

The FoGH Family Fete – Bank Holiday Monday 7th May

Our first Community Day was in June 2012 to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee. The initial idea was for a picnic, with a few stalls and some music, and we added in a dog show and other attractions. Following this success, we decided to hold a second one in 2013.... and the event grew bigger each year. This culminated with the Grand Re-opening in 2016, at the end of the Heritage Lottery Funded work. After such a major event we decided to have a break in 2017, to re-assess.





In November 2017 the committee voted to proceed with a Community Day in 2018, but as a smaller event. So, on Bank Holiday Monday 7th May we will present 'The FoGH Family Fete' – a return to a mix of local

community activities, food and music. We will concentrate the attractions on the lower football pitch, with bouncy castles by the skate-park, and donkeys near Auckland Road gates again.



Traditional favourites are booked: the hog roast, fish & chips, ice cream vans, Sussex Arms bar, crafts from St James' church, Kent High Weald Partnership, the CREATE choir and Imaginarium, and Tunbridge Wells in Bloom. New attractions include Jimmy the Juggling Jester, paella from Sankeys, Fat Carrot vegan stall, and The Real Italian Pizza Company

FoGH will have two fund-raising stalls – a tombola and a cake stall. We would be grateful for your help to make this day run smoothly – please see below for ways to get involved. *Carolyn Gray*

FoGH Needs You!

Please could you help with the Fete? Donations to the FoGH cake stall and tombola would be welcomed. Or could you help on the day? Either setting up, tidying up, or stewarding: please contact events@fogh.org.uk

Chairman's Report

During the winter months we have been looking at the schedule of events for the rest of this year. Having taken a year's respite from the Family Fun Day, we are looking forward to running the event again.

This time it will be a slightly smaller assembly of stalls but designed to be of a format we can take forward to the future. By limiting the cost, we can hope to raise enough funds to continue in the future. This will also sustain any losses should we be unlucky with the weather and have to cancel. Additionally, it makes the event manageable for the small team of volunteers who do all the work to make the day happen.

While we have been thinking of community activities, we have been keen to add an initiative to try and reach those who might feel lonely or isolated in the area. In these days of social media and instant online communication, it seems a paradox that loneliness should be more prevalent. But for some, face to face conversation often brings a feeling of more friendship and understanding than online media provides.

With this in mind, FoGH and Steff have arranged occasional 'Cake and Natter' mornings. These aim to encourage anyone who would like to meet other Park users, as well as those who want to make friends in the area. It will take a few sessions for numbers to accumulate but it has already generated very good feedback. If

you know someone who might benefit, but is unlikely to hear about it, please let them know: we would be very glad to welcome them.

You will see from the diary of events that there is plenty of variety to choose from during the next three months or so. I hope that the spring weather will soon arrive and attract as many of you as possible to come and enjoy the Park.

Liz Edwards

Update from the Parks Department

In terms of the Heritage Lottery Funded work, the landscaping contractor Blakedown have completed the final items on their list. A number of boards on the boardwalk running through the wetland area had warped, so new ones have been installed. Park users will have noticed that some of the conifers planted around the wetland have failed and these have all now been replaced. Sadly one of the Spruces has been snapped by vandals, so another replacement will be installed. We are still in discussion with Southern Water about



repairs to the pumps for the Dripping Wells and the poor repair they made to the path area by Marnock Lake.

Unfortunately, there were a couple of break-ins to the Sodexo compound near the Hub over the Christmas period, with small items of plant being stolen. In an attempt to combat any further break-ins, we have installed intruder lights in the compound and upgraded the CCTV system at the Hub. As always, please contact the Police if you see anything suspicious. On a more positive note, Sodexo are continuing to progress with the winter work by pruning the old and new pleached limes and shaping the box shaped trees. Mulching and pruning work will continue on the shrub areas. The Bowling Green will receive a spring treatment, with work to remove more of the thatch in preparation for the new season.

We have a full programme of events planned for the spring and summer, some of which are already fully booked, so if you see an event you'd like to attend, please book early to ensure a place. We will shortly be welcoming a new member of the team to assist Steff in delivering events and activities over the summer, which is being funded from our successful bid from Tesco and HLF funding. I'm sure that over the next few months you will get to know our new team member, but more about her in a future newsletter.

