



## Friends of Grosvenor & Hilbert Park Newsletter 38 Spring 2021



Ground frost around the wetland

### Celebrating Frosty Mornings

The winter weather has swung from wet and windy to cold and frosty! We are used to ground frosts, when water vapour in the air condenses on surfaces, then the temperature drops below 0°C. This gives the characteristic crunchy frozen grass and slippery paths.

On Sunday 10th January we had a hoar frost, formed when water vapour in the air comes into contact with surfaces below freezing point. Ice crystals form immediately, continuing to grow as more water vapour freezes. We woke to a winter wonderland, with all the trees and plants glistening with frost.

Thanks to the photographers who braved the cold! **Mary Hughes**



Hoar frost on oak trees



The wetland in  
the hoar frost



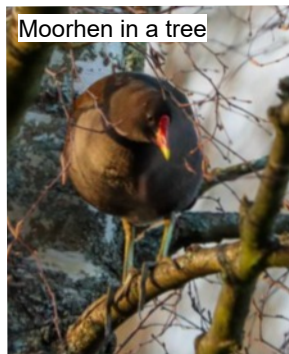
A frosted broom

### News from the FoGH Committee

I'll start by wishing you all a HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Things have been very quiet for the Committee over the past three months. Like the rest of the nation, we have been trying to Stay Home, with limited exercise locally. All this local exercise has seen our Park very well used, and increasingly muddy. Hopefully it will recover as we move into spring and some drier, warmer weather. The cold week in February certainly made a change from the rain and brought about lots of social media fun photos. It has been cheering to see the flowers blooming in the baskets that were planted up by volunteers in autumn, around the bowls green and the playground.

It seems unlikely mass gatherings will be allowed for a while, but we may be able to arrange further booked/limited events similar to September's litter pick. Thanks to everyone who has been able to carry on litter picking during their daily walks, and thanks to Tony as always.



Moorhen in a tree

Personally, I've managed two fleeting glimpses of the kingfisher at Marnock Lake, and that alongside the graffiti walls, have been the main focus of visitors' social media posts – read more on both of these items elsewhere in the newsletter. I've also spotted the Marnock Lake moorhens sitting in the trees a couple of times.

Apparently this is perfectly normal moorhen behaviour – featured on our FoGHwatch posters. I took to Twitter to ask Dr Ian Beavis and John Reeves if the moorhens flew up there, having not really seen them fly. Ian had a look in his 'Handbook of British Birds', and, while moorhens can climb and roost along low branches, they do in fact fly: "(they are) fond of flying about at night for no obvious reason, well up in the air." A great quote!

Watch out for them and much more when you are out and about in the Park!

**Carolyn Gray**



## Update from the Parks Department

If it is not too late, I would like to wish a Happy New Year to you all.

We start with the news that from 1st February you will see a change of contractors in the Park. Sodexo have sold the landscape services part of their business to Tivoli, who are a specialist grounds maintenance company. Tivoli are a relatively new company but with plenty of experience delivering this sort of park and grounds maintenance contract. Other than a new uniform for Tony and different logos on the vehicles, it will be business as usual. If you would like to find out more about Tivoli here is their website address: [www.tivoliservices.com](http://www.tivoliservices.com)



Parks continue to be an important part of people's lives for daily exercise or simply to get some fresh air, but we do ask that you respect Government advice and continue to give other people space while in the Park and play area. With the increased number of visitors, we are starting to see the impact on some of the infrastructure, so please do keep to the paths during the wet weather and allow the grass areas to recover.

South and South East in Bloom will continue this year, although in a different format that is yet to be agreed. We are unsure if judges will visit the Park or carry out a desktop assessment, but either way Grosvenor and Hilbert has again been entered in the Large Park category. We hope that we can retain our Gold standard.

This year, as well as our application for continued Green Flag status, we have entered the Park for a Green Heritage award. We feel this award would recognise the Park's history and connection to the Victorian garden designer Robert Marnock. It will be interesting to see the assessor's views on the Park and any recommendations they make.



Some good news is we have finally resolved the problems with the Dripping Wells, which were working well the last time I visited the Park. The bad news is that there are some cracks in the footpath surrounding the Lake, however, our property team will be investigating and providing a solution.

