



Summer 2025

Welcome to the summer 2025 edition of the FoGH Parklife! Let me introduce myself:

I'm Chris Hughes and I was elected as Chair at the March AGM. As my house overlooks the Park, I've always had an interest in what happens in it. I really got to know it well when I started volunteering with Kent High Weald Partnership in 2007. Since then, I've helped to build boardwalk, planted trees in Appledore Wood and sown yellow rattle in the Orchard. I've also worn a fetching pair of waders as we cleared bur-reed in the wetland!

When the Friends group started in 2011, I was keen to join to support them. I joined the committee in 2013 and became Treasurer in 2017. When Carolyn Gray decided to step down as Chair last autumn, we began looking for a replacement, but it soon became clear that it would be hard to identify anyone. After some thought, I decided to put myself forward, as I've always been very much involved in the group. I'm very much aware that I've got big boots to fill! Carolyn has been involved in FoGH since the very beginning and has been a dedicated and energetic Chair for the last four years. We are glad she's decided to remain on the committee.

There have also been a number of changes to the FoGH committee: John Scholey has stepped down, as has Lynda Steers, who has moved away from the local area. We'll miss her help at events and all her gardening work with the FoGH Green Team. Richard Woodfield has been our Secretary since 2021, and his hard work has ensured that we have up-to-date policy documents and risk assessments. We'll certainly miss his knowledge of the FoGH constitution and careful recording of volunteer hours.

At the AGM two new committee members were elected: Sue Payne and Tom Saunders. Sue lives close to the Park and we are hoping to use her skills as a former art teacher. Tom has an accountancy background and has agreed to become Treasurer, so I'm currently handing the role over to him. I chaired my first committee meeting in May, with help from our special guest Pebbles the cat, who lives near the Park. We hoped he would take the minutes, but that went cat-astrophically wrong.....



Last year Grosvenor & Hilbert won the 'Best Large Park (above 25 acres)' category in the South & South East in Bloom competition, which was a triumph for all concerned! Royal Horticultural Society judge Sorin Caraiman is coming to Tunbridge Wells on Wednesday 2nd July and will visit the Park in the morning. FoGH will be working with the park keeper Tony Cheeseman, the Parks Department and our volunteers to make sure everything looks as good as possible. There will be opportunities for gardening work in the Park over the summer – look for social media posts or emails and give us a hand if you can.

Our events are listed at the end of Parklife, and I hope to see you at some of them over the next few months: please come over and say hello!

Chris Hughes, FoGH Chair, June 2025

A Round Up of Events & Activities in the Park

History of Beer Talk Thursday 27th March

Following on from the AGM in March, we enjoyed a fascinating talk on the History of Beer by Jeremy Kimmel from the Amelia. We learnt about the prehistoric origins of alcoholic drinks, through to the origins of beer and its later development. Jeremy clearly loves his subject! Refreshments included beer, which was kindly donated by Pig & Porter from Tunbridge Wells.



FoGH Dog Show Saturday 26th April

A very popular event with 18 volunteers helping to make it a great success by organising, baking cakes as well as setting up and clearing up afterwards. Thanks also go to our very own park keeper Tony Cheeseman as Head Judge and Mark Sparrow who ably assisted him as compere. For the record there were 11 entries in the Cutest Puppy class which made it very hard to judge, Not to mention 19 entries in the Waggiest Tail class!



Overall Results were:

- Best Young Dog Handler: 1st Aurelia & Jaxi; 2nd Amelia & Cookie; 3rd Kitty & Maisie.
- Cutest Puppy: 1st Monty; 2nd Basil; 3rd Dexter.
- Golden Oldies: 1st Hamish; 2nd Ollie; 3rd Millie.
- Best Trick: 1st Pepper; 2nd Jasmine; 3rd Bailey.
- Waggiest Tail: 1st Winnie; 2nd Roly; 3rd Rocco.
- Most Obedient: 1st Olive; 2nd Mackie; 3rd Lekki.
- Best in Show: Monty with Louise (shown left)

Pond Dipping Saturday 10th May

Local expert Martin Sutton was on hand to identify anything that our pond dippers found in their nets. These included water boatman, pond snails, leech, dragonfly larvae, caddis larvae, a smooth newt and three-spined stickleback fish. Our wetlands and Marnock Lake are teeming with wildlife and, happily, no one fell in!