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

CREATE Community Choir......Rehearsals on Thursdays 7.15pm
At the Church of Christ, Commercial Road, off Camden Road
A FUN informal choir for those who enjoy singing: no auditions, just turn up & join in!

Nose in a Book Night.....First Thursday of every month 8.30pm At the Church of Christ, Commercial Road.

An informal hour sharing & performing favourite pieces of writing based on a theme

& bringing them alive with performance. (Unhappy to read in public? Someone else can read your piece.)



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

Geocaches in the Park

What is geocaching? It's an outdoor treasure hunt, using your smartphone to find a treasure, known as 'caches'. To join the quest, download the Geocaching app to your phone, available on Apple or Android devices. Open it up and search for caches in your immediate, or specific, location and you'll see a map with caches to find. Select one and the phone will guide you towards it. When you're close, you can read a hint to help find the cache.

The caches are small containers hidden in accessible places. They range from tiny magnetic capsules (like a collar tag for a dog or cat) to 35mm film canisters, to larger 'click-&-lock' food containers. Traditional caches are found by following the compass and directions on your phone, then rummaging around, using the hint if you get stuck. Others require you to



solve puzzles, or search for clues to get the coordinates. The three caches located in the Park are puzzles: you find answers from clues in the Park to point you in the right direction.

Once you find the cache, you log the find in the app and sign the log in the cache with your geocaching name and date. But there could be more! There could be small items to swap. Or you could strike Geocachers gold – the Trackable! These are items with a coded 'dog-tag' that you pick up and move on. You help the trackable move on it's journey by dropping it off in another large enough cache. Some travel thousands of miles! You can buy your own trackables to send on their way and track their progress on-line.

Geocaching is a great day out for family and friends to venture out and discover new places – and it's free!. Create a free account at www.geocaching.com and browse the map online or on the app, and you'll see just how many there are. At the very least, look for the caches in Grosvenor and Hilbert Park!

Simon Reeve

FoGH Events Roundup

Fish & Chips Quiz Night



Following the success of our first Quiz Night, we held our second on Saturday 18th November 2017. Once everyone had arrived, we had six teams, which effectively filled the Hub. Keeping to the same formula as before, we had a total of six rounds, three before taking a break to eat the fish & chip meal, and three afterwards.

This time rounds included questions on food & drink, buildings, name that year, and of course one on Christmas. It was a competitive quiz, with the the lead changing hands on a number of occasions. Everyone attending enjoyed themselves, with the Ravenswood Rabble team proving to be the winners by a couple of points.

Along with the raffle on the night, we raised around £250, which will go towards the cost of putting on other events in the Park during the year.

Chris Hughes

Carols with CREATE

Despite the miserable day, it was warm and cosy in the Hub on Sunday 10th December. Add in mulled wine, mulled fruit juice and mince pies, and the CREATE Choir – you've got the perfect recipe

for a cold Sunday afternoon!

An audience of all ages

The Choir treated us to a Christmas-themed concert, then finished off with a few songs and carols we could all sing along to. We were

pleased to welcome friends from the Park and FoGH members to this celebration of Christmas.

The donations were shared with CREATE. We appreciate their taking the time to come and entertain us.

Mary Hughes

Snap happy in the Park

Rosie Harris led a Photographic Walk through the Park on Sunday 28th January. We gathered outside the Hub on a typical winter's day. The sky was grey, but the rain held off. The walk attracted around 25 people, of all different ages, with all kinds of different cameras.

We started by strolling around the Lake and looking at the light reflecting off the water. Rosie provided advice on framing shots and what **not** to include in the photo – rubbish bins, lamp posts! We wandered on to the wetland, and from there took a walk along the boardwalk through the woods.



The CREATE choir in full song

There were plenty of photo opportunities and everyone enjoyed a few hours of happy snapping. We are hoping to hold an exhibition of some of the photographs in the Hub.

Zephyr – New Public Art for the Park

Over the last year, sculptor Richard Perry has carved three substantial stones to be placed in the Park by the cycle path near the wetlands. *Zephyr* – the name refers to a warm light westerly wind - is carved from gneiss stone. This is a foliated metamorphic rock, with a banded

appearance and texture.

