

# FRIENDS OF HAM HILL NEWSLETTER

Issue 21 | Winter 2023-24



The Rangers and the Volunteers putting up the Bat Boxes purchased from donations received by the Friends of Ham Hill

## WOODLAND WELLBEING PROJECT

Throughout 2023, we've funded even more community and family events through our "Woodland Wellbeing at Ham Hill" initiative. Launched during the COVID-19 pandemic, it funds community and family activity and crafting sessions at Ham Hill, focussing on mental health and physical wellbeing. Whilst we cover all the expenses involved, it is fair to say that the major expenditure is for the groups that have required a community transport minibus to get to and from Ham Hill.



Led by Edd Chilcott, Somerset Council's Community Heritage Officer, the groups have engaged in fossil scavenger hunts, using a slingshot (under guidance, of course!), outdoor fire lighting (ditto!), history and nature walks around Ham Hill, story reading, berry picking, bird feeder making, clay modelling, bug hunting, and building minibeast mansions.

Further Woodland Wellbeing sessions will happen later this year and people should look out for information on the Ham Hill Facebook page.



## 2023 EVENTS



The work we fund only happens with the generosity of individuals and organisations that support us in a variety of ways. Whether it be the Prince of Wales pub “lending” us use of the chapel for our get-togethers, local web and IT specialists helping design and manage our digital presence to everyone who pops by to say hello at the various events we attend during the year, we just want to say **THANK YOU**.

After all these years, many folks either haven't heard of the Friends of Ham Hill or don't know what we do. Yes, we are volunteers yet we're a separate group to the Volunteer Rangers (though some of us are both!). With that in mind, we created a couple of storyboards for the events we go to, to showcase what we do

## STOKE MAY FAYRE

So, after three years absence, it was great to be back at the Stoke May Fayre in its new home at the Stanchester Academy. We entertained the youngsters with creating their own fridge magnets as well as introducing the Ham Hill Pairs Challenge card game (where everyone gets a prize!). The weather was exceptionally kind and we raised over £50 on the day.

## HAM HILL DOG SHOW

After last year's cancellation the Ham Hill Fun Dog Show returned. As is tradition, the event raises funds for the Ferne Animal Sanctuary and the Friends of Ham Hill. The organisers, Donna, Sarah and their band of helpers, once again did a wonderful job of making it a fantastic day. The FOHH were there in force. It was a tad breezy for the Ham Hill Pairs Challenge card game, but the tombola sold out. The ever-popular Ham Hill Challenge for the dogs (and their owners) was expanded for 2023 and we even provided a judge for the dog show competitions. The Friends received £550 from the day and, we can't say it too often, that's thanks to you!



*Credit : Annie Collins Photography*

## PRINCE OF WALES PUB - QUIZ NIGHT

The Prince of Wales pub is a long-standing friend of the FoHH and once again in October, their regular monthly Sunday Quiz Night was in aid of our charity.

We raised over £100 on the night. Along with everyone who enjoys the quizzes, we'd like to thank Quizmaster Chris, who did his last Prince of Wales quiz in December. He will be a hard act to follow.

## BATBOXES UPDATE



You may recall that we wanted to do something specific with the money you put into our collection boxes throughout the pandemic – something tangible and lasting. When we asked Ranger Paul for his (extremely knowledgeable) thoughts, he immediately said “bat boxes”! Bat boxes provide a safe environment for bats to roost and give females a safe, warm place to raise their young, encouraged by conservation organisations, government agencies and forestry experts. With over £600 raised, we purchased ten bat boxes that have now been installed in carefully-selected locations across the park. Remember, bats are a protected species by law so please don't interfere with a bat box or its inhabitants.





### COMMUNITY TREE PLANTING – Sat 27th January 2024



Whether you're young, young-at-heart or not-so-young....whether you have two or four legs, you'll have a fun time planting new trees in Pit Wood. The Friends will be there, mucking in as well as keeping you supplied with tea, coffee and biscuits.

Just wrap up warm as we can't guarantee the weather! The exact details will be on Facebook and posters around the park nearer the time, so keep an eye out.

This year, the trees are funded by donations

### DRAGONFLY SCRAPE

In 2023 we announced Community Project – the Dragonfly Scrape (Witcombe Valley).

A "Scrape" is a shallow depression with gently sloping edges, which seasonally holds water. A scrape creates in-field wet features that are very attractive to wildlife, including dragonflies, damselflies, pond skaters and water boatmen.

The Rangers and volunteers have finished digging the scrape with an excavator. Shovels and rakes have been used to manufacture some of the softer banking in readiness for seeding. The plan is to have a community planting day in Spring 2024.

Details of when and how to be involved will be on Facebook and posters around the park nearer the time .

### WAYS TO SUPPORT THE FRIENDS



Pop your change into our collection boxes at:

- Norton Community Shop
- Prince of Wales pub
- The Priory Café in Stoke

If you are a local business who would like a collection box, get in touch: [info@friendsofhamhill.org](mailto:info@friendsofhamhill.org)

#### FOHH CONTACT



[info@friendsofhamhill.org](mailto:info@friendsofhamhill.org)



[friendsofhamhill.org](http://friendsofhamhill.org)



Ham Hill Country Park



#### Scan the QR code to make a donation

By supporting the FOHH you enable us to continue our work with activities, conservation and projects in your local country park.

#### SOMERSET COUNCIL CONTACT

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