



**Apple Day 2021**

Last year the pandemic prevented us from holding Apple Day, so it was great to be able run the event this year. We would ideally like to be able to use apples from the orchard, as it is developing really well.



Unfortunately, this year a small number of inconsiderate people decided to help themselves to most of the apples, rather than leaving them for the actual tree sponsors. However, not all was lost, as once again Peter from Downingbury Farm in Pembury was kind



Getting started at the Oast House



Turning the apple press

enough to let us pick up windfall apples, so the event could go ahead.

Having set up at the Oast House by 11am, it was pretty much all go throughout the event, with the odd pause around lunchtime and for a short spot of rain. It's always great to see the way kids love to get involved, particularly when it comes to turning the press to crush the apples.

We always need quite a few people to help on the day, as making apple juice is quite a labour intensive process. Washed apples need to be cut up, then passed though the scrapper to chop them more finely. The final stage is putting

them into the press to enable the juice to flow.

Quite a lot of the juice is drunk straight from the press, with the rest decanted into bottles and taken away for later consumption. For those looking to do other things, there were children's activities, and everyone loved the homemade apple based cakes that were on offer as well.

A big thanks goes out to all the amazing volunteers who helped out on the day, including local councillor Ben Chapelard. **Chris Hughes**



Chopping apples in the scrapper



Loading the apple press



Enjoying the juice



Volunteers cutting up apples



Children's activities

## Acting Chair's Report

Welcome to our winter newsletter. Looking back to September, sadly I missed our rescheduled AGM – big thanks to Emma Melville for stepping in to host the meeting. I had my first cold in 20 months, which completely wiped me out. Due to continued health concerns across the world, the committee have decided not to plan indoor events just yet (see page 8).



On the next pages you can read about all the awards the Park has gained this year, including two Green Heritage plaques, which are now attached inside and outside The Hub. These awards are for everyone who looks after the Park, and we offer particular big thanks to park keeper Tony Cheeseman, and to the support of the TWBC Parks Department, particularly Kasia Olszewska-Martin.

Although Kent High Weald Partnership have been in the Park less often during the pandemic, they and their volunteers continue to look after the woodlands and wetlands, as well as helping out in the community orchard. KHWP are overwintering some geraniums for FoGH in their allotment greenhouse. We hope to replant these into the baskets next summer, saving costs and cutting down waste. Thanks to all at KHWP!

Planting, weeding and litter picking remain the focus of our events, although we have also held Heritage Open Days, Apple Day and Moth ID mornings. At our October committee meeting we discussed and voted on a council consultation on Grounds Maintenance and Outdoor Sports. The results of this borough wide consultation will go before the TWBC Cabinet on 2nd December 2021. With regards to parks, there were financial and climate concerns. These included replacing some seasonal bedding with permanent planting, less mowing, and whether friends groups and other organisations would support the maintenance of parks and open spaces.

The past two years have been very strange, and I don't feel we will awake on January 1st 2022 to a miraculous change in circumstances. 'Happy New Year' seems overly optimistic. However, I would like to wish you all the best for the winter season, and I hope warm spring weather and better health arrive very soon. **Carolyn Gray**

## In appreciation of Roger Worraker 1929 – 2021

The Friends group was sad to hear that our orchard guru Roger passed away in September. Roger was a well-known expert on fruit tree growing, having been Fruit Lecturer at Hadlow College. He wrote pruning books and advised many fruit producers.

When the Heritage Lottery work was being planned, a community orchard was suggested. In October 2013 members of the committee were welcomed to Capel Diamond Jubilee Community Orchard by Roger and his late wife Celia. We were inspired and began planning the orchard that is now in the Park.

Roger ran a pruning workshop in the orchard for us every winter and was unstintingly generous with his advice and assistance. He was kind enough to give generously of his unrivalled expertise and he will be sadly missed.

**Mary Hughes**



## Update from the Parks Department

In the last newsletter I made you aware that the current maintenance contract is coming to an end and the Council will consider the best option for the delivery of the service. The Council now have authority to extend the contract for a further year with Tivoli until a final decision is made.