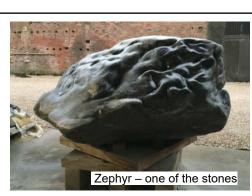


The carving emphasises the natural markings in the stone and is inspired by flowing shapes representing the moving water, wind through the trees and rolling

nature of the Park. *Zephyr* was commissioned by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and funded from local development contributions.

All are welcome to the Launch Event on Friday 6th April 11 – 12am. Meet the sculptor Richard Perry and learn more about the stones, their carving and

the inspiration behind them. There will be a rubbing trail for children, to inspire them to create their own artwork.



Steff's Sum Up

Winter has been delightfully rainy, allowing the Park's trees some respite from the dry summer. We have seen some beautiful snowy days, with the muddy brown woodland floor being replaced by pristine white snow. It won't be long until the bluebells, which are just coming through, start to turn the forest floor into a lovely shade of blue.



This winter the volunteers have been very busy in the Park. They have swept up all but one area of the gravel pathways, to make access for all much easier. A set of rustic benches have been created in Appledore Wood, set in a patch of sun on top of the hill, using wood sourced from only 10m away.

They have constructed four beaver dams to hold more water in the woodland, reducing the chance of flooding downstream. The community allotment plot is being cleared, ready for the

return of the Wildlife Gardening Club. Pupils from Beechwood Sacred Heart

School have helped to collect over 8 bags of litter from the Park.

Our Christmas events attracted adults and children alike to get into the swing of the season, making baubles, window decorations and Christmas wreaths. Some amazing wreaths were created over the course of three evenings in the Hub. Attendees weaved willow bases, then attached a mix of natural materials, mainly sourced from the Park, to add a bit of Christmas colour to their homes.



The baskets in 2017

Folly Wildlife Rescue visited the Park to introduce ways that locals could help to look after hedgehogs that may like to visit their back garden. These included making a hole

in your fence (wall) for them to pass through, to checking areas of long grass before cutting them back. The talk was popular, with 27 people in attendance, and included an opportunity to meet a rescue hedgehog.

We celebrated National Storytelling Week with a visit from Storysock, who revealed a great range of stuffed sea creatures, much to the children's delight.

John Waller returned to teach basket making in the Hub in early February, which was booked up very quickly. A great mix of baskets were made, using a variety of colours of willow, for the weavers to take home with them.

Keep an eye out for events coming up this spring. Do introduce yourself to our soon to be appointed Graduate Wildlife Events Assistant. They will be helping me on a part time basis in the Park over the spring and summer period, thanks to funding from Tesco Bags of Help.

Steff d'Agorne

Partway through a basket

Finished wreaths proudly displayed

Steff d'Agorne, Community Engagement Officer

Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom 2018 (Find out more at www.royaltunbridgewellsinbloom.org.uk/)
This horticultural campaign and gardening competition is part of the local South & South East in Bloom and nationwide Britain in Bloom campaigns. The aim is to improve our gardens, parks and green spaces, as well increase the activity of gardening in the community, which can have a positive impact on health and well-being.

The stakes are high for Tunbridge Wells this year, as in 2017 the town won the Large Town category in the South & South East in Bloom competition. This means entry into the national Britain in Bloom contest, with the

It's Your Neighbourhood 2018
FoGH will again be taking part in the

FoGH will again be taking part in this grassroots gardening campaign (part of Britain in Bloom), encouraging community groups to improve the places where we live. We will be replanting the baskets on the railings near the Hub on **Sunday May 20th 2 – 4pm**. Tools, plants and equipment will be provided, so please join us to help brighten up the Park. You can also get involved on Thursday 29th March: join the volunteers planting around Marnock Lake. Meet by the Hub at 10 am. *Mary Hughes*

chance of being national winners. TWBC launches Tunbridge Wells in Bloom on **13 – 14th April**. Look out for events and ways to get involved.

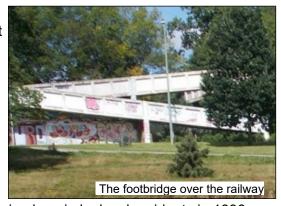


The Upper Grosvenor Road Entrance into the Park

We take ease of access into Grosvenor & Hilbert Park for granted. But for residents of Upper Grosvenor Road, it was 46 years before an entrance was built into the Park.

