



FOHH – PLAYZONE PHASE TWO PROJECT COMPLETED

# FoHH NEWSLETTER



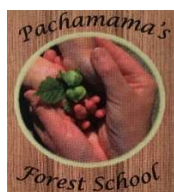
## Autumn 2021

FoHH is a registered charity no 1177431

### WILDWOOD PLAYZONE EXTENSION

You may have seen in the Spring Newsletter that following the success of Phase 1, the Friends won a further grant from the Somerset Community Foundation in 2020 for permanent den building frames, stepping stones to link to the existing facility and a wooden musical instrument.

The Rangers and volunteers completed the new additions during Spring and are proving very popular with young (and not so young!) visitors.



In early September, to celebrate the new additions to the Woodland Playzone, we asked the Pachamama Forest School to run a free event for children of all ages.



Throughout the day, over seventy children attended for a wide range of Forest School activities.



There was fire lighting, storytelling, and bug hunting. Children also made paper crowns, windchimes and clay imprints to take home.



(P.S. Thank you to the childrens' parents and carers for letting us share these photos).



Somerset  
Community Foundation

## BRITAIN IN BLOOM

The **RHS Britain in Bloom Competition** is a year-round competition that allows groups to compete on a regional or national level by using their land to enhance their communities.

You may not know that **Britain in Bloom** is not just about well-tended flower beds in small parks and flower boxes down the roads in your town or village? It also covers activities such as tending wildflower meadows, wildlife habitats and maintaining conservation areas.

The Rangers at Ham Hill Country Park are justifiably proud of everything they do and invited the RHS to Ham Hill in July. The Friends of Ham Hill were invited to join them.



On 16th July, Mick, and Steve from the Friends together with Rangers Paul and Izzi met with Sharon Scott, the adjudicator for the RHS. A leisurely couple of hours were spent showing Sharon around our wonderful Country Park and pointing out some of its features whilst discussing the involvement of the Rangers, the Friends, and the community in general.

We hope that Sharon was suitably impressed, and we will find out later this year if Ham Hill has been successful in winning an award.

## FUN DOG SHOW



*FoHH manning the tombola stall*

After last year's virtual event, the Ham Hill Fun Dog Show returned in August to help raise funds for the Ferne Animal Sanctuary and the Friends of Ham Hill. Donna and Sarah, the organisers, once again did a wonderful job of making it a fantastic day, including the weather!



The Friends were there in force, with our new-look stand, running the tombola, manning the ever-popular (and expanded) Ham Hill Challenge, and even providing a judge!

The money raised from the show was split between the two charities, each receiving £350. A huge 'thank you' to Donna and Sarah, their band of helpers and, of course, everyone who came to the show to make it a memorable day. We're told they're already planning for next year.

## WOODLAND WELLBEING AT HAM HILL

In our last newsletter, we talked about the **Woodland Wellbeing** initiative that we were planning to support, with funding via the Co-op Local Community Fund. The Woodland Wellbeing initiative seeks to help those in our local communities who are finding these times incredibly challenging, particularly those with mental health issues and pre-existing health conditions. There is much evidence to show that a connection with nature aids wellbeing.

Because so many of you chose to support the Friends of Ham Hill when shopping at Co-Op, we have funded a Community Heritage Officer's time to deliver the first of the Woodland Wellbeing sessions (with the Yeovil Huddle that supports new and expectant parents) and more are planned (with the mental health charity, MIND).

Our current funding from the Co-Op Local Community Fund finishes at the end of October and we're already looking at ways to ensure this great initiative can continue.





## TREE PLANTING 2021

The Friends of Ham Hill funded the Tree Planting in Horses' Wood in 2019. The Wednesday Volunteers put in a shift recently to maintain those small. The areas around each young tree were cleared of bramble, bracken etc. which were threatening their development.



Obviously, there wasn't a 2020 Tree Planting event, but the Rangers have confirmed plans for a 2021 event in November. This year's project will be to restore species' diversity in a small part of Horses' Wood adjacent to Pit Pond. Sycamore trees have been thinned and there is a requirement to plant around 300 small trees (such as hazel) along the woodland edge.

The Rangers and the Volunteers are clearing the scrub prior to a public tree-planting event in November. The exact date isn't yet finalized but keep an eye out on Ham Hill's Facebook page and the Visit South Somerset website.



## FLYING FOX RUNNING

This year we have used money received from the Flying Fox club to buy some new tools for the Volunteers Rangers, the hardy group who themselves give up their own time to support the Rangers across the park.