On a more positive note, Grosvenor & Hilbert did well in the South and South East in Bloom competition, retaining the Gold standard for in the Large Park category. All our parks entered into this category were awarded Gold, with Dunorlan Park coming out on top as winners. The Friends entered Its Your Neighbourhood again and were awarded Outstanding, plus a certificate of special recognition for maintaining high standards. This is thanks to the volunteers and FoGH and I would like to say thank you for all the hard work everyone puts into the Park.

The Park retained its Green Flag for another year and for the first time was awarded a Green Heritage award for the historic landscape and history. Grosvenor & Hilbert is one of only two parks in Tunbridge Wells to hold the award. The other is Dunorlan, for its links with Victorian designer Robert Marnock, who designed both parks.

Next year sees the Queen celebrate her Platinum Jubilee and, to mark the occasion, Tunbridge Wells is taking part in the Plant a Tree for The Jubilee scheme. We are working with Parish Councils, Friends groups, schools and other organisations to plant 70 trees across the Borough. FoGH will be taking part, adding a conifer to the Bedgebury collection around the wetland area. Myself and our Technical Officer will be visiting Lime Cross

Nursery to see what's available: hopefully, something out of the ordinary. We will consult with the FoGH committee before making the final choice.

As we move into winter do enjoy the Park and say hello to our park keeper Tony, who has worked hard over the year keeping the Park tidy. If you have any suggestions or wish to contact the Parks Team, please email to [parks@tunbridgewells.gov.uk](mailto:parks@tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

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



## Events & Activities in the Park

### The FoGH Annual General Meeting

We held our long-postponed AGM at the Hub on Thursday 9th September, with doors and windows open wide to keep the room well ventilated. Members caught up and chatted over bread, cheese, wine and soft drinks before the serious business. Emma Melville deputised ably for Acting Chair Carolyn Gray, who was suffering from a cold.

The committee said goodbye to Sara Borton and long standing committee member Jane Melville, who had been on the committee since we formed in 2011. Jane remains in a volunteer position as membership secretary, and we hope to keep seeing her at events.

We welcomed Clare Kelly and Derly James to the committee. Both have volunteered at events before being nominated to join the committee and have already added many positive suggestions. Treasurer Chris Hughes gave his report and the meeting agreed to assist with funding repairs to the skate park. Sincere thanks to all the FoGH members who attended.



At the AGM

**Carolyn Gray & Mary Hughes**

### Litter Pick

The day we chose for our September Litter Pick turned out very hot, which may account for the low turnout. The whole Park, including the playground, was quieter than usual. We set up by the Hub with the litter picking equipment, as well as maps and newsletters to hand out. We signed up several new members and raised awareness of FoGH.

Committee member Lynda brought along books and other unwanted items, which we offered to passers-by for a donation to FoGH. Our litter pickers came back with several bags of rubbish and we are most grateful for their efforts to keep the Park looking tidy.

**Mary Hughes**



Ready for the volunteers

### Heritage Open Days

FoGH again took part in England's largest festival of history and culture. This year's theme of Edible England fitted well with the Park, as it was originally farmland. So we had new displays on the history of the farm.

There was an orchard and hop fields, so we offered visitors apples, apple juice and beer from a small barrel (kindly donated by local brewery Pig & Porter). Ian Beavis led a history walk around the Park.

**Mary Hughes**



Some of the display



Ian leading the history walk



Planting one of the beds

### Planting the Bowls Green Beds

Back in March 2015, as part of Royal Tunbridge Wells In Bloom and In Your Neighbourhood, volunteers planted up the bowls green beds, with wildlife friendly plants and herbs. By last summer (July 2020) the beds were in need of more TLC, and the RTW In Bloom team and Kent High Weald Partnership planted them with moth friendly plants.

It became apparent this spring that these projects had taken the beds out of the routine park maintenance schedule. The moth friendly plants had not survived well, with fennel, couch grass and

bindweed taking over. As reported in the last newsletter, FoGH were keen to keep on top of the weeding, and see what plants came up.