The original plans, drawn up in 1887, included a subway under the railway, connecting a growing area to the Park. Rock Building Society offered to donate land. Permission was required from South Eastern Railway Company and construction would cost an estimated £100.

This sum was wildly optimistic and the detailed cost breakdown came to £1032. The land fell through, adding more expense. The Local Board decided not to proceed, as a Government Loan would be





necessary. The issue was raised again by local residents in 1896, 1898 and 1902, with petitions, and letters to the Council and Kent & Sussex Courier. Each time the cost was considered prohibitive.

In 1905, Tunbridge Wells Tradesman's Association got involved, due to the "great increase of population on the far side of the railway line." Residents had to "walk over half a mile to the Recreation Ground, although residing, in many instances, within a few yards of it." A donation of land was offered, and costs were estimated at £1580. After two long debates, the Council agreed to proceed. However, restrictive covenants on the land meant the plans were abandoned for legal reasons in 1907.

Councillor Strange's gift of land (now Hilbert Park) meant that plans for a subway resurfaced in 1931 and 1933. Land at 174 – 178 Upper

Grosvenor Road (the site of the present bridge) was available. The estimated costs (excluding the land purchase cost) were £4700 for a subway, or £800 for a reinforced concrete bridge. Two other sites were considered, but no further action was taken. Repeated requests for access continued, and it was debated by the Council again in 1932, but the cost of £2240 was too high.

Finally, in 1934, £700 was agreed to buy land for an entrance. The Town Clerk was instructed to apply to Southern Railway for permission to build a footbridge. Once they agreed in March 1935, work proceeded quickly. The Mayor (Councillor F B Weekes) turned a gold key in the gate of the new



entrance on Wednesday 27th November 1935. The final cost of the work came to £2158.

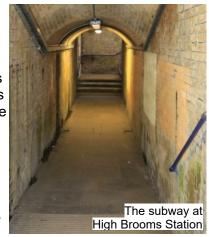


The Works Committee wanted to sell part of the frontage on Upper Grosvenor Road as two building plots, allowing 25ft (7.6m) for a path and approach into the Park. Several councillors opposed this, suggesting there was a chance to make an imposing entrance, with trees and flowering shrubs. However, their amendment was lost.

This was hotly debated again in 1936, with the Council finally deciding in favour. The land was transferred to the Parks Committee and became part of the Recreation

Ground. The current frontage is nearly 60ft (18.5 m) wide, forming an open and welcoming entrance from Upper Grosvenor Road.

The long delay in establishing this access did have one benefit: we don't have to use a Victorian subway with steps to get into the Park! *Mary Hughes*Sources & images: Kent & Sussex Courier 1873-1950 (©Local World Ltd courtesy of The British Library Board) via British Newspaper Archive.



The RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch in the Park

This year in the Park we joined in with the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch, by doing a count of the Park's birds. Liz Edwards (FoGH Chair) helped me lead a bird walk around the Park, where the maximum number of each bird species spotted at one time was counted.

The walk followed the same route as the volunteer's monthly bird survey route, starting by Marnock Lake before looping through Hilbert Woods and the orchard. 31 different bird species were spotted by the 22 people who came. This is a record for the Park, topping the 30 previously counted during the monthly surveys by the conservation volunteer team.

Winter is a great time of year to see a wide variety of bird species in the

Park, as with no leaves on the trees, the birds are easier to spot. Also, the Park is regularly visited by winter migrants. These birds spend winter in the UK, as it has a milder climate and food is easier to come by than in the North and East where they spend their summer. Migrants spotted during our bird count included: redwing, siskin, and redpoll. We didn't spot any fieldfare on this count, but these are also regular visitors to the Park in winter.







We also saw a good number of tits during the survey. In winter tits flock together to find food, so you will often see (as we did) a mix of blue tit, coal tit, great tit and long-tailed tit in groups in the tree tops.

Bird spotters on the survey

To view the full list of birds we saw, check out the wildlife sightings board in the café (Table 8).

