



Chairperson's Report

Annual General Meeting 20 May 2009

Our second year of existence has been both rewarding and frustrating. Rewarding for the achievements we have made, setting up our website, having a notice board erected adjacent to the London Road Gardens Cottage, increasing our membership and lobbying the council for improved maintenance within London Road Gardens and Hillside Crescent Gardens. The frustration has come about, as these achievements have been through the work of a small group of dedicated people with limited support from the majority of our membership and this is something we have to look to improve over the year ahead. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed, in any way, over the past year.

Our website is now fully up and I would urge our members to use it as a reference to upcoming events and also as a means to contact the Office Bearers should they have any issues to raise. Thanks go to Rob Hainsworth who set the website up and updates the website on a regular basis to ensure that we are keeping people notified. Thanks also to the dedicated group who established the basis for the website and try to keep it simple and concise. Obviously this is a work in progress and we would welcome any comments through our membership, as to how we may improve the information we provide on the website.

We managed to input and contribute towards the area of London Road Gardens in particular, in establishing a debate about bio-diversity and maintenance. The improved maintenance has made a huge difference and this in turn has led to a reduction in littering in obvious places. The topic of biodiversity is one which will develop through time of working in tandem with the Council on the ongoing maintenance plan. This is something which we feel would be very beneficial for our membership and the local community, but it comes back to getting a number of people willing to dedicate specific time to this task. Unfortunately litter will always be a problem however we will work together with the Council in an attempt to minimise this.

The provision of the notice board in London Road Gardens is a positive step forward and we hope to get one for Hillside Crescent Gardens in the near future. We need to work at providing more information to be posted on these and we would welcome comments and input from our members about the type of information which they would like to see.

The main task for the coming year is getting more of our membership involved in activities. Principally this will be in compiling a survey for park users and the local community to establish where we should be directing our energies. For example we are currently lobbying the Council regarding the Sir Eduardo Paolozzi sculpture 'The Manuscript of Monte Cassino' currently situated outside the Cathedral, and due to be re-located due to the tram works, for potential re-location to the central space within Hillside Crescent Gardens. We would, of course, like to do more of this type of work with the support and input of our membership and the local community and park users, which is crucial to the survival of our Friends group.

As ever we are open to all suggestions and possibilities for the green spaces and parks in our area and value every input into an open and productive debate.

Lastly, our Treasurer, Kate Tomlinson, has decided to step down although she will still be an active member of the Friends Group. I would like to offer our thanks to her for her dedication and hard work over the last two years. We require a Treasurer to maintain our basis as a constituted Friends group and I welcome nominations or volunteers to fill this post.

Gavin McNab