shows work so far on the 'Gneiss' sculpture, to be installed near the wetlands. Sculptor Richard Perry is working on two rocks,

following on from the workshop in April depicting water, foliage and wind through art. We are looking forward to their installation, marking the third piece of art along the cycle path. This project, funded by money given to TWBC by developers, got a mention in our very first newsletter in Winter 2011, when the six artists for the piece by Grosvenor Bridge were short-listed. Carolyn Gray





### Steff's Sum Up

Autumn has blown by, with a great mix of events and visits from local schools and groups. Over 550 people came to our October half term events. These included toasting 100 marshmallows, making 30 acorn necklaces, painting 80 mugs and planting 140 plants.

We had some good bat sightings during our September bat walks. The Noctule bat was seen over the lower football pitch: a lovely start to the evening. This species flies much higher than the other common species we see at dusk (the Pipistrelle). It is also much bigger, with a wingspan of up to 40cm (compared to the 23cm of the Pipistrelle).



Mugs painted with butterflies

October saw visits from Beechwood Sacred Heart School, who carried out a litter pick through the Park, and made a great start with the winter weeding in the beds by the bowling green. The St Barnabas Beavers also visited the Park on two occasions to complete their

insect and navigator badges. They made mining bee hotels, nests for local invertebrates or birds, and explored the brass rubbing trail.

We were lucky enough to have beautiful

weather for our volunteer BBQ in early October, when we celebrated the official completion of the boardwalk through Hilbert Woods. This incredible feat of engineering, created by conservation volunteers, now has a grand total of 2100 planks and is 283m long. Surprisingly, only 3 tools were

buried (temporarily) under the boardwalk during its creation!

Half term flew by. Local theatre group In-souliloquy introduced us to some

of their digital theatre work, including a moving live performance of one of their most recent pieces. Some beautiful works of art were created during the mug painting session, including great images of butterflies.

The Families in the Forest day was a buzz of activity and we saw many

families throughout the day. It was fantastic to watch toddlers enjoy the sensory overload of the woodland, before enjoying stories from Katy and her Storysock. Older children created acorn necklaces, using a palm drill to

make holes through the middle of each acorn. Finally, the magic ended after all wands had been whittled and the fire had burned out. Our fantastic volunteers and Kent High Weald Partnership headed home for a rest.

Looking ahead to the winter season, we have some great festive events lined up. The popular Christmas Wreath Making will be returning and the kids get a chance to make decorations too. Folly Wildlife Rescue will visit on two occasions early next year and will bring a friendly hedgehog or two! Do keep an eye on the noticeboards and on social media so you don't miss out! **Steff d'Agorne, Community Engagement Officer** 







#### **Natural Flood Defences in the Woods**

You may be mistaken for thinking that beavers have moved into the woods in the Park! This would be a good assumption but not quite correct. Kent High Weald Partnership volunteers, along with Steff and the Park volunteers, have created two dams in the stream in Roundabout Wood.

These natural woody debris structures are designed to allow the normal flow of the stream to run under them. During peak flows (ie storm events), they will act as a natural barrier, holding some water back temporarily in the woods and slowing the flow. This reduces the risk of flooding further downstream. The location and design was directed by KCC Natural Flood

Management Officer, Louise Smith, who helped supervise the volunteers. They are sited where no properties or paths would be affected by temporary flood water storage.

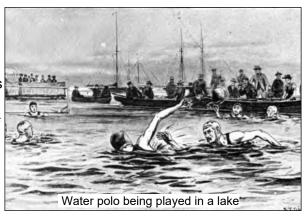
The structures are secured with stakes and wire to stay put during a peak flow. We used woody debris from the woods, so these structures will provide habitat for wildlife. If you would like to find out more about this work, please contact <a href="http://www.khwp.org.uk/">http://www.khwp.org.uk/</a> Cally Fiddimore, KHWP Officer



#### Water Polo in the Park

Water polo began in Scotland during the mid-19th century, played in lakes and rivers. It was developed as a new and attractive spectacle at swimming galas. In 1870, the London Swimming Association drew up rules for 'football in the water'. Early problems included bursting balls and several near-fatalities.

Swimmers in Tunbridge Wells were early adopters, and a game of "Aquatic Polo" was played at the 1874 Swimming Fete and "was won by the blues after creating much fun." The next recorded game was at the 1880 Fete and "elicited much cheering." 1885 saw the first "water polo" match in Tunbridge Wells, at the Fete, with teams selected from the local club, Cygnus Swimming Club.



