



# NEWS UPDATE

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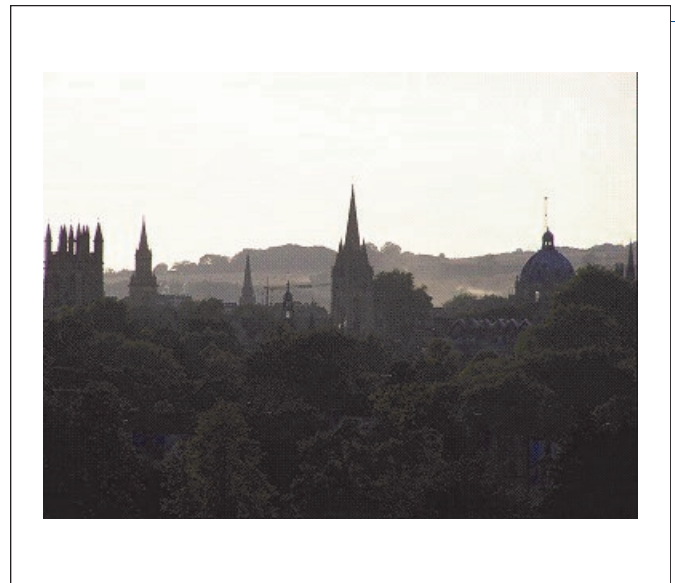
[chair@friendsofsouthpark.org.uk](mailto:chair@friendsofsouthpark.org.uk)

## DATE FOR YOUR DIARY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 22ND OCTOBER 2014 7.30-9.00 P.M. ST CLEMENT'S FAMILY CENTRE, CROSS STREET

Friends of South Park will hold its first AGM on 22nd October 2014 at 7.30 p.m. at St Clement's Family Centre, Cross Street

This is the opportunity for the community to contribute to discussions about important issues affecting the Park, and to elect new committee members.

For its first year, Friends of South Park has been ably led by Susanna Bowles. Although she and her husband Bjorn have now left Morrell Avenue she is happy to continue in this role, but new committee members are needed.



The classic view of the dreaming spires of Oxford from South Park  
(*photograph courtesy of MBB Brett*)

## Constitution and Membership

The Constitution (approved at the 2013 AGM) can be viewed on the website [www.friendsofsouthpark.org.uk](http://www.friendsofsouthpark.org.uk)

The membership fee is set at £1 per annum. To renew your subscription, or to join, please email your name, address and email address to:

[membership@friendsofsouthpark.org.uk](mailto:membership@friendsofsouthpark.org.uk)

Address for subscriptions:

c/o Treasurer of FOSP, 109 Divinity Road, Oxford OX4 1LW

## COMPETITION: “MY SOUTH PARK” YOUR BEST PHOTOGRAPHS

The panorama from the higher vantage points of the Park presents one of the iconic views of the dreaming spires of Oxford, and the only such view within easy walking distance of the City Centre. All are invited to submit their favourite photographs of

South Park for a special photographic competition & exhibition.

We are looking for photographs which show your personal enjoyment of the Park at any season or time, whether focused on the setting, the trees and other

plants, the wildlife that inhabits these, the people who use the Park, or preferably a combination of all these aspects.

(See p4 for entry details)

# FUTURE OF THE DEPOT? HAVE YOUR SAY!

The old farm buildings at the top of South Park, between the Warneford Lane entrance and Cheney Lane, have been disused for decades. The main barn is a listed building. There are other



outbuildings, but none is currently in use. The lovely cottage has a secure tenant, and is not under threat, according to both Oxford City Council and the Oxfordshire Preservation Trust (which has a restrictive covenant over the depot). There is no suggestion of substantial development for, say, student housing. The City Council has commissioned architects to undertake a feasibility study about possible development of the site for community/commercial use, and Friends of South Park will be consulted about their recommendations.

*Committee members viewing the barn*



## INSIDE STORY HEADLINE

How might the barn best be used for the benefit of the community? Sadly, left as it is, it will fall into disrepair, and simply disintegrate—as will other buildings on the depot site.

Could it be a café/restaurant with the outbuildings converted to small workshops or studios? Could it be used as a community space?

One thing is certain, unless financial backing is forthcoming, the Council will not have the resources to develop the site. Come along to the AGM and make your voice heard!



## SOUTH PARK FITNESS TRAIL

South Park has had a fitness trail for many years and the exercise stations have been so popular that several of them were starting to show their age. The City Council has recently invested in a new, updated and extended fitness trail around the perimeter of the park, including stations in the lower part of the park for the first time. Before the new trail was installed the plans were on display at a FOSP event in St Clement's Family

Centre and a member of the Council Parks team was on hand to discuss the proposals and note people's suggestions and concerns. As a result of feedback from FOSP members the number and location of fitness stations was amended to site them away from houses and ensure that the trail wasn't too intrusive for other park users.

FOSP members are delighted see the City Council investing in South Park's facilities, particularly as these

have been a very popular part of the park. The new trail is designed for a wide range of users including seniors. Research shows that exercise can reduce heart disease and diabetes as well as improve general health so it's good to see the park is getting the kind of investment that will enhance it as a place to visit and help the local community stay healthy.

