



FRIENDS OF EASTVILLE PARK 2023 & 2024 NEWSLETTER



Friends of Eastville Park Committee: Sarah West - Chair, Jo Edkins - Treasurer, Chrissy Quinnell – Secretary, Andy Gee – Events and Activities Co Ordinator, Mo Lewis, Gill Calloway, Christina Stokes, Martyn Cordey - Wildlife Sub Committee, Ian Player

Eastville Park Bowling Club; Chair - Tony Reid Treasurer, Secretary- Ian Player

We love celebrating what has been achieved in the park and reflecting on all the activities which have been happening in the refurbished Nissen Hut Community Hub. Many groups from last year have gone from strength to strength and we have welcomed many new projects and initiatives to continue to fulfil our charitable objectives for the community in and around Eastville Park.

Friends of Eastville Park committee had a busy year meeting more people than ever. We also currently want to grow and are looking for more suitably skilled trustees to join us. Please contact us; friendsofeastvillepark@gmail.com

Here is an overview of where we have been focussing our voluntary energy over the past year or so.

NEW YEAR 2023

The Warm and Welcome Space became an important new project which Friends of Eastville Park initiated from February 2023. Funded by **Bristol City Council** we responded to the cost of living crisis by opening the Community Hub once a week to offer; a friendly warm and welcoming space, a place to obtain advice and signposting and a meal. We employed experienced community worker Jo Penguilley, to devise weekly programmes to keep the service interesting and engaging. She and her volunteers do a fantastic job!

Our regular groups stayed with us and thrived!

Roots to Wellbeing the leading green social prescribing service met weekly at the Community Hub with it's a weekly programme of outdoor nature connection activities in parks for anybody struggling with their mental health, feeling lonely anxious or isolated.

We continued to host the eclectic and popular **People's University of Fishponds** on Sunday nights as well as the monthly **Eastville Park Film Club**. The **Nordik walking group** also used the lovely hut as a base for their sessions and filled the space with their energy.



The Thursday **Warm Space** project went from strength to strength providing company, friendship, activities, advice, fun and a lovely lunch all for free! This project for over 55's is funded by the **Grateful Society** has now been successfully evolved into **Community Connect** managed by Laura Cobbett who brings her experience and ideas to continue creating a welcoming group every **Thursday from 11 till 2pm**. Many thanks to Laura and her volunteers.

On Thursday nights music fills the air with the blissful **Songbird's choir**, (which I attend), led by the inspirational **Jannah Warlow**. Every Friday **Eastville Park Food Club** continues to provide support for the local community by sourcing and distributing donated food and other items at this important weekly event.

Friends of Eastville park also completed the process of becoming a **Community Interest Organisation**

SPRING

Friday **Bowls Taster Sessions** started this month last year and will do again this year. **Eastville Bowls Club** continues to meet regularly and is open to new members and enquiries

Friends of Eastville Park continued to support local teenagers by creating a programme for the volunteer element of their **Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme**. We have really started to rely on their contribution in the park and they were invaluable in helping with preparing and clearing up for **Santa's Grotto on the Green** later in the year, as well as helping on the day. Further activities they supported us with included bagging up duckfood, setting up for Food Club, clearing shrubs and trees, maintaining and decorating the pavilion and bowling green maintenance. We are so grateful for and encouraged by their enthusiasm, many thanks to Andy for co ordinating this!

The first of 4 monthly hugely popular **Fundraising Cafés** also took place.

Frome Fairies got their waders on and cleared tons of tree debris from the river near the weir great family fun!

The Community Hub hosted; **Folk Around Fishponds** every fortnight a very special fortnightly event out for musicians and audience

Nature Sub Group News

2023 was a busy year for the Habitat Management Volunteers as they continued to manage the blackthorn saplings in Redhill Drive field. Using funds awarded by Quartet Community, some wildflowers were sown at the end of the year (with lots more planned for this autumn!).

An effort to reintroduce cuckoo flowers was carried out earlier year and although a few have flowered, we hope they will establish.

