



Park Life

News from the Friends of Grosvenor and Hilbert Park



Winter 2025

Welcome to the last Park Update of the year – where did it all go?! Looking back, we had a busy time with some 30 or so events/activities going on in the Park over the year. It takes a lot of hard work from the FoGH Committee, in planning, organising and managing each event, so it's great when we see people enjoying themselves at them.



It seems an appropriate time to let you know how our current project to extend the wildflower meadow in the orchard is progressing. After removing as much grass and thatch as possible, we planted yellow rattle. This weakens the grass by feeding off the roots and reducing its growth and it is doing its job well. This means we can now think about sowing wildflower seeds. This will take place over the next few months and, fingers crossed, we will start to see some lovely wildflowers appearing during next year.

This means that we have been thinking about our next fund-raising project, and we have come up with two new ones. The first is to repaint the graphics on the ground in the children's playground. This is now 10 years old, and after a lot of wear and tear is looking very tired. Rather than just repaint it, we have been discussing options with the Parks Team to create graphics reflecting some historical aspect of the Park. Ideas include the 'lost' swimming pool, the remnants of which still lie under the playground.

The second is to refresh some of the interpretation boards around the Park and install additional ones, where the swimming pool and bandstand once were. These will link in with our online Discovery Trail, which provides a self-guided tour around the Park.

We are always grateful for all the donations we receive at our events, as they help to cover the running costs. For 2026 any money left over we get will go towards the children's playground graphics and interpretation board projects.

It was encouraging to see that the Park once again retained its Green Flag and Green Heritage Site awards. In addition, the Park was awarded Gold in the RHS In Bloom competition. Not to be outdone, FoGH were once again given an Outstanding rating in the RHS It's Your Neighbourhood category. These awards really underscore all the time and effort that everyone puts into the Park, so thank you to everyone that has been involved.



Finally, can I wish everyone a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year and look forward to seeing you in 2026!

Chris Hughes – FoGH Chair, December 2025

A Round Up of Events & Activities in the Park

Over 200 people attended the Apple Day in October. A vast number of apples were cut up, 'scratted' and then pressed to make a huge amount of the freshest apple juice you could imagine. We were pleased to welcome the educational team from the National Fruit Show, whilst the Iron Springs Morris entertained everyone with their music and traditional dances. There was plenty to eat with lots of apple-based cakes to go with the apple juice.



The Fungal Foray took place towards the end of October and was fully booked. Our expert Keith was on hand, and it wasn't long before we had found the first few mushrooms. As we walked around, we kept finding more and more, so by the time we got to Roundabout Wood we had a great variety of different ones. It's always amazing to see the huge difference in the size, colour, shape and texture of individual species, particularly once we laid them all out in the Hub at the end of the walk. Our thanks go to Keith for taking the time to lead the walk and his amazing knowledge which he shares with us.

It was all hands to the pumpkins as we held our Children's Halloween Party on 26th October. There were lots of different arts and craft tables at the event, keeping everyone busy throughout the afternoon. The Halloween Trail around the bowls green proved popular, with stickers as a reward for all those finding the correct clues.



Our volunteers were out in force at the beginning November for the Winter/Spring basket refresh. After removing the summer plants, we replanted with a mix of primroses, primulas and winter flowering pansies. We also added large numbers of spring bulbs, that we had saved from earlier in the year. Hopefully, all these will provide a good display over the coming months.

Winter Events 2025 – 2026

Christmas Tree Festival.....Thursday 11th – Saturday 14th December 11am – 6pm

At King Charles the Martyr Church, 3 Warwick Park, Tunbridge Wells.

Featuring trees decorated by local groups & charities – you can visit the FoGH tree!

Free entry, but all donations are shared with the participating groups.

At the end, the trees are sold in a silent auction.

Apple Howling.....Saturday 3rd January 2 – 3pm

Join FoGH & Iron Spring Morris to scare bad spirits away from the Community Orchard.

Follow the ancient tradition of wassailing to wake the trees, so they give a good harvest.

Meet at the Oast House for refreshments & dancing, before we process up to the orchard.

Please bring pots & pans, whistles & drums to make as much noise as possible.

Big Garden Bird Watch..... Friday 23rd – Sunday 25th January

The world's largest garden wildlife survey is happening over this weekend.

You can join in by spending 1 hour watching the birds in your garden or in the Park.

Keep a record of the birds you see & add the details to the RSPB website.

See <https://www.rspb.org.uk/whats-happening/big-garden-birdwatch> for more information.

KHWP Volunteer Day.....Wednesday 28th January 10am – 3pm

Join the Kent High Weald Partnership volunteers as they thin Appledore Wood.

The trees in this woodland pasture were planted 18 years ago & now need thinning out.

Tea, coffee & biscuits provided: bring a packed lunch if you are staying all day.

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

Orchard Pruning.....Sunday 1st February 11am – 1pm & 2 – 4pm

Join the FoGH volunteers for this fun outdoor task. Pruning handouts will be available.

The apple & pear trees need pruning in winter when they are dormant.

This encourages fruit production & maintains well-shaped trees.

Please wear appropriate clothing & footwear. If you have secateurs &/or loppers, please bring them.

Winter Lantern Parade.....Saturday 7th February from 5.30pm

The Parade starts in Calverley Precinct, goes down Camden Road & finishes in the Park.

This year's theme is Monsters & you can get involved by making a Lantern.

There are Lantern making workshops on all Saturdays in January at 10am & 1.30pm.

See <http://www.winterlanterns.org/> & <https://www.facebook.com/WinterLanternParade/> to learn more.

The Fun FoGH Quiz Night.....Saturday 28th February 7pm for 7.30 start

At the Hub. The popular brain-testing quiz returns! Tables of 6 if possible: price to be advised.

Want to join in but don't have 6 people? We can put couples, singles or small groups into teams.

Fish & chips included, as well as condiments. Please bring your own drinks & glasses.

Booking essential by phone or text on 07972 592799 & please advise of any dietary requirements.

FoGH Annual General Meeting.....Thursday 19th March from 6.30pm

Join us at the Hub for light refreshments & to help to shape the future of FoGH.

Local expert Martin Barrett will give a talk on Bees, Hornets & the Asian Hornet threat.

Only paid-up members can vote: to join please see our website <https://www.fogh.org.uk/join>

FoGH Dog Show.....Saturday 25th April from 10am to 12pm

There's great fun to be had at this dog and family friendly event!

On the lower football pitch. See posters & social media nearer the time for more details.

There will be a choice of classes & light refreshments will be available.

Please note: children must be accompanied by a responsible adult at all events.

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

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

Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/ghparkfriends/>

To learn more about conservation volunteering days with KHWP, see www.khwp.org.uk/