



PARKS COMMUNITY

helping uk friends groups thrive

Spring Newsletter April 2021

Your chance to catch up with the latest news from PCUK

Newsletter 1 - April 2021

[View this email in your browser and access previous e-bulletins](#)

Hello and thanks for signing up to receive the Parks Community UK newsletter. We aim to share interesting news and information from the greenspace community and draw your attention to any new resources on our website and further afield.

We have a popular @ParksCommUK Twitter account but we know it's easy to miss things, so we will include a few of the best tweets here. It could be an interesting discussion, great photo or links to useful content.

If you know someone who might like to receive future PCUK mailouts, please point them towards [the sign up form on the Parks Community UK website](#).

With best wishes,

The Parks Community UK team

Parks Community UK is a support network, knowledge hub and learning space operating within the grassroots movement of thousands of parks and green space Friends and community groups. We aim to help empower local volunteers to be effective and resilient. PCUK is managed by the [National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces \(NFPGS\)](#), the movement's umbrella

"COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT IN GREENSPACE" FINAL PCUK WORKSHOP FOR 'RETHINKING PARKS'

...

Read the full write-up on our website, including links to survey results, polls, slideshows and a recording of the workshop:

<<https://parkscommunity.org.uk/news/highlights-from-the-final-parks-community-uk-rethinking-parks-workshop>>

...

We thoroughly enjoyed our time and learned a great deal taking part in NESTA's 'Rethinking Parks' programme (2018-2020). Our original aim was to "support the meaningful involvement of communities in their local park or green space". This continues to be our mantra, as we evolve beyond the project and work to support the grass roots green space movement on behalf of the National Federation of Parks and Green spaces.

The final project workshop took place at the end of 2020. and the virtual meet up featured eight of our pilot sites. We discussed their key challenges, success stories and how local groups can continue to support each other in future, backed by PCUK and the NFPGS.

PCUK will continue to help cultivate and strengthen the UK-wide network of Friends Groups, so that shared experiences and peer learning are freely available and ensure volunteers feel empowered and enabled to do their incredible work.

There are over 7000 Friends of Parks/community groups in the UK and the pandemic has shown local people are more appreciative than ever of access to quality greenspace. Harnessing the energy, insight and help of these volunteers is key to the future health of our parks and green spaces.



Highlights from the @ParksCommUK Twitter feed

Here are a few highlights from our popular Twitter feed in case you missed them. If you haven't already, then please do follow us and say hello [@ParksCommUK](https://twitter.com/ParksCommUK)

- [Discussion on best bank accounts for Friends Groups](#) including positive feedback for: Unity Trust, CAF Bank, Monzo, Lloyds, Tide and Co-op Bank.
- [Many Friends/community groups are seeing more #socialprescribing taking place on their sites](#), this tweet included a link to a new Defra award for social prescribing/community group projects.
- The [news that Liverpool City Council had voted to protect all its parks and green spaces from development in perpetuity](#) has proved our most popular tweet of 2021 so far. The Council will be working with Fields in Trust and the initiators of the agreement were two inspirational Friends Groups volunteers (Chrisie from Walton Hall Park and Pauline from Calderstones Park). This is a fantastic commitment from Liverpool and we urge you to call upon your local authority to do the same. If we all apply pressure then hopefully more areas will follow.





Fox



Snow



Holly



Frost on Wild Carrot



Goldcrest



Bee visiting a Snowdrop



Early Blossom



Galls on Oak



Robin in the Snow



Shelf Fungus



Ice



Crocus

We love this "Winter Walks" spotters sheet that Friends of Barnes Common have created. It's the first in a series of self-guided walks in and around Barnes Common and the sheet is designed like a treasure hunt to enhance the enjoyment as visitors explore the area. "On Common Ground" walk [further information on their website](#).



Wonderful spring bluebells on show at Beckett Park, Leeds
c/o [@ParkBecketts](#) and [@loveleedsparks](#)



"Better Outside" guide - as we continue to live with #COVID19 Greenspace Scotland (@Greenspacescot) has released some terrific practical guidance showing us how to take #communities #schools and #arts outside! [Read more and download resources from the Greenspace Scotland website](#)

[Friends of Central Park](#) in Peterborough have produced a wonderful leaflet which celebrates their park and all those people who visit, use and look after it. It is so easy to forget to give thanks and seeing so many positive stories and characters are uplifting. Well worth the effort, well done FoCP!

[See the Leaflet here.](#)

USEFUL THINGS FOR FRIENDS GROUPS!