This October we replanted all the beds with an assortment of shrubs and perennials, and a big layer of bark mulch to try and suppress the unwanted plants and weeds. The plants, chosen by TWBC Parks Technical Officer Kasia Olszewska-Martin, will provide all year round floral colour, with interesting leaves. In a variety of colours based around pink, yellow, white, purple, they are all pollinator friendly.

Hopefully these will all grow well and shade out any further weeds. We shall see what next year brings....there are likely to be further volunteering activities here. Thanks to all the volunteers who have worked on this area in 2021.



A bed after planting

**Carolyn Gray**

## Events & Activities in the Park *contd.*

Planting in the rain



### Replanting the FoGH Baskets

FoGH volunteers were out in the Park on Saturday 13th November, on an intermittently rainy day. We refreshed the baskets by the Hub and bowls green, so that they will continue to provide a display through the winter. This year we are going to try and reuse some of the summer basket plants that would not survive the first frost, by over-wintering them in a greenhouse. So, the first job was to remove these plants, and re-pot them ready to move to a suitable spot.

Once this was done, any dead plants were removed, whilst others were pruned back, allowing more space for planting. The winter

planting consisted of white flowering heathers, mixed polyanthus and blue pansies, all of which will provide colour through until the spring.



We are thankful to TWBC Parks department for providing us with the plants and compost. In fact, we had more plants than we needed and there were quite a few left over. These will not go to waste, as Tony will plant them in the borders, filling in as and where there are spaces. A big thank you to all those who helped out, and once again sincere thanks to the Parks team for supplying us with the plants.



An intrepid volunteer

**Chris Hughes**

### Willow Weaving

The living willow dome was planted in spring 2019 as part of the Heritage Lottery work and was the inspiration of the third Community Engagement Officer, Emma Peters. Like the bowls green beds, it has become a bit of a shared project between Kent High Weald Partnership (as it is by the Nature Reserve), FoGH, and Tony.

In mid November, five of the FoGH committee spent a couple of hours weaving in the stems that have grown this year and tidying up the structure. It had certainly got into a bit of a tangle but now looks a lot tidier. We are looking forward to lots of green growth next summer!



Weaving willow



Nearly finished

**Carolyn Gray**

### Celebrating Awards for the Park & FoGH



Volunteers with Tony and the Green Flag

FoGH volunteers joined park keeper Tony to raise the Green Flag, which has been retained for another year. This award recognises and rewards well-managed parks and green spaces. The Park has also been awarded Green Heritage Site accreditation by the Green Flag Scheme. This takes into account the condition of historic features, their use and enjoyment, and how the historic character and appearance of the Park is maintained.

These awards follow on from the Gold that the Park

received in the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Britain In Bloom competition. Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom achieved an Outstanding award for Nature-friendly Gardening in this year's RHS Community Awards. The town was one of only three entries to achieve this level, with the national award judged on criteria including gardening in a nature-friendly way and introducing or strengthening habitats for native wildlife. This is a real credit to the TWBC Parks Department.



The award



FoGH were also celebrating, as they received a National Certificate of Distinction from the RHS, as part of the 'It's Your Neighbourhood' Scheme. The award is discretionary, only given when groups maintain a consistently high level of achievement. For the last five years FoGH have been judged as Outstanding, the highest level awarded by the South & South East in Bloom scheme. Sincere thanks to all the FoGH volunteers: we couldn't do it without you!

**Chris Hughes**

## Before the Park: Charity Farm

In Tudor times, the site of the Park and the surrounding residential areas were part of South Frith Hunting Chase. At times it was owned by the Crown or passed to others, it was sold piecemeal in the 17th century. The tenants or owners would hunt deer and wild boar, and there was probably a right to pannage: pigs were driven into the woods during autumn to feed on acorns.