If you have any suggestions or wish to contact the Parks team, then please email

[parks@tunbridgewells.gov.uk](mailto:parks@tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

**Peter Every – TWBC Parks & Sports Team Leader**

## Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom Competitions 2021

Entries to the local Bloom competition are open to residents, businesses, community groups and schools across the town of Tunbridge Wells. The entry form will be available on our website from April 2021 ([www.royaltunbridgewellsinbloom.org.uk/](http://www.royaltunbridgewellsinbloom.org.uk/)) and judging will take place in July. Closing dates: 1st June for Allotments, 30th June for other categories.

### Open Gardens

We hope to run the Open Gardens tours on Sunday 13th June with eight lovely gardens participating. This annual community fundraising event is for the benefit of the Hospice in the Weald. Tickets cost £5 and covers entry to all gardens taking part.



Bee on scabious

### Blooming Marvellous Photo Competition – 'Buzzing Blooms'

Get your cameras at the ready! We are looking for photos of pollinating insects like bees, butterflies or moths captured on a flower, taken from April to September 2021. Open to all, there are two categories: Children (up to age 18) and Adults (18 plus). The best images will be displayed in town during winter. Closing date: Friday 15th September.

Competition email: [BloomPhoto@tunbridgewells.gov.uk](mailto:BloomPhoto@tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

### Beautiful Butterflies Children's Art Competition

Now in its fifth year, our popular Art competition is this year focusing on the most colourful pollinating insects – Beautiful Butterflies. We want children to explore various art media to create amazing butterfly posters!

For inspiration and information on native butterflies please visit the British Butterfly Conservation and Kent Wildlife Trust websites:

[www.butterfly-conservation.org](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org) and [www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-explorer/invertebrates/butterflies](http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/wildlife-explorer/invertebrates/butterflies)



Mighty Moths posters

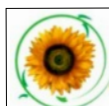
Please use A4 or A3 size (no larger). Closing date: 1st June 2021. Winning entries will be displayed in town. Postal entries: RTW in Bloom, North Farm Depot, North Farm Lane, Tunbridge Wells, TN2 3EE and write the child's name, age and school on the back. For digital entries, please submit high-resolution images to

[BloomPhoto@tunbridgewells.gov.uk](mailto:BloomPhoto@tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

**Kasia Olszewska-Martin, Parks Technical Officer**

Facebook: [RoyalTunbridgeWellsInBloom](https://www.facebook.com/RoyalTunbridgeWellsInBloom)

Twitter: [@RTWinBloom](https://twitter.com/RTWinBloom)



ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS IN BLOOM



## Street Art

We often feature a couple of photos of work from the legal graffiti walls in the newsletter. Through the Park instagram account I've been able to identify some of the tags too!



The original 'Redneck Zoo' piece



The 'Candygirl' additions

We all watched with interest in January when, after the storming of Capitol Hill, a piece of art tagged HUMOR and 'Redneck Zoo' appeared, which during that week rapidly changed. The original piece was impressive in its skill and detail, but what happened next, as it changed to 'Candygirl', then grey paint, and then an 'Yo' angel was very interesting.

One February weekend I spotted HUMOR and EKS painting a new piece on the railway bridge and I took the opportunity to chat about 'Redneck Zoo'.

(I had to return in the late afternoon to see the finished work).



HUMOR & EKS at work

I've always wondered about the emotions of having your work painted over. During the chat I realised it also works the other way, because you start on a legal wall knowing you will be painting over someone else's work. EKS said the aim is always to paint something better than what was there before.



The 'Yo' angel

Neither of them were worried about what happens to their work when they finish and leave. They know it won't last forever, they see it as solely for fun, trying something new, maybe with a message, maybe with lettering or with imagery. As long as they get a photo of the work!

So – what inspired 'Redneck Zoo'? HUMOR says it was to just capture that moment in history, the incredible scenes in USA, and that the character with fur and horns was an interesting subject. With the thought of making people think a bit, the idea was worked out a couple of days before coming to the Park, including getting the right colours to go with the flag.



The Captain Sir Tom mural



The finished artwork

They say they know CANDYGIRL and felt maybe the yellow additions were just part of getting involved in the project. Amazingly, 'Redneck Zoo' made it into the pages of The Guardian newspaper, in a piece titled 'Street Art: How the pandemic is changing the look of our cities', alongside other pieces from around the country. HUMOR also painted, not in our Park, a tribute to Captain Sir Tom Moore. For more of their work, see social media.