Bee Walk Saturday 17th May



To celebrate World Bee Day Dr Ian Beavis, lead a walk around the park. A good variety of bees were seen including: Red Tailed, Honey, Early, Common Carder, Hairy Footed Flower, Red Mason, Garden and Chocolate Mining. Ian also identified a number of other insects such as Marmalade Hoverfly, Speckled Wood Butterfly and a Maidens Blush Moth. As ever, a big thank you to Ian for his time and impressive knowledge.

FoGH Volunteers

Have been working hard this month. There were two afternoons spent emptying the baskets, before they were planted ready for the summer on Saturday 24th May. We had an experimental evening session to start the big tidy up of the pollinator beds by the bowling green. Wine, beer, soft drinks and snacks were available as a thank you!



Summer & Autumn Events in the Park

Himalayan Balsam Removal.....Thursday 12th June 10am – 3pm
Thursday 19th June 10am – 3pm

Join the Kent High Weald Partnership volunteers to remove invasive non-native plants.
Tea, coffee & biscuits provided: bring a packed lunch if you are staying all day.
Meet at the Hilbert Road gates & wear suitable clothing & footwear.

Moth Morning.....Saturday 21st June 10.30am – 12.30pm

There are 59 types of butterflies in the UK, but over 2500 moth species!
Join Dr Ian Beavis to see some of the night-flyers caught overnight near the Park.
Free drop-in event at the Hub. Suitable for all ages.

Tunbridge Wells Fringe Festival.....Saturday 28th June – Sunday 13th July

Showcasing creative arts performances in venues throughout the town, including at the Hub.
For more information & tickets, please see twfringe.com/events

Himalayan Balsam Removal.....Wednesday 9th July 10am – 3pm

Tea, coffee & biscuits provided: bring a packed lunch if you are staying all day.
Meet at the Hilbert Road gates & wear suitable clothing & footwear.

Tree Walk & Talk.....Saturday 12th July 11am – 1pm

Join TWBC's Landscape Officer David Scully for an educational walk, starting at the Hub.
David will take a closer look at the Bedgebury conifers planted around the Wetland.
Limited tickets (£2.00) for this event will be available at fogh.org.uk/tickets

Moth Morning.....Sunday 17th August 10.30am – 12.30pm

Different species of moth fly at different times of the year, so come & meet some more!
Join Dr Ian Beavis to look at these interesting creatures caught overnight near in the Park.
Free drop-in event at the Hub. Suitable for all ages.

Orchard Inspection & Pruning.....Sunday 3rd August 11am – 1pm & 2 – 4pm

Stone fruit (cherries, plums & damsons) are pruned in summer, to minimise risk of disease.
We aim to keep a good shape & a manageable height (so we can reach the fruit!)
Please bring secateurs or loppers if possible & wear suitable clothing & footwear.

Moth Morning.....Saturday 20th September 10.30am – 12.30pm

Which autumn-flying moths will we find in the moth trap set up overnight near the Park?
Join Dr Ian Beavis as we remove and examine the insects we've caught.
Free drop-in event at the Hub. Suitable for all ages.

Pond Dipping.....Sunday 21st September 2 – 4pm

Discover the creatures that live in the Park's water habitats with local expert Martin Sutton.
We'll be meeting at the Hub before heading to the wetland area to investigate.
Limited tickets (£2.00) for this event will be available at fogh.org.uk/tickets

Apple Day.....Saturday 11th October 11am – 2pm

At the Oast House (by Hilbert Rd entrance). Join FoGH for children's craft activities & refreshments.
We'll be making juice with our apple press: bring bottles & any spare apples from your own tree.
Lots of volunteers needed to help cut up the apples! Free event but donations welcome.

Fungal Foray.....Saturday 25th October Time TBA

Discover the Park's fungi on this exploration & identification walk led by expert Keith Palmer.
Limited tickets (£2.00) for this event will be available at fogh.org.uk/tickets

Community Basket Planting.....Date & time to be advised

Help FoGH get the Hub & Bowling Green baskets replanted for winter & spring.
Tools, plants & equipment provided: please wear appropriate clothing & footwear.

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

For more information about any of these 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