The woodland slowly became small farms. One farm was known as Charity Farm after the Dorking Charity which owned land in the Tunbridge Wells area and part of this farm became Hilbert Park in the 1930s. An 1838 map shows that area surrounding the farm was still wooded but by 1868 the Dorking

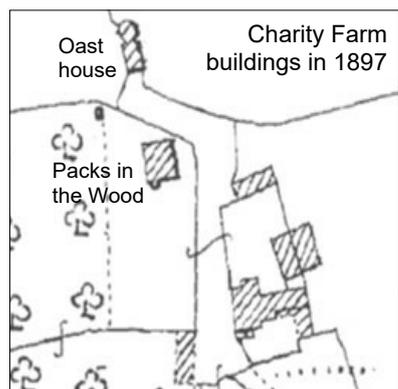


Charity had begun selling land for housing development. The railway came through Charity Farm in 1845, cutting in half two meadows belonging to the farm: Great Shatters and Little Shatters.

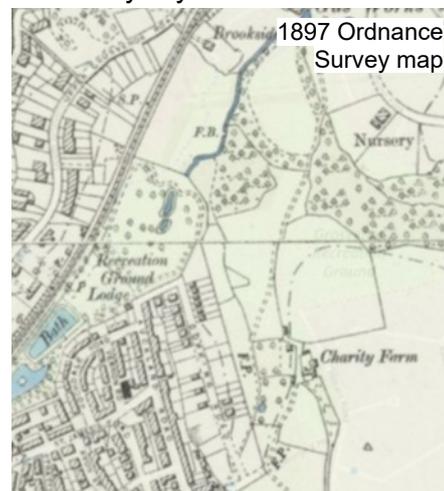


Four acres of Charity Farm was sold to John Stone-Wigg in 1887 and donated to the town to become Grosvenor Recreation Ground. In the following year further land was sold, becoming Rochdale Road, Auckland Road, Stanhope Road and Vernon Road. Then in 1889 another strip of land was sold, to form Dorking Road, named for the charity. By 1897 much of the farm has been lost to housing. The remnants of the two fields north of the railway had also been built on.

In the 1930s, 26 acres of Charity Farm was purchased by Councillor Edward Strange and donated as an extension to the Grosvenor Recreation Ground. We know this as Hilbert Park. Three acres



(1.2 ha) donated in 1936 included the farm buildings, which consisted of a "cottage, oast house barn and other buildings, cow house, barns etc." The Borough Surveyor wanted to demolish all the buildings, but Cllr Strange requested that the cottage and oast were used in connection with the recreation grounds.

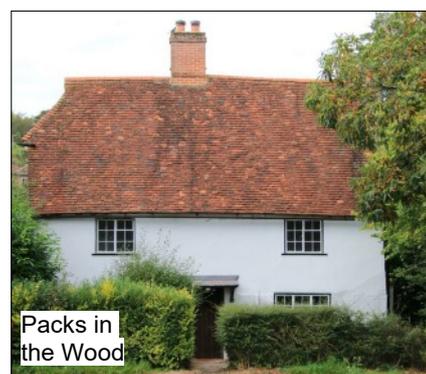


The cottage (which can be seen in Hilbert Road) was reconditioned in 1938, with the work paid for by Cllr Strange. At his request it was renamed 'Packs in the Wood', after 17th-century tenant John Pack. Probably built in the

1680s, this Grade II listed timber-framed house is one of the oldest in Tunbridge Wells. The oast house, which dates from 1838-1849, was converted to changing rooms for football teams using the pitches in the Park.



We have a description of one of the barns from 1937, when the council considered using it as an indoor bowling facility. "An old Kentish oak timber barn with tiled roof on open oak principles about 60ft x 30ft." But the plan didn't come to fruition and the barn, along with the other farm buildings, was demolished.



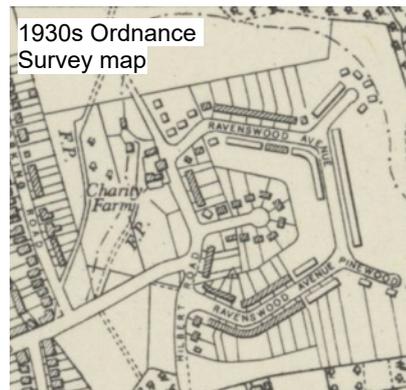
When building work started on the Ravenswood estate in the early 1930s, the remnants of Charity Farm were hemmed in by new housing. The last tenant was Mrs Mary Ann Copper, who ran the farm in the 1930s, with a milk round and sales of surplus milk.