## NEW WEBSITE LIVE

Have you seen our new website yet? Helped by funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, we overhauled our website earlier this year. It now has loads of info on who we are, what we've achieved, what we're doing and planning and how you can support us.

Visit: <https://friendsofhamhill.org/>

## STOP PRESS

We're planning to run another photo competition during 2022 or a 2023 calendar – watch this space!

## FUTURE EVENTS AT HAM HILL COUNTRY PARK

For further details look on Ham Hill website or Facebook page

**Ham Hill Bonfire**  
**Friday 5<sup>th</sup> November**  
**5.30pm - 7.30pm**

This dog-friendly event leaves the ranger centre at 5.30pm for a wonderful torchlight procession down to the stone circle. The fire will be lit at 6pm and there is no finish time – Stay as long as you wish. We sell yummy hotdogs and warming spiced apple juice on the night and sparklers are permitted.

## SSDC CONTACT

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Follow SSDC on social media:



Ham Hill Country Park



@hamhillcountrypark



@SSDCcountryside

## FoHH CONTACT

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Website:

<https://friendsofhamhill.org/>



Ham Hill Country Park



## CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

### INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 Pandemic continues to have a significant impact on the Friends' activities and the ability to raise funds. During the year, there was very little volunteer work with only brief opportunities being offered by temporary breaks in the lockdown measures.

There were no meaningful events in the Country Park during the year, but general visitor numbers were strong as new people 'discovered' the gem in their locality for escaping lockdown and taking exercise.

We have not met as a group as regularly as we normally would and, for some of us, Zoom is a fairly poor substitute. Therefore, we are looking forward in June to our first face to face meeting in nine months.

### CHANGE OF CHAIR

At the deferred Annual General Meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2020, Mick Wooden stood down as Chair at his own request and I took on the role with some large boots to fill. We are all grateful to Mick for his leadership during his long tenure as Chair and are pleased that he will continue to fulfil the role of Project Manager.

### PROJECTS

Last year's Annual Report referred to the Ham Hill Roman Treasure Trail, the Woodland Playzone Phase 2 Project, and the Woodland Wellbeing Project.

During the year, the Roman Treasure Trail was completed with funding from the Prime Foundation.

The Woodland Playzone Phase 2 was very nearly complete by the end of the year and received funding from the Somerset Community Foundation.

The Woodland Wellbeing Project aims to improve access to green spaces and offer sessions to improve mental health and promote mindfulness, skills, and confidence for community groups. Funding from the Co-op Local Community Fund has reached over £700 and will continue accumulating money until October/November. We should be able to make a start on a few sessions with the money that is currently available and build on those sessions going forward.

Now that the volunteers are back working on Wednesdays, we will spend the £200 that we had promised to buy further tools to help make life easier.

### AWARENESS AND FUND RAISING

During the year, with the aid of funding from South Somerset District Council (SSDC), several of the committee worked with consultants to establish a new website for the Friends. The intention was to raise the profile of the Friends and link with social media where appropriate to enhance our opportunities for gaining new members and finding funds through different sources.

The donation link through Amazon Smile was mentioned in last year's Annual Report and is starting to bear fruit and a new platform for making donations through PayPal was set up recently. Both of these have a donate button on the new website.

Collection boxes in the surrounding villages are also contributing to our annual income.

As the pandemic lockdown starts to ease and further projects start to become viable, we shall be pursuing grant aid from both existing and new sources.

### FORWARD PLANS AND EVENTS

As we start to make plans for future projects and pick up where we left off, we shall also continue to support the SSDC NLHF bid for Ham Hill by selecting projects that meet our objectives but will, at the same time, enhance the community, education, and conservation aspects of the bid. There are projects in the NLHF programme that have already been identified and will be considered at our next full meeting.

The Ham Hill Dog Show will take place on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2021. The Friends have offered their assistance with running the event and will carry out some PR and fund raising of their own.

We shall monitor future local events and use them where possible to raise both the profile of the Friends and funding for projects.

### SUMMARY

We can still regard it as a positive and successful year because we have emerged solvent and still operating in particularly challenging circumstances. This is due to the work of the committee. Special thanks go to Mick Wooden for his work as both previous Chair and current Project Manager and also to Jaïne Leaning and Neil Dutton as Treasurer and Secretary respectively who kept us on the straight and narrow.

**Steve Poolman – Chair  
June 2021**