**Carolyn Gray**

Instagram: @humorstreetart @eks\_graffiti  
Facebook: @humorstreetart



## The Grosvenor & Hilbert Kingfisher

Imagine the scene; we're walking around Marnock Lake on yet another grey, damp winter's morning, when a darting flash of the most magnificent azure-blue whips past us and heads around the island towards the bulrushes.

The subject of this dazzling spectacle is a male Kingfisher, which has become a regular winter visitor to the lake and we now look out for it every time we visit. Present since November and enjoying the supply of sticklebacks and newts found in the clear shallow waters, close views of this splendid bird brightens up the wintery backdrop of bare winter trees.



John's kingfisher picture

Enjoy this fantastic bird whilst you can, as once Spring is sprung, it will move away to a river with suitable steep mud banks, in which it will dig its long nesting burrow. We will all be left with just beautiful memories of the most resplendent and dazzling of all of the visitors to the park.

**John Reeves**

A male bird has been the most frequent visitor, but there have been sightings of a female. The sexes are identical in appearance, but for the lower bill: black in the male, orange-red with a black tip in the female. The species is an indicator of high water quality, which is reassuring. If you have been lucky enough to see them, you may find them surprisingly small: slightly larger and heavier than a sparrow.

Kingfishers use perches to look for prey in the water, assessing the depth before diving. The diet is mainly fish, and also aquatic insects, freshwater shrimps, tadpoles and



The male perching on a bulrush

newts. They dive with open wings and eyes covered by their transparent third eyelid.

Returning to the perch, they repeatedly strike the fish to kill it, before swallowing it headfirst. Each bird must eat at least its own bodyweight in a day. A few times each day, a small greyish pellet of fishbones and indigestible remains is regurgitated.

They don't sing: their flight call is a short sharp whistle *chee*, repeated 2-3 times. The alarm call is a harsh *shrit-it-it*. Courtship begins in February, so by the time you read this the birds are likely to have left.

**Mary Hughes**



The female kingfisher



A newt dinner from the wetland

## Exploring the Park with Trails

The need to physically distance during the past year has meant FoGH have been unable to hold any community events involving getting together. We set up a Park DIY Scavenger Hunt for Halloween (see last newsletter). Then over Christmas an enterprising soul set up an alphabetical gingerbread person trail which led around the whole Park (nothing to do with us, but we saw lots of people enjoying it). The Park was also visited by 'The Smile Project' at Christmas, who decorated a bench by Marnock Lake.



The decorated bench

In our autumn 2020 newsletter we mentioned our self-guided walk of the Park, compiled for Heritage Open Days. It was a shame not to be able to hold our traditional open days, but the trail remains available all year, [www.fogh.org.uk/](http://www.fogh.org.uk/) using a variety of permanent features. While there's no doubt the Park has been well used this winter, the trail leaflet offers some insights into the Park's history and can be a fun addition to an outing.



A variety of Waymark posts were installed during the Heritage Lottery Funded work – if you find all 10 you have taken quite a good walk! There are seven interpretation boards around the Park, with additional information. We have the ISpy and FoGHWatch posters, which you can find around the Park and on our website.



Cow Waymark post

Park visitors have obviously enjoyed sharing their photos online during the past year. Research carried out by Clarks shoes [www.clarks.co.uk/editorial/best-kept-secrets](http://www.clarks.co.uk/editorial/best-kept-secrets) placed Grosvenor and Hilbert Park in 15th place in the county of Kent thanks to its high proportion of 5 star reviews on TripAdvisor. (Nationally the top three parks were Silverburn Park in Fife, Southampton Common in Hampshire and Hereford Board and Bike Park in Herefordshire).



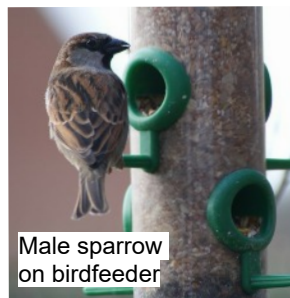
Mallard Waymark

The cow Waymark post reflects that the Park was once a farm. We hope to find out more on this for the Edible England themed 2021 Heritage Open Days in September.