There are memories of cows grazing on what is now the lower football pitch. In 1936 Mrs Copper was given notice to leave by the following Christmas.

Future articles on Charity Farm will look at the land use, daily activities and the challenges of farming as more housing was built.

**Mary Hughes**

Sources & images: Kent & Sussex Courier 1873-1950 (©Local World Ltd courtesy of The British Library Board) via the British Newspaper Archive & Tunbridge Wells Museum & Art Gallery. Maps: Kent County Council heritage ordnance survey maps website & the National Library of Scotland historic maps collection.



## Moth Mornings 2021

We held three successful moth mornings in 2021, showcasing a wide variety of species caught overnight in a garden overlooking the Park. Having a table outside the Hub, once the trap was unpacked and the moths potted for viewing, proved successful in attracting 'passing trade' and the October event was the best attended moth morning of all the years that we've held them. All the moths were safely liberated after the events.



Opening the moth trap in the Hub



Elephant Hawk

The catch at our June event comprised 30 species. The star was the large and beautiful Elephant Hawk, with its striking pink and olive-green colouring. It is named for the caterpillar, which has an extensible front section that reminded Georgian entomologists of an elephant's trunk. The caterpillars feed especially on larger willowherbs like Rosebay and are often seen wandering over open ground when fully grown, seeking a pupation site.

Other June finds were several Peppered Moth, a famous example of natural selection, as black forms predominated over black-speckled white ones in smoky Victorian cities. Also the wonderfully named True Lover's Knot, so called on account of its ornate pattern on a purplish background. Traditionally a heathland species, the caterpillars may feed on cultivated heathers in parks and gardens.



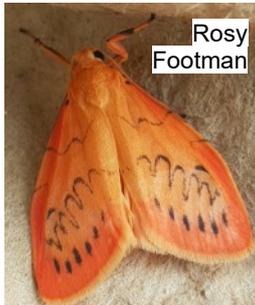
3 Peppered Moths



True Lover's Knot



Poplar Hawk



Rosy Footman

Our August event also produced 30 species (and 87 individual moths), including two more Elephant Hawks. Also a Poplar Hawk, with irregularly shaped wings and an unusual resting posture to mimic a bunch of dead leaves.

As usual both of woodland and wetland species appeared. The woodland ones included Nut-tree Tussock, Oak Hook-tip and the beautiful light-red Rosy Footman, whose caterpillars feed on lichens growing on trees. The Ear moth, named for the distinctive mark on its forewings, is associated with grasses in damper areas.



Tree-lichen Beauty



Old Maid

New to the Park was Tree-lichen Beauty, a migratory species which started appearing regularly in southern England in the 1990s and is in process of becoming established. As well as having lichen-feeding larvae, the adult is camouflaged to blend into lichen-covered backgrounds.

Another unusual find was the Old Lady, named because its wing shape and colour evoked the voluminous dark dresses once worn by the elderly. Although quite common, it is rarely attracted to light: collectors got it by 'sugaring', spreading concoctions of treacle and alcohol on fences and trees.

As the season moves toward mid-autumn, the variety of moth species diminishes but a number appear that are not seen at other times of the year. Our event on 9th October found 13 species, with a good range of autumn specialities.

These included Lunar Underwing, Green-brindled Crescent, the velvety Black Rustic, and Barred Sallow, one of a group with attractive yellow, red and brown 'autumn leaf' shades. Another beautiful example of autumnal colouration was the Frosted Orange, whose larva burrows into the stems of large upstanding plants like foxgloves.

We also had two related migratory species – the L-album Wainscot and the Delicate. The Delicate is thought to breed intermittently in southern England, while the L-album Wainscot has been established on the coast since the 1930s. The name 'L-album' comes from the moth's scientific name and refers to a distinctive white mark like an elongated letter L on its forewings.