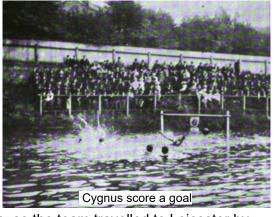


During this time, the rules of water polo were developing, to make it safer and to standardise the game. In 1888, the Amateur Swimming Association agreed a set of rules which became the norm. Games lasted 20 minutes (10 minutes each half), there were seven players on each side and goal posts were introduced. Fixed goal posts were added to the open-air baths in the Park in 1889.

Various leagues were formed to promote the game and the first county match under the London League took place in 1890 at Tunbridge Wells, between Kent and Middlesex. The Kent team included three members of Cygnus and won the match 4-3. Kent County League formed in 1891. Cygnus players often featured in the county side, in particular the goalkeeper, W.Tyrell Biggs.

Water polo became popular in Tunbridge Wells, with spectators enjoying the fast-paced games. Cygnus were hard to beat at home, often winning against teams much better on paper. The cold, deep water and lack of a shallow end made the open-air baths notorious. Especially when compared to indoor baths with more temperate water temperatures. In 1892 Cygnus won most of their matches and beat Dover 15-0 in the final of the Kent Challenge Shield.

In 1893 there was a programme of 22 matches, with home games also featuring races and other events. 1893 was a triumphant year, with the team winning the All-England Water Polo Championship. After beating "crack northern team" Manchester Osborne S.C. at home in the semi-final, they faced Hanley S.C. (former cupholders) in the final. This was





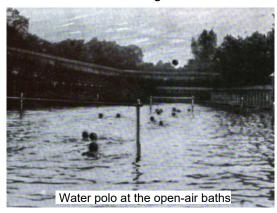
played at a neutral venue, so the team travelled to Leicester by train on the day of the final. The sides were evenly matched, but Cygnus defended well in the first half and won 3 – 1.

There was massive excitement in Tunbridge Wells and the team were met at the station the following evening by excited crowds. The Ceylon Band played on the platform and there was a torchlit procession through the town. In October, they retained the Kent Challenge Shield, beating Sheerness S.C. 3-0 at a pool in London. The double-winning team consisted of W.T. Biggs, goal; J.H. Kipling and W. Tuddenham, backs; G.R. Cragg, half-back, W.S. Masterman, J.P. Milton, and E.J. Plumbridge, forwards.

Regular matches during

the summer season in still attracted crowds during the 1890s, but in 1898 the Cygnus annual report notes a "local decline in water polo". The indoor swimming pool in Monson Road opened in October 1898 and in 1899 most water polo matches were played there. As more indoor pools were built, the game could be played all year and teams preferred to play inside. Matches continued to be held occasionally in the open-air baths at summer aquatic fetes until 1905. *Mary Hughes* 

Sources & images: Kent & Sussex Courier 1873-1950 (©Local World Ltd courtesy of The British Library Board) via British Newspaper Archive, The Badminton Library of Sports and Pastimes 'Swimming' by Archibald Sinclair & William Henry & The Strand Magazine 1889 Vol Xviii.



### **National Moth Night 2017**

Coordinated by Butterfly Conservation and other partners, this annual event aims to introduce the often overlooked world of moths. It takes place at a different date each year to reflect different species that appear as seasons change. After two successful spring and summer moth events, it was appropriate to round off the year by celebrating this year's October Moth Night. As before, the moth trap was set up overnight in a garden by the Park, and the catch was revealed in the Hub the following morning.



We were fortunate to have a mild and cloudy night, perfect for maximising our catch. Cloud

cover at night holds in daytime warmth, offering ideal conditions for moth activity. Eighteen species of moths were recorded in all, some represented by large numbers of individuals – especially Yellow Underwings (Large, Lesser and Broad-bordered).

Alongside late-flying summer moths like Yellow Underwings, we had a

good range of characteristic autumn species. These included Blair's Shoulder-knot, whose caterpillars feed on cypresses and are well camouflaged on conifer bark. First colonising Britain in the 1950s, it benefited from the planting of cypresses in parks and gardens.





Pink-barred Sallow

Looking at moths in the Hub



We had a number of specimens of Black Rustic, an understated but rather elegant species – velvety black with a conspicuous brilliant white mark on each forewing. A single example of Large Wainscot was something of a surprise, as it seems to be new to the immediate area. It is a wetland species which I never found over the years when I regularly ran a garden moth trap. It may well have been attracted in by the development of the Park's wetland area in recent years.