**Carolyn Gray**



## Making Your Garden More Wildlife Friendly



It was a pity that Covid19 restrictions meant we were unable to have an RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch in our Park, as we have in recent years. However, after having sparrows nibbling my garden crops last summer, I decided to invest in two bird feeders and seeds for eat this winter, and in my Birdwatch hour counted seven sparrows and one pigeon. It was interesting to read these tips from Bex Messenger, Partnership Officer at Kent High Weald Partnership, on making your garden more wildlife friendly. The full piece is available on our website in Latest News. Let us know if you are doing anything at home for wildlife via our social media.

**Carolyn Gray**



### Choosing the Right Flowers

Plant a range of species of all shapes, colours, sizes and smells. Particularly, choose plants that provide pollen and nectar for as long a season as possible, from spring (eg crocus and mahonia) through to autumn (eg Michaelmas daisy, Sedum spectabile and ivy).

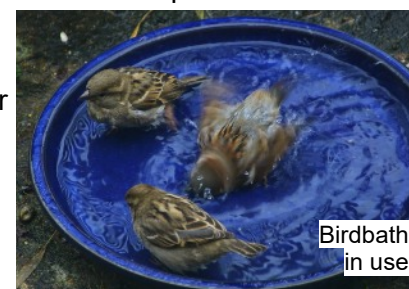


### Keep a Mix of Trees and Shrubs

Small trees and shrubs that are good for blossom and berries include rowan, crab apple, elder, blackthorn and hawthorn – and not just our native species. Fruit trees support a range of specialist native wildlife and can provide for them while also supplying you with a useful crop.

### Add Water

Including a pond, birdbath or even just a container of water in your garden can help many creatures thrive, from birds and dragonflies to frogs and newts. The bird bath in the photo was a plant saucer accidentally left on the patio – now it's an essential daily stop for the local sparrow population!



### Build Insect Homes

Decaying woodpiles provide a rare habitat to a range of specialist wildlife that is becoming more uncommon in the countryside, such as stag and bark beetles, and many species of fungi. It provides cover and hibernation sites. Piles of rocks provide shelter and ready-built insect hotels also work well.

### Compost!

Composting your garden waste helps all your garden plants and wildlife. It speeds up the natural recycling of nutrients by harnessing native decomposer organisms, especially fungi and soil bacteria. Compost heaps also shelter many creatures as they enjoy the heat released by decomposition.

### Scatter Wildflower Seeds

Wildflower meadows will attract pollinating bees and butterflies and provide shelter to other animals. Try this if you have a gap in your flowerbed.



### Allow a Patch of Grass to Grow Longer

You don't have to create a full-scale wildflower meadow to increase biodiversity! Allowing patches of lawn to grow longer provides shelter for small mammals and food for some butterfly caterpillars. On the rest of the lawn, mow less often, with the blades set higher.

### Leave a Gap in Your Fence

Garden fences with gaps at the bottom allow wildlife, such as hedgehogs and frogs, to move from area to area. It also helps to link different habitats together.



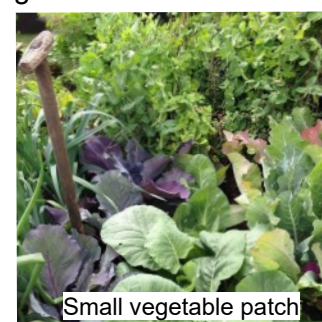
### Think Environment When Growing Vegetables

The lockdown has encouraged a gardening boom: here's some suggestions to be more environmentally friendly.

- Use peat-free compost – harvesting peat releases carbon dioxide and we are using it faster than it forms.
- Reuse plastic containers as seed pots or trays – make holes in the bottom for drainage.
- Use water butts to save water and don't water in the heat of the day.
- Reduce watering and weeds by using mulch on bare soil: try lawn clippings!
- Learn to love your garden insects – many will eat the bugs that may eat your crops.

But slugs and snails can be very destructive – here's a few tips:

- Use slug traps: half bury empty plastic pots and fill with milk, water or beer.
- They like it wet, use dry, gritty substances around your plants as a deterrent.
  - You can buy products or try dried, crushed egg shells, wood ash or sand.
- Try physical barriers: sink bottomless plastic pots slightly around the stems.
- If you can't see an alternative to slug pellets, please use aluminium sulphate ones.