**Ian Beavis**



Green-brindled Crescent



Frosted Orange



Delicate



L-album Wainscot

## Meet the Committee



Dorothy Swann

When I moved to the St James area 45 years ago, I was delighted to find Grosvenor & Hilbert Park so close to my house. As a dog owner, I have always made use of the Park, visiting it on most days since then.

The first time I got involved in helping the Park was in 2008.

The developers of the new flats around Grosvenor Bridge wanted to close the path towards Marnock Lake. Working with my friend Sally, we were instrumental in getting the path designated as a Public Right of Way, to maintain this access into the Park.

After being a FoGH member for some years, I was happy to be elected to the committee five years ago. I have enjoyed helping with activities, from planting and watering the flower baskets to helping with events. I look forward to getting involved with more FoGH activities and events in future.

**Dorothy Swann**

## Dogs in the Park

Hi I'm Sonny and I'm a 12 yr old Lurcher. I've had 7 homes since being abandoned with my sister when we were 18 months old.

But I've now found my forever home, which I love. I was only meant to stay three months as a foster dog.....that was nearly 7 years ago now. I have my own comfy armchair and choice of beds...but I like the big one upstairs best.

Sleeping is my favourite thing. I love the Park and all my park friends – we go there most days so I can check my wee-mails and social wee-dia – the whole Park is so sniff-tastic. I love a splish splash in the water and sometimes a run around, though I tend to leave that to the young pups these days.

And there's squirrels! They tease me, so I have to bark at them when they get away. I love a good fuss too – especially man fusses.

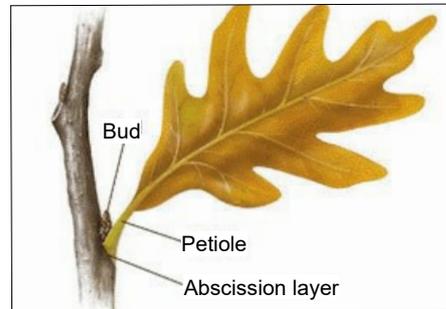
**Wendy Smith**



Sonny

## Why do leaves change colour in autumn?

The green leaves on trees and shrubs in spring and summer already contain the colours of autumn. These are hidden by the dominant green of chlorophyll, which trees use to capture solar energy to make their food. Simple sugars are made from water and carbon dioxide, forming the carbohydrates needed for growth and development. Chlorophyll breaks down and is constantly replaced in the growing season.



In autumn, trees that lose their leaves in winter (deciduous) need to shut down the photosynthesis

process and reclaim valuable chemicals from their leaves. As days get shorter, less sugar is produced through photosynthesis and chlorophyll replacement slows down. As trees enter dormancy, the compound abscisic acid triggers a seal to develop at the base of the leaves. This reduces water reaching the leaf and traps any remaining chemicals. Leaf colours change as these chemicals gradually break down.

The loss of green chlorophyll reveals the colourful chemicals in leaves. These include yellow flavonols and orange carotenoids. Anthocyanins are red to purple and may help to protect leaves from strong sunlight, so more are released in hot summers. The proportions of the different chemicals in leaves differs from species to species, and from tree to tree in different locations, so leaf colour varies widely.

Autumn colour is best after a warm, dry summer, followed by similar weather in September and October, then colder nights. This means photosynthesis continues later into the year and the leaf drop process shortens. Leaves seal more quickly when nights are cold, trapping more chemicals. In a warm, wet autumn, the process slows and leaves can turn completely brown before dropping.



Yellow hues from flavonols

Why do deciduous trees shed their leaves? The process helps trees by preserving moisture in their branches and trunk, as they enter dormancy and use less energy. Leafless trees tolerate winter storms better, as strong winds just move through the branches.

The fallen leaves improve the health of the woodlands through decomposition. Some carbohydrates and sugars stay in the leaves, giving nutrients for fungi, bacteria and insects on the woodland floor. The decaying leaves help the soil retain moisture and any remaining nutrients pass into the soil, where the trees eventually absorb them.