While working in the field, we realised that some yellow rattle had become established and it was wonderful to be surrounded by large skipper and marbled white butterflies! These are just some butterfly species whose caterpillars rely on the long grasses to feed, thus allowing these valuable pollinators to thrive.

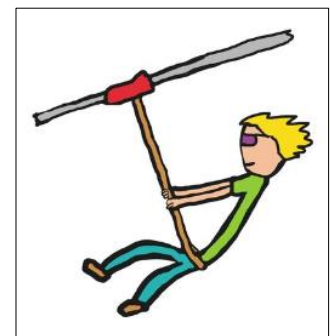
There are also exciting proposals from the council to create lowland meadows in several areas within the park and how these will help to further enhance Eastville Park as a valuable green space for both humans and nature



SUMMER

The Pop Up Cafe volunteers linked up with **Bristol Refugee Festival** again and created a beautiful way of supporting refugees in our community with an event full of food, tennis, music and fun! It had a South American focus this year and despite a few showers we danced and feasted.

The next stage of the **Children's Play Area** finally got completed after SOOO long and that zip wire hasn't stopped zipping since and the rope climbing frame is epic too! Incredible relentless work from Friends of Eastville Park probably the project that has demanded most consulting and vigilance we have been part of to date. Please support us in the next phase of renovating the beloved sandpit and it's equipment.



Eastville Park Bowls Club were in full swing with home and away games and the occasional win!

Music with Maya delighted the little ones from August and the Nissen Hut Community Hub became extremely busy with bookings nearly every day of the week with; parties, corporate days in which teams painted, gardened and made a difference.

We also supported **Special Friends Film Club** a group which uses the Community Hub to enable young people who find mainstream cinemas hard to access to enjoy a cinema experience together.

Bright Spaces came and painted wonderful **Alice in Wonderland** scenes on the pavilion walls. As well as the regular activities we had many “one off” events in which local groups hired the space including; Afghan minors, Eastville Park Bowls socials, Park story telling, many children’s parties, One Nursery graduation, Gamelan with Isis and Kenyan Independence rounded off with the unforgettable outdoor screening of **Jaws**!!



AUTUMN

We joined up with the local **Home Educators** group who began a weekly session for children and it started getting seriously busy for us at the Hub with all the usual groups continuing to use the space but now we were joined by **Imayla Youth Club** and then we obtained funding from The People’s Health Trust to provide some further groups. The incredibly popular **Monday evening (6 -9pm) Creative Group** and enjoyable **Tuesday Food and Nature Connection Group (11- 2)** which Jo Penguilley co-ordinates.

We began planning and preparing for Christmas and decided to go all out and have (deep breath) **Santa’s Grotto / Café/ music stage and Xmas market and book fair** all the things we love! It was A LOT OF WORK but the weather was kind, if windy on the day and it was a huge success and hundreds of people came. This linked with our **Christmas tree sales** and wonderful **Eastville Park Calendar** and **A History of Eastville Park** booklet provided us with a fantastic fundraising boost.

Throughout 2023 and into 2024 we have continued to try to keep the local community aware of our activities and dreams with regular “**Parkie**” articles in the Fishponds Voice thank you Ken for always making space for us.

Friends of Eastville Park are currently looking for new trustees and also people to be actively involved with Friends of Eastville Park projects.

NEW YEAR 2024

We were awarded 5 stars for our kitchen Food Hygiene rating

The Community Hub will be hosting Saturday morning **Yoga classes** from April and **Mindfulness** sessions from September. We have been chosen as the venue for **Bristol City Council’s 12 week Gardening and Horticulture Course Level 1** commencing in

Mid April. All the regular events, workshops, food club, meetings, film club, singing, corporate days, parties, album lunches etc will also continue managed so perfectly by Andy Gee.

We are so grateful for all the volunteers who have made events happen, too many to name here and to all the wonderful people who have come and been part of this unique journey. My highlight was seeing so many people coming to Santa’s Grotto. What was yours?



