

## **Fairfield Association – Chairman’s Report 2016**

What follows is a general summary of our activities over the past year. Detailed project reports will follow from those who are more closely involved.

This is my first year as Chair and I am pleased to report that throughout the year I have received support and guidance from my fellow trustees and committee members. The Fairfield Association continues to provide a serious but friendly forums for decision-making, to maintain our areas of responsibilities and to work to provide all our traditional community activities and more...

### **Continuations**

This year the Fairfield Association will celebrate its twentieth anniversary and the year 2016 has been one in which we have continued to consolidate and better our past achievements. Our membership continues to increase and we now have, in addition, 60 Friends who between them provide an annual income of around £4000. Many thanks go to Geoff Oliver for his work promoting Fairfield Friends.

The Fairfield Association began in response to a threat to our local play area, Fairfield Green. The play area continues to thrive and remains a remarkably popular hub of activity. It is well-maintained by the Playground group and special thanks go to Ken Capewell (who seems able to fix anything!), David Dawson and Andrew Brennand.

The Fairfield Association Flora and Fauna Nature Reserve is a farmed reserve and, as such, provides a predictable annual pattern. We continue to blitz the ragwort, to make hay when the sun shines and the rain holds off (or not!) and to battle the rushes and promote the reeds. We need to thank all those people who turn out in sun, rain and mud to maintain the fields and footpaths so that we can enjoy them and especially thank those who perform the thankless tasks of clearing ragwort, thistles and other persistent weeds. We particularly need to thank Ian Procter for organising and inspiring our many volunteers in the field, Jonathan Tansley for his entertaining emails and Tony Finn who provides refreshments, including homemade cakes for the volunteers. Also thanks to Sue Nieduszynska, who chairs the FFOG committee, and Oliver Fulton, who steers us ever closer to LNR designation.

The success of both our lecture series and our outreach into schools continues. Our adult lectures this year have included talks on butterflies and Exmoor ponies and there have also been guided birdwalks and bioblitz events.

We continue to encourage and enable visits from local primary schools. Between July 2015 and June 2016 there were 11 tutored visits by primary school groups to the nature reserve led by Tony Finn. Most of these visits have involved Dallas Road but following the success of the Flora project, Ryelands school (yrs 1 and 4) came for visits in July 2015 and plan to come again this year. The Fairfield Association is very grateful for all the work which Tony Finn puts in on our behalf and I am really pleased to be able to include in this report news of an

Eyecan award for Tony, who is partially sighted. The award was given in recognition of the important role he plays both in volunteering and running the Fairfield outreach programme into local schools.

Julia McDowell has also arranged a number of school visits as part of her technology project and as a result of her work in Dallas Road Primary School, Dallas Road School, in conjunction with the Fairfield Association, were named joint winners in the national BBC Schools Digital Wildlife Award (Key Stage 1) with a presentation entitled 'Magical Minibeasts of Fairfield Orchard'.

During the course of the year we have continued to arrange and enjoy a full and varied calendar of community events. These included Apple Day, Carol singing, the Easter Egg Hunt, a barbecue at the Aldcliffe Triangle and a Kwik (but hard fought) cricket match. I would like to thank all those people who contributed to making these events a success. Our communal activities not only raise money for the Fairfield Association, they help make us into the community that we have become. This year we hosted the Open Garden Event at Carr House Farm which raised just short of £1000 for the Fairfield Association and enabled us to provide a view of the Nature Reserve and the activities of the Fairfield Association to a new set of people. In addition to all those who helped at the two day event, I would like to thank Helen and Robin Loxam for providing this opportunity.

Of our many fundraising activities I would like to give particular mention to the success of the Fairfield Christmas Card and Christmas Calendar Sale and in particular the work of Carole Martin and Mandy Bannon in organising the production and distribution of the calendars and cards. This year the cards and calendars raised over £1800 in total. I would also like to mention the success of some of our younger members in raising funds for the FA. Over £200 was raised by two sets of children (on Aldcliffe Road and Sunnyside Lane) who took initiative and sold cakes and books on our behalf.

In the coming weeks we will enjoy yet another Fun Day on July 2nd. This is a great community event and I would like to thank Andrew Brennand for organising this and also the many other people who have taken on some part of the event. There is still time to come forward and offer help. If you would like to be part of the band of Fun Day volunteers, please let Andrew know.

### **Changes and beginnings**

One sad change is the fact that 'Longface' the oldest cow in the herd of White Park died this year. However, we now have a new prize heifer and her bull calf.

Our volunteer activities continue to grow. One new addition is work on a photographic record of the area. On the website, you can now find the beginnings of an archive which will enable people to track the changing landscape of the nature reserve over time. I would like to thank Chris Workman for organising this and David Herrod for the many wonderful photos he has provided. This year for the first time we have also introduced the John Muir Award for conservation work which enables our volunteers to gain accreditation if they wish to do so.

In October 2015 we celebrated Fairfield in words and music at the Write around Fairfield Evening. Thanks go to Mandy Bannon for taking the initiative on this. This was a first for the Fairfield Association and since it was a great success, we hope it will be followed by other events which involve looking at the nature reserve with creative eyes. This year the Melodrome will provide a stage (literally!) for local musicians and there will also be a Fun Run for local athletes. There is still time to register for the Fun Run (£5 entry fee) and details can be found on newsletters by the door.

Celebrations of our twenty years of achievement will continue throughout the year and will culminate in a second public exhibition in the town centre. We are looking for memories of Fairfield, memories of the Fairfield Association and photographs of memorable moments. If you have treasured moments, or funny stories please share them with us either at Fun Day or by contacting us via the website. Further details of how you can contribute either to Fun Day or to the store of Fairfield memories which will be used in the Flora Footpath project can be found in your newsletter (additional copies are by the door).

Finally, I know I owe thanks to the many people who make it possible for the Fairfield to continue and to flourish. I particularly want to thank Jane Parker, our Treasurer, who does an amazing job on our increasingly complex accounts, Julia our webmaster and Shirley and Glenys, the secretaries of the FA and FFOG respectively who keep a record of our activities. I also need to thank Mandy Bannon for some great newsletters and Julia Salmon for her email circular. The Fairfield Association relies on its many, many volunteers and I close this report knowing that many of you have gone unthanked. You are not unappreciated.