# The History of Grosvenor Bowling Club

For over 100 years, the Grosvenor Bowling club has been at the forefront of lawn bowls in Tunbridge Wells and indeed the county of Kent. From the beginning it has been a competitive club, and sometimes controversial.



Opening day 1912

The club was formed in 1912 in the Grosvenor Recreation Ground. The green was laid in 1911, with an eventual cost of £170. Initially it was opposed by some residents, because the site was on a children's playground, which was moved down into the valley. It was formed so the working men in the East Ward could practice the 'grand old game of bowls'. At the time, the two other bowling greens in the town (at the Grove and St John's Recreation Ground) were for the gentry and businessmen of the town.

The green was opened in May 1912 by Deputy Mayor Robert Vaughan Gower. In his speech he hoped that as many of the working class as possible would join in "the healthy recreation of bowls". The initial membership was 90, which soon grew to over 100, and the membership fee was four shillings (20p today). Councillor Robert Gower (Mayor 1917 – 1919) was the first president, holding this office for over 25 years.



Mayor Robert Gower



The members circa 1920

From the beginning the members were successful, but the club found it difficult to play matches against the other two Tunbridge Wells clubs, who were reluctant to play the 'working class'. However, after a few years the other clubs relented. In 1917 the members had their first Kent honour, winning the County Fours competition. It started as a men-only club: a ladies section was not formed until 1930. The ladies section also went on to be successful in County competitions.

In the 1950s a remarkable and controversial change occurred in the game of bowls in Tunbridge Wells. Several youngsters in their early teens decided that they wanted to play bowls. They formed the Grosvenor Juniors club but were not allowed onto the bowling green or to join the main club. Instead, they had to play on a patch of grass known as the 'first green', situated where the Hub is now. They had to use the old Gardener's Hut and play with the old Council wooden bowls. At this time, bowls was thought to be 'an old man's game'.



Club members in the 1930s



The club members in 1962

Realising how keen these youngsters were, the club finally let them play on the proper green and become Junior Members. They soon made their presence known in the town and two outstanding bowlers came out of this group: David Jenner and Derek Cole. National Service intervened for two years, but they came back and won many County competitions. They also had trials for the England International team.

The 1960s were the golden years for the Grosvenor Club: they dominated the bowls scene in the Tunbridge Wells area and even Kent County. In fact, so many Grosvenor bowlers won County badges that the club adopted the Kent County tie as their own.

In 1977 another youngster, John Dunn, hit the headlines by appearing on BBC television and beating the bowls icon David Bryant in the Embassy World Bowls Championship.

Although Grosvenor is now a much smaller club, it is still recognised to be a strong force in the bowls world. One big advantage is that the bowling green has its quirks and opponents dislike playing us at home in competitions!



David Jenner, 1973  
Kent singles winner



Centenary  
year 2012

**Lionel Hanmore**

Sources & images: Kent & Sussex Courier 1873-1950 (©Local World Ltd courtesy of The British Library Board) via British Newspaper Archive



## Meet the Committee



Lynda Steers

Born in Tunbridge Wells, the Park has always been a huge part of my life. I came here as a child, then brought my own children and now my grandchildren. Every morning I walk my dog Lottie in the Park. We have met some lovely people, who are now dog walking friends.

After I retired, I joined the committee several years ago and enjoy helping at events, planting and tidying the FoGH baskets. I pick up litter on my daily walks and often fill a carrier bag.

I have seen many changes in the Park over the years and all for the better. One of my fondest memories is from when my children were young and were part of the Church of Christ Christmas nativity play by the Dripping Wells.

I'm looking forward to the year ahead – hopefully later we can run some of our events again. **Lynda Steers**

## Dogs in the Park

My name is Harvey and I was named after the brewery in Lewes much loved by my Dad. I was one of a litter of eight puppies born in July 2016. Like Mr Hicks, my doggy housemate, my parentage is a mystery.

I am self-appointed guard dog at home and particularly dislike the postman but have no idea why.

You will see I am walked in the Park wearing my 'nervous lead'. I'm quite jumpy when surprised by dogs or children rushing up to me. But when you get to know me, I'm a very soppy, loving and cuddly chap.