Barred Sallow

Among other autumn specialities were two out of

the seven British species of Sallow moths – Barred Sallow and Pink-barred Sallow. The Sallows are distinctive and attractive moths whose yellow and reddish colours seem to match the shades of autumn



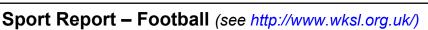
leaves. Some species have larvae that feed on sallow



catkins, but others are associated with elm or poplar, so as a group they may be named more for their yellowish colour.

Another attractive autumn-flying species was the Red-Green Carpet, represented by a freshly emerged example that showed to perfection its mottled deep green forewings with hints of red-brown.

Ian Beavis



The team currently playing on a regular basis on the top football pitch is St John's Yard (gold shirts with black shorts and socks). The season began in September with a storming 2-7 victory over East Grinstead Mavericks. Good league form has continued, with wins against Speldhurst Rangers (5-1), Tonbridge Casuals (5-1) and Paddock Wood Reserves (2-6).

The team currently top Division 3. In the Junior Cup, they are through to the semi-final, heading their table. There were more high-scoring wins in the cup, against Tunbridge Wells Ridgeway (3-8) and Tonbridge Casuals (5-1). The Yard are through to the second round of the Intermediate Cup after beating Speldhurst Rangers 1-2.



Sadly, Sunday league football is in decline all over the country. In 2011, the West Kent Sunday Football League stretched to six divisions, but now there are only enough teams to form three. So it's good to see a local team playing at Hilbert! We wish St John's Yard well for the rest of the season and in the cup competitions. If you're in the Park on Sunday morning at 10.30am, go up and give them a cheer!

Mary Hughes

#### View from the Allotment



It was a good year: bumper crops of beans and carrots. Nature is slowing down as winter's frosty fingers start to take their icy grip on the ground. We collected in the last of the season's produce: pumpkins, onions and shallots that will store well, and we can use through the winter.

After this final harvest, we turned towards clearing and bedding down for winter. I have spent a serious amount of hours clearing the raspberry patch. The grass, bind weed (my mortal enemy), brambles and other unwelcome guests had made a comfortable home for themselves amongst my fruity friends.

These interlopers just don't seem to get the message they are not wanted here! As well as clearing the area, we planted some more raspberry canes, which should hopefully add to my crop next year. Well worth growing as the fruit is expensive! Emma Melville

### Dogs in the Park

Introducing Cassie! She is a 'red' Staffordshire Bull Terrier from southern France. We have been visiting the Park for 10 years, since she was a puppy. Cassie says hello to all her friends from the Park! She is well known and always carries her red ball. She loves people



and greets them with a waggy tail, while making a really funny noise like she's talking! Her ball gets dropped at their feet in the hope it gets thrown.

A real water lover, Cassie makes the most of the ponds and streams in the Park and woods, especially on hot summer days. We have fun in all weather, from running and sniffing in the snow to wallowing and bathing in the water holes.

A misunderstood breed, Staffys are so friendly with the right love and affection. Great with children, they were once known as the 'nanny' dog. Let's give them some good press for a change! **Emily Hammond** 

### Belgian Refugees 1914 – 1918

During the years 1914 – 1919, Tunbridge Wells was home to some 300 Belgian refugees, men, women and children. Refugees from fighting on the Continent arrived in Dover and Folkestone (18,000 arrived in Folkestone on one day in October 1914). Individual schemes were launched to welcome them and on 25th September, the Mayor of Tunbridge Wells, Charles Whitbourn Emson, called a meeting. He proposed to open a Municipal Fund and set up a Borough Committee to help refugees arriving in the town.

Tunbridge Wells welcomed middle class and trades-people (not the peasant type). Most of the refugees worked, although a few were families whose husband/father was fighting in the war. During their

time in the town there were births, deaths, and a marriage. Children attended local schools, and the Belgians were welcomed at social events, given English lessons, and offered support with clothing and housing.





Verschueren family registration document The nearest residents were at 2, Dorking Road. They were the Verschueren family from Mechelen – boot-seller Jean, his wife Elisabeth (nee Matthieuwis) and their son Josef. The registration documents from the Archives in Brussels show that they first lived in Wadhurst, in 'Malines Cottage'. An article in the Sussex Agricultural Express (Thanks to British Newspaper Archive) mentioned the arrival of 8 refugees from Belgium. They were housed by Mrs Boyd at "the best available cottage at Duneden Place....re-named Malines Cottage because the eight refugees came from that town".