Long-tailed tits

Since this

walk, we have had the delight of spotting a firecrest in the park during our monthly bird walk. This is very similar to the goldcrest (seen during the RSPB bird count). These tiny birds weigh 5-7g and at just 9 cm long are Britain's smallest birds.





The key identification difference, seen only in the firecrest, is the bold black eye stripe and white supercilium (a marking found directly above the eye stripe).

The firecrest is only resident in the South and East of the UK and 550 breeding territories have been identified rather than the 600,000+ of the goldcrest. Its beautiful flame coloured crest makes for a beautiful sight during winter!

If anyone missed out on this bird survey but would like to learn more, there is a monthly bird survey with the volunteers. Anyone is welcome to join us: we meet at the Hub at 10am on 5th March and 12th April.

Steff d'Agorne, Community Engagement Officer

Sport Report - Football (see http://www.wksl.org.uk/)

Our local park team are St John's Yard (gold shirts with black shorts and socks), playing on the top football pitch in Division 3 of the West Kent Sunday Football League. The league reached the halfway point in the season in December with no weather related postponements – very unusual! This didn't last into January, with St John's Yard playing only 2 of their scheduled 6 matches so far into 2018.

Their good season has continued, with the Yard scoring freely at home against Insulators Reserves (10-2) and East Grinstead Mavericks (10-0). There was a slight hiccup in the WKSFL Intermediate Cup, when they lost 3-5 against Cassidy's Phoenix and



were knocked out. They are still in the Junior Cup, with 2 semi-final legs to be played against Speldhurst Rangers. These should prove interesting ties, as the Rangers are their main rivals at the top of Division 3.

They gained 3 points in December, when Tonbridge Casuals were unable to raise a team. In these cases, the Management Committee makes a review and can allocate points to the opposing team. A 2-6 victory over Tonbridge United and a 2-1 home win against Tunbridge Wells Ridgeway kept them at the top of the table. However, three postponements during January and February saw them drop to second. *Mary Hughes*

View from the Allotment



Winter is a quiet time for the allotment holder. Short, dark days are the time to leaf through seed magazines and dream about the prize winning vegetables we will grow over the new season. In February we started preparing the soil for the new seeds. The strawberry patch

was a complete mess and needed some severe weeding and TLC. I began working on weed removal, but the 'Siberian beast' put work on hold for a week. We planted new raspberry canes in the autumn and plan to put in some support structures to hold them up when they're laden down with fruit! We also plan to lay some weed mats under the raspberries to help in the constant fight against my mortal enemy, bind weed. Some early, frost-hardy broad bean seedlings have been planted, hopefully they will survive the blast of cold weather.

Dogs in the Park

My Yorkshire terriers are brother and sister but a litter apart. Teddy is 11 months old, sometimes known affectionately as Teddy Weddy Woo! He is extremely lively and playful and loves the Park.



Very sociable, he interacts with other dogs of all sizes. He will play with any breed of dog, partly because he is very bold and brave (big personality in a small dog syndrome). The things that do scare him are refuse trucks and large lorries.

Pippa is 3 months old and Teddy's little shadow. They adore each other, although Teddy will put Pippa in her place if she tries to take any of his favourite squeaky toys. She is a very cuddly dog, quieter than Teddy. They are the best of friends apart from at treat time.... I love watching them tear around after each other or peacefully sleeping their bed together.

Emma Heasman

Who are the Kent High Weald Partnership?

You might hear the words Kent High Weald Partnership mentioned regularly, especially in regards to Hilbert Woods, volunteering, National Playday, or the fact that our truck got stolen at Christmas. However, many people don't actually know who we are and the name doesn't exactly roll off the tongue! So to enlighten you...



We are a non-profit organisation made up of 8 passionate people who

work really hard to make our green spaces awesome for wildlife and the community. At the heart of our ethos is linking people with nature. We do this primarily by: offering volunteering opportunities in conservation and horticulture; delivering outdoor education with local schools; and running

Hard work by

Pond, Rusthall

projects using the power of nature to enhance health and wellbeing.

Most of the sites we work in are within the Borough of Tunbridge

Wells and include Hilbert Wood, Barnetts Wood, Southborough Common,



Sherwood Lake and Woods, Dunorlan Park, High Wood, and Reynolds Lane. There's also Cinderhill Wood in Matfield and Crane Valley in Cranbrook.

