

## Friends of Newbridge Park – Chairmans report

This is the first AGM of the Friends of Newbridge Park (to be referred to as FONP). FONP came together approximately 1 year ago following public consultations called by AquaVista who expressed a desire to expand their current footprint into what is known as Newbridge Park. Residents came together at the Boathouse with a wish to thwart that desire. As a result of this, the voice of the community was listened to by AquaVista and their wish to move into Newbridge Park was withdrawn.

A small group of us then got together to hold talks with the Parks department to see what would be the best way forward. We were told that it would be to our advantage to form a Formal Friends Group under the guidance on the councils website. This was duly done and FONP was formed and Constituted.

At this stage it is appropriate to say that this is not a new problem and has been around for at least 6 years with a Facebook group being formed in 2017. I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to all who have battled in the past with this problem.

Both groups serve a common purpose and can still work side by side but the council have identified with FONP that this will be their mechanism to offer support / funding and development of the park in the future. Albeit the council are now taking what can only be referred to as a backward step in supporting Friends Groups and are defaulting to "YourPark" Bristol and Bath who are as it sounds are an amalgamation from the Bristol and Bath parks. This newly formed group are a registered charity and will be a pathway to obtain support and funding in the future. In fact, it was this group that obtained the funding for our bulb planting session last November. B&NES Parks department will still play a part in the

general upkeep of the Park. You will have noticed on Facebook that we are pushing for people to apply for membership of FONP. This serves several purposes –

- It gives us a greater community voice
- The ability to show potential funders that we are a collective community
- To be honest another mechanism for being able to communicate more readily with everyone through 2 platforms – Facebook and a website

We have as can be seen managed to carry out quite a few things in the last year – for example -

- Refurbished the Benches in the Park
- Planted 2000 bulbs
- Got B&NES to agree to sort out the unsightly Brassmill Lane boundary hedge and fence- this is still ongoing
- Created a website for all

I would encourage you all to join FONP. We do not charge for membership but ask for donations only. I wish to pass on my thanks to the initial small group that has helped form FONP over the last year and hope that we grew from strength to strength over the next year.

The more people that join FONP the better and I ask that you complete an application form as soon as you can.

Many thanks for your attendance this evening and look forward to improving the park and its facilities even more in the coming year.