By October 1915,

Elisabeth (presumably with Josef) was in Tunbridge Wells, while her husband worked in Street, Somerset, at Clarks Shoe Factory. A year later, he and his family were back in Tunbridge Wells, at 60 Newton Road. In November 1916 they moved into apartment accommodation provided by the Mayor's Refugees Committee at 2 Dorking Road. They must have settled, as "Verschueren J." is listed there in Kelly's Directory for 1917. In February 1918 they moved north to Manchester.

July 2017 saw relatives of some of the refugees revisit Tunbridge Wells for a Belgian Festival. This high-lighted a generally forgotten part of the town's past. Alison Sandford MacKenzie & Carolyn Gray For more information, see <a href="https://blogs.kent.ac.uk/rtwbelgians/">https://blogs.kent.ac.uk/rtwbelgians/</a>



### **Winter Event Highlights**

Carols with the CREATE Choir.....Sunday 10th December 2 – 3.30pm

FoGH invite you to join us at the Hub (outside if the weather is good).

Mulled wine, juice & mince pies.

# Winter Wreath Making......Wednesday 13th December from 6.30pm

Create a Christmas wreath from willow & festive foliage. Friday 15th December from 6.30pm

At the Hub. Aimed at adults. £10 per person. Booking essential.

Campfire bake-off......Thursday 21st December 10am – 3pm

The Christmas task: woodland work, with baked spuds & marshmallows for lunch.

HLF/TWBC volunteer task. Meet at the Hub & dress appropriately.

# Deck your Halls.......Friday 22nd December 10am – 1:30pm

Make festive decorations to hang up at home. 45 minute sessions.

At the Hub. Suitable for all ages. £2 suggested donation.

Cake and Natter......Monday 22nd January 2018 10am – 12:30pm

At the Hub: get to know other local people over a free cuppa & cake.

Board games provided. Suggested donation £1.

Photography Walk......Sunday 28th January 10.30am – 12.30pm

How to spot perfect photo opportunities. with photographer Rosie Harris.

Meet at the Table 8 cafe. Bring your camera & wear appropriate clothing and footwear.

National Storytelling Week......Tuesday 30th January from 9.30am

Story sessions at 9.30am, 10.15am, 11am & after-school at 3:45pm

At the Hub. Suitable for all ages. Suggested donation £1 per child.

# Basket making for Beginners......Saturday 3rd February 9:30am - 4:30pm

Learn how to make a willow basket, from expert John Waller.

At the Hub. £30 per adult includes equipment, materials & light refreshments.

# Basket making for Improvers......Sunday 4th February 9:30am - 4:30pm

Attendance on a previous course or equivalent experience is essential.

At the Hub. £25 per adult includes equipment, materials & light refreshments.

Furry Friends......Tuesday 13th February from 10.30am

Learn who lives at Folly Wildlife Rescue at interactive sessions with the education team.

At the Hub. Ages 2 – 5 session at 10.30am, age 5+ session at 11am

Bee Our Friend......Friday 16th February 1 – 4.30pm

Learn about bees while creating bee craft using clay & natural materials.

At the Hub. Suitable for all ages. £1 suggested donation towards materials.

Great British Spring Clean.....Sunday 4th March 2 – 4pm

Calling all litter heroes! Join FoGH on a litter pick to tidy up the Park.

Meet at the Hub. Tools & equipment provided.

Events marked #: Booking essential at <a href="mailto:steff.dagorne@tunbridgewells.gov.uk">steff.dagorne@tunbridgewells.gov.uk</a>

HLF/TWBC conservation tasks most Thursdays & some Mondays: contact Steff D'Agorne

Kent High Weald Partnership volunteer days & events: www.khwp.org.uk/

See posters, www.fogh.org.uk Facebook www.facebook.com/GrosvenorHilbert or Twitter https://twitter.com/FofGH

#### **FoGH Contact Details**

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www.FoGH.org.uk
www.facebook.com/GrosvenorHilbert

or 15 Dorking Road,

Facebook www.facebook.com/GrosvenorHilbert
Twitter https://twitter.com/FofGH

To join, contact the Secretary at 41, Dorking Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2LN or on Friendsghrp@aol.com

Our sincere thanks to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council for all their support in printing and collating hard copies of this Newsletter



Other Contacts & Useful Information

TWBC Parks Service 01892 554031
Out of Hours Service 07920 534369
Toilets: Opening Hours 7am - 6pm

Tunbridge Wells, N1 2LN