## Friends of South Park

### Committee 2013/14

Bjorn Bowles  
 Susanna Bowles (Chair)  
 Caroline Compton (until April 2014)  
 Lesley Court (Committee Secretary)  
 Tom Hayes  
 Richard Hayward (until June 2014)  
 Andrew Lack  
 Elizabeth Mills  
 Mark Redhead (Treasurer)  
 Peter Rooke  
 Liz Rooke

More committee members are needed, so please put your name forward if you have time to help. Email to:

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

## AIMS OF FRIENDS OF SOUTH PARK

To represent the local community for the benefit of the park and its users. This includes:

- a. Influencing South Park's appearance (railings, tree maintenance, litter, dog fouling);
- b. Having a say in its facilities (play area, toilets, benches, bins, etc.);
- c. Being a consultee regarding the future of the depot and barn at the top of the park;
- d. Being a consultee for the events that happen within the park;
- e. Improving the park's biodiversity;
- f. Promoting exercise, health and wellbeing activities in the park;
- g. Organising community events;
- h. Fundraising through membership, events, sponsorship and donations.

## SEASONAL NATURAL HISTORY

After flowering superbly many horse chestnut leaves are developing brown splashes. This premature browning comes as a result of a canker caused by a bacterium. The canker thrives in warm winters and wet springs. Last year the infection appeared to be much milder... after a prolonged cold spell delivering the second-coldest March on record (after 1962). Perhaps the lower infection in 2013 gave us this year's splendid floral display. We must enjoy these displays while we can as the future of these trees must be in the balance. Now it is the turn of the sweet chestnut to flower with its long green inflorescences and distinctive, unusual smell. The large chestnuts near the top of the park can produce some good edible chestnuts, but most are too small to be worth collecting. It is actually more closely related to the beech than to the horse chestnut.

Birds have stopped singing, in the main, though many of you will have heard the drumming of the great spotted woodpecker earlier in the year. This is, in effect, a breeding call and nothing to do with feeding. Young starlings begging for food on the open grass are always a feature of mid-summer and the black-headed gulls are beginning to return, looking most dapper with their dark brown (never black!) heads.

## “BIG BELLY” SOLAR COMPACTOR

Oxford, Aberdeen, Cambridge, Philadelphia all have one thing in common – the adoption of Big Belly litter bins! One of these extraordinary bins has been installed at the top of South Park, between the Warneford Lane entrance and the entrance of the playground, so residents have probably seen it but maybe not realised just how clever it is.

The Big Belly Solar com-

pactor consists of a solar panel which powers a 12v battery, which in turn provides the power for an internal compactor. There are two volume sensors



within the bin and when the rubbish reaches a certain level, the sensors trigger the compactor. Owing to its unique compaction capability, it can hold a minimum of 606, increasing to 800 litres of waste, which is up to eight times greater than the average street bin used by most local authorities.

The clever bin sends an email and text to the Council when the bin is 85% full.



## WEBSITE

The website [www.friendsofsouthpark.org.uk](http://www.friendsofsouthpark.org.uk) went live in April. Friends of South Park website will be updated with news, views and membership information. Updates about the Park, consultations and developments will be covered on a regular basis. Photographs – from the competition and elsewhere – will be published.

This is your organisation so if you would like to see anything added or changed on the website, please let us know by emailing

[webmaster@friendsofsouthpark.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@friendsofsouthpark.org.uk).

Thanks to Bjorn Bowles for designing the website, and to Richard Brown of Orpheusnet for hosting it.

### STOP PRESS!!

Friends of South Park is on Facebook – visit

<https://www.facebook.com/friendsofsouthpark>

## MUDDY ENTRANCE SUCCESS STORY!

Many will have seen the work that has been completed at the eastern gate of South Park next to the play area. A low lying section of the path just inside the gate became muddy when it rained, very muddy when it rained hard, and an impassably muddy pool when rain was particularly persistent (such as during much of this past winter). The area has had a face-lift. After a few days' work a raised hard path is in place from the gate to where there was already a hard path across to the park, and to

the gate of the play area. The ground all round this area was initially dug and that may have improved the drainage too. Much grass seed has been spread around the new path.

FOSP has been campaigning for this as a matter of urgency and are delighted to see this park improvement. That entrance is used by large numbers of students at both Cheney school and Brookes University as well as dog walkers, families and children and other park visitors and this will help everyone. It has withstood some rain since being completed but it remains to be seen (probably next winter) whether it will remain dry in the worst of weather. Let us hope so. Meanwhile, it is a huge improvement.

## PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION – CLOSING DATE 31ST AUGUST 2014

A prize of £100 worth of vouchers will be awarded to the photograph selected as the best, and a number of runner-up awards may be made on merit, at the discretion of the judges.

The winning photograph will be published in the local press.

*This is your chance to show your photos of the best views of South Park !*



### RULES:

1 The competition is open to all amateur photographers; those below the age of 12 years will need written parental consent to enter.

2 Entrants may submit up to three (3) digital photographs each.

3 All entries must be received by 31<sup>st</sup> August 2014; entries should be

submitted by email to :

[webmaster@friendsofsouthpark.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@friendsofsouthpark.org.uk)

4 All entrants must be the originators of the photographs and hold copyright for them; entrants will retain their copyright, but in the event that the Friends of South Park (FOSP) wish to publish them in whatever form to raise awareness of and funds for their work, entrants are deemed to have

agreed to this, regardless of whether they receive a prize. Under these circumstances, authorship and copyright will be clearly identified on any original or copy pictures.

5 The winning photographs and runners-up will be exhibited in a public place.

### *Our first year in brief:*

*Consultation on new fitness equipment (now installed and used)*

*Muddy Warneford Lane entrance repaved*

*Invitation to view ancient barn and depot and consider future uses*

*Constructive dialogue with Oxfordshire Preservation Trust*

*Committee member, Tom Hayes, elected to City Council representing St Clement's Ward*