1. [PCUK 'Better Friends' tool](#). A **FREE** self-assessment check-up tool designed to help greenspace Friends and community groups reflect on their organisation and activity and strengthen themselves. Since the launch in September 2020, over 200 groups have taken part and received their 'Better Friends' feedback reports. This is the

volunteer Friends groups who champion and improve their local UK parks and green spaces. It will get you thinking about how you operate, how effective you are and highlight areas for possible improvement. [Take the test here.](#)

2. "[How to campaign to save a park or greenspace](#)" - we've written a new comprehensive guide for our website, with lots of useful links and up-to-date advice. [Take a read here.](#)

3. [Read some thoughts about parks, compiled by the 'Rethinking Parks' NESTA team](#) (which included Parks Community UK). Their fantastic and inspirational visions look at the future of parks and green spaces and feature essays, provocations and fiction. They encourage all of us to boldly imagine the role that these spaces can play in our communities. Learn how "world cities are now re-weaving their built fabric with intense greenery inc Barcelona's 'Superblocks'". There's also a great piece on how young people view green spaces. [Take a look here!](#)

4. [NESTA's 'People Power in Parks' leaflet](#) features Parks Community UK, Friends of Hardie Park and Par Track. The groups discuss their experiences, some of the challenges they faced, their key lessons and sets out a framework to map the different forms that people power can take in parks. [Read online or download the leaflet here.](#)

5. There's a great downloadable guide from My Community on "[Recruiting and Retaining Green Space Volunteers](#)" and it includes

[guides on the PCUK website too.](#)

6. Almost 10 million people in England live in areas with very limited access to green space. Are you one of the unlucky ones? Use the [Friends of the Earth greenspace tool](#) to find out how your neighbourhood fares. This tool was developed as part of [a detailed report of the current needs of green space](#). It praises the Friends Groups movement, calls for parks to be a statutory service – and calls for the Government to ensure an additional investment of £4 billion a year.

7. “[The National Grassroots Campaigns Map](#)” is a new and important grassroots green space resource created by [@rosieP4](#), [@BEAG_Tweets](#) and [@ExplorerDale](#). The map is interactive and shows where UK campaign groups are fighting housing developments, road building and other environmentally damaging projects. If your local green space is under threat, you can upload details of the campaign and get added to the map. So far, an impressive 378 campaigns have been logged in only a few weeks.

Read more [information here](#)

And you can [view and update the map here](#)

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT!

Dave Morris, the Chair of the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces, [wrote a comment published in The Guardian](#) last month, in praise of our parks and the Friends groups who champion them. The [NFPGS](#) is the grassroots umbrella organisation co-ordinating and amplifying the voices of Friends Groups across the UK. (Parks Community UK works for the NFPGS, to help ensure groups can

Parks and green spaces

The UK edition
Guardian

Letters

Readers respond to Simon Jenkins' suggestion of turning Buckingham Palace's gardens into a public space

Parks are indeed the “unsung, unclapped heroes” of the pandemic. They are also a chronically underfunded and understaffed public service. We represent hundreds of thousands of members of local Friends of Parks groups across the UK who care passionately about their local green spaces. They publicise, protect, maintain and generally champion them. It is time to demand the government takes its responsibilities just as seriously and ensures parks get the statutory recognition and funding that our communities deserve.

Dave Morris

Chair, National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces

To read NFPGS newsletters [click here](#).

To sign up for future NFPGS mailings [click here](#)



in association with National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces with
Parks Community UK

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Full edition

Parks Community UK and the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces were key contributors to the [CJS 'Focus on Volunteering'](#) edition published in February 2021.

Our in-depth feature article "Green spaces need Friends" explores how land managers can embrace and work with Friends Groups and community volunteers. [Read the article here.](#)

The NFPGS looked at the inspirational grassroots Friends Group movement in an article called "Friends United"
"Slowly but surely, especially over the last 20 years, an inspirational grassroots movement has been arising of people dedicated to improving, caring for, protecting, animating, appreciating and publicising, and taking some 'ownership' of their own local green spaces in all kinds of ways."
[Read the article here.](#)

PARKS COMMUNITY UK NEEDS FUNDING!

Our grant from NESTA has finished and we will only be able to continue to work on the website until the end of June. We are currently seeking to obtain further funding but it is a slow process.

If you are in a position to help us with a donation, we would be very grateful.

>>> [You can donate via the NFPGS website here](#) <<<

Please reference your payment - Parks Community UK.

Thank You!

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