Some of the activities you might find KHWP doing this year are: constructing boardwalk with volunteers; counting bees on the Cross Pollination Project beds;

supporting adults with mental health issues through gardening work; on a community allotment teaching growing skills; or in the woods working with families in difficulty, by helping them build relationships with each other.

Sherwood Lake

Clearing at Fremlin's

KHWP is predominantly self-funded, but is hosted by Kent County Council, with supported funding from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. Many of our projects are funded by grants from the Lottery, Sussex Lund, and other Charitable Trusts. We often work in partnership with organisations such as Town and Country Foundation, Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom, local schools, Friends

groups, and the Forestry Commission. To find out more, please visit our website

www.khwp.org.uk Cally Fiddimore, Kent High Weald Partnership Officer



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Spring Event Highlights

Great British Spring Clean.....Sunday 18th March 2 – 4pm

Re-scheduled from 4th March. Join FoGH on a litter pick to tidy up the Park.

Meet at the Hub. Tools & equipment provided.

FoGH Fish & Chips Quiz Night......Saturday 24th March 7pm

The popular brain-testing quiz returns! Tables of 6: £10 per person.

Booking essential at editors@fogh.org.uk & advise of any dietary requirements.

This time we're fundraising for our Kent High Weald Partnership.

FoGH Easter Egg Hunt......Easter Sunday 1st April 2.00 – 3pm

Meet at the Oast House. Come & hunt for Easter Eggs in the Park!

Free event, no booking. All ages, children must be accompanied.

National Fruit Show Event......Tuesday 3rd April 10.30am - 1pm

At the Hub. Meet the National Fruit Show organisation.

Apple tastings, make your own juice & apple-based crafts.

Free event, suitable for all ages, children must be accompanied.

Stone Art Grand Opening......Friday 6th April 11am

Drop-in event – meet the artist Richard Perry & learn about the artwork.

Starting at the Hub. Children's activities & refreshments.

FoGH Family Fete......Monday 7th May 12 – 5 pm

Music & entertainment, bouncy castles, donkeys, food & drink.

Opening at 12pm with Mayor Julia Soyke & TS Brilliant Sea Cadet Band.

Aquatic Invertebrates Walk & Talk......Monday 14th May 5.30pm

Join Ian Beavis to discover what lives in our ponds & streams.

Walk from the Hub at 5.30pm, then a talk in the Hub at 7pm. Refreshments provided.

FoGH Annual General MeetingThursday 17th May 7pm

Join us at the Hub for cheese & wine. Help shape the future of FoGH!

Only paid up members can vote; please contact the Secretary.

FoGH Dog Show.....Saturday 19th May 10am – 12pm

On the upper football pitch. See posters & social media for more details.

Community Planting for Britain in Bloom......Sunday 20th May 2 – 4pm

Help FoGH plant the baskets by the Hub for the RHS It's Your Neighbourhood campaign.

Tools, plants & equipment provided: wear appropriate clothing & footwear.

Make natural paintbrushes, then produce your own art work in the Park.

Suggested donation £1. Children (6+) must be accompanied.

KHWP volunteer day......Thursday 7th June 10am – 3pm

Meet at the Hilbert Rd gates & dress appropriately.

For more information about any of these events, see social media & look out for posters in the Park.

KHWP volunteer days & events: www.khwp.org.uk/

HLF/TWBC tasks Thursdays & some Mondays: contact Steff D'Agorne or see www.facebook.com/GHParkHLF/

FoGH events: www.fogh.org.uk Facebook www.facebook.com/GrosvenorHilbert

or Twitter https://twitter.com/FofGH

FoGH Contact Details

Liz Edwards (Chairman) chair@fogh.org.uk Jane Melville (Secretary) Friendsghrp@aol.com Website

Facebook

Twitter https://twitter.com/FofGH

Newsletter editors at www.FoGH.org.uk editors@FoGH.org.uk www.facebook.com/GrosvenorHilbert or 15 Dorking Road,

Tunbridge Wells, N1 2LN

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

Comments or contributions to

Toilets: Opening Hours 7am - 6pm