My favourite things are destroying squeaky toys, chasing balls, sea swimming, ear scratches and listening to weird jazz with my Dad. I'm not supposed to chase cats but they do excite me so! I'm terrified of fireworks and not particularly fond of the vet either, especially after my 'operation'. Who says a dog doesn't remember!

**Clare Kelly**



Harvey



A new tree at Upper Grosvenor Road

## Tree Planting in the Park

Following on from the February 2020 tree planting around the Upper Grosvenor Road entrance, a further planting took place this December. The planting was both to add to the original but also to replace a few trees that had unfortunately been vandalised. A small group of volunteers (working under Covid-19 rules with the Kent High Weald Partnership) helped us with the planting.

They removed the remains of the vandalised trees, dug out the ground and helped plant the new ones, extending the line of trees along the path. New posts



were banged in to secure the trees in place and aid their long term growth. The planting compliments the existing trees with a mix of Cherry and Crab Apples, which will add more spring colour to this area of the Park. The volunteers then moved up to the Community Orchard, where two trees needed replacing. FoGH would like to offer sincere thanks for all their hard work!

**Chris Hughes**



Planting in the orchard

## Sport Report

### Bowls (see [www.grosvenorbowls.co.uk/](http://www.grosvenorbowls.co.uk/))

We are hoping that this season we will be able to play a little more than we did last year, and at present national competitions are scheduled to go ahead as usual. Fingers crossed for an improved situation! Obviously, safety comes first, but we love to get out on the green and have a good time!

We are looking forward to trying the green after the improvement work over winter. If we are able to play, starting from the beginning of May, we are always happy to welcome new players, so come along and give our sport a try! **Jo Cartwright**

### Football (see [www.wksl.org.uk/](http://www.wksl.org.uk/))



There have been no matches in the West Kent Sunday Football League since 1st November. Although the government guidelines state that from 29th March "people can take part in formally organised outdoor sports", this may be too late for the season to be completed.

The effect of the pandemic and two disrupted seasons on local grassroots football is likely to be severe. Clubs are sponsored by local businesses and players lose the habit of attending training sessions and matches. Watch out for updates in future newsletters. **Mary Hughes**



Autumn maintenance on the green



## Winter Lights 2021

This year, as with many events, we couldn't have the usual Winter Lantern Parade in Tunbridge Wells. We couldn't gather in Calverley Road, couldn't admire the fabulous giant lanterns to the sound of drums in the Park. So, the CREATE team adapted! We still wanted to light up the town, still wanted to bring the community together in a creative way. We held a couple



of brainstorming workshops in January to get everyone's creative juices flowing and decided to brighten up the whole of February.

We asked people to think creatively and use their front gardens, cars, houses, windows, even the garden gate(!) to create a fabulous light display within the 2021 theme of Heroes and Villains.

Each weekend had a different theme: Heroes, Villains, Origin Stories, and The Final Showdown. At the time of writing, there have been some fabulous entries so far, including some awesome



window displays and use of light up balloons!

People were asked to share their creative displays in a Covid-19 safe way, on social media through the CREATE or Winter Lant accounts or using the hashtag #winterlanternsat home

To find out more, please see Instagram @winterlanterns\_twells or @createtwells or Facebook [www.facebook.com/WinterLanternParade](http://www.facebook.com/WinterLanternParade)

To make a donation to support CREATE to deliver this project and future creative activities for our community, please feel free to donate

via [www.gofundme.com/winter-lanterns](http://www.gofundme.com/winter-lanterns) or email [hellocreatetwells@gmail.com](mailto:hellocreatetwells@gmail.com) for more information.

A big thank you to all at CREATE for being so adaptable and to everyone for submitting their displays. We hope to be back in the Park celebrating in Feb 2022!

**Nell Price,**  
**CREATE Chairman & Creative Director Arty Farty Retreat**

### Camden Road

CREATE supported the winter wreath lights on Camden Road which you might have spotted since their installation in shop windows during December. Look out for creative competitions around the wreaths when the weather gets warmer!



### FoGH Contact Details

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

*Photos courtesy of Dave Barnett, Ian Beavis, Carolyn Gray, Chris Hughes, HUMOR, Clare Kelly, Jenni Matthews, Simon Reeve & John Reeves.*