**Mary Hughes**



Looking towards the zigzag bridge



Vivid colour in the playground

## Provisional Winter Events

### Woodland Management.....Thursday 9th December 10am – 3pm

Kent High Weald Partnership (KHWP) volunteer day.

Meet at the Hilbert Road gates & wear suitable clothing & footwear.



Look back at the end page of old newsletters and you'll find a massive list of upcoming events, even in winter. Sadly, the combination of the end of the Heritage Lottery Funded Community Engagement Officer post in June 2019 was followed by the Covid19 pandemic.

As a committee, we agreed there is still an element of caution about indoor winter events. We have managed some outdoor summer and autumn events (including having Moth Days largely outside). But we thought it best not to plan the traditional winter activities – Quiz Nights, Carols and Talks.

Hopefully there will be more social events in 2022: look out for posters in the Park or see social media. Don't forget you can sign up as a volunteer via our website to help with Gardening, Surveying Wildlife, Family & Community Events, Park Maintenance, Refreshments & Baking, plus Admin Support.

KHWP are continuing with their conservation volunteering activities, with a monthly task day at Hilbert Woods nature reserve in the Park. It's an opportunity to learn new skills and refresh old ones! For more information see their website <https://khwp.org.uk>

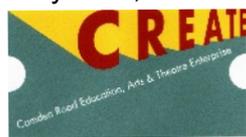


**Carolyn Gray**

### Winter Lanterns Parade Fundraising

We at FoGH are pleased to hear that the Winter Lantern Parade is booked in for Saturday 5th February 2022 and will end in the Park again. However, we have this update from the organisers at CREATE:

“Did you know it costs £12000 to put on the Winter Lanterns parade and workshops? This year has hit everyone very hard, and funding sources are at an all-time low for CREATE to be able to put this fabulous community event on. If you can help, please donate to <https://gofund.me/69392af3>



Every little bit you can donate will make a difference! If you are a local business, CREATE are also looking for sponsors for our event! Please get in touch with us if you can sponsor this event via [hellocreatetwells@gmail.com](mailto:hellocreatetwells@gmail.com)”

**Carolyn Gray**

### Sport Report: Bowls

Looking back at Grosvenor's season, our members enjoyed their time on the green, home and away, and off the green on social occasions! We held our finals day in September, with some fantastic games and new names for our winner's boards in the Hub. Thanks to all those who supported us during the season.

In October, we faced the challenge of an indoor game against the Tunbridge Wells Royals. We came off second best but had a lovely evening. In March, we will be facing them again. Our AGM took place in November, appointing officers and awarding this season's trophies. We are delighted that current captain, Chris Tapp, will continue in his role next season. Members and families enjoyed a curry night, and in the New Year we will get together again for a lunchtime roast – it's not all bowls at Grosvenor!

We are looking forward to getting back onto the green in 2022 and giving people the opportunity to come and have a go at bowls. You can find out more about us on our website [www.grosvenorbowls.co.uk](http://www.grosvenorbowls.co.uk) **Jo Cartwright**



Triples match on finals day

### FoGH Contact Details

Carolyn Gray (Acting Chair)

[chair@fogh.org.uk](mailto:chair@fogh.org.uk)

Jane Melville (Membership Secretary)

[Friendsghrp@aol.com](mailto:Friendsghrp@aol.com)

Website

[www.FoGH.org.uk](http://www.FoGH.org.uk)

Facebook

[www.facebook.com/GrosvenorHilbert](https://www.facebook.com/GrosvenorHilbert)

Twitter

<https://twitter.com/FoGH>

To join, contact the Membership Secretary at 15, Dorking Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2LN or on [Friendsghrp@aol.com](mailto:Friendsghrp@aol.com)

Comments or contributions to

Newsletter editors at

[editors@FoGH.org.uk](mailto:editors@FoGH.org.uk)

or 15 Dorking Road,

Tunbridge Wells, TN1 2LN

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 Sally Balcon, Dave Barnett, Ian Beavis, Jo Cartwright, Carolyn Gray, Chris Hughes, John Reeves, Dave Sissons & Wendy Smith.*