

# FRIENDS OF FOOTS CRAY MEADOWS



ISSUE 10

NEWSLETTER

March 2012

[www.footscraymeadows.org](http://www.footscraymeadows.org)

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## London in Bloom 2011

There was success again this year for Bexley and Fots Cray Meadows in the 2011 London in Bloom Competition. Hearty congratulations to all those involved with the Boroughs awards from the Friends of Fots Cray Meadows.

Fots Cray Meadows was again awarded a Gold in the Country Park category and held onto its Best in London title for the second year running. Members of the FFCM Committee joined other winners to receive the trophy.



## Bexley Environmental Challenge 2011



Members with the Trophy before the walk

The Friends of Fots Cray Meadows celebrate success at the Bexley Environmental Challenge awards evening for 2011 held on the 11<sup>th</sup> January, We were able to parade the Cup at our Winter Walk on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> January.

Over forty members and supporters of the Friends turned up to enjoy a seasonal but sunny walk through the Ancient Woods on the Meadows.

The Friends received a Gold Award in the Green Projects Category and a cheque for £50. And then went on to be Awarded First Place in the Challenge, and another cheque for £1000. Michael Heath the chair said 'we were absolutely thrilled to receive these awards which recognises the volunteer teamwork of the committee and members since the group was formed six years ago; we are an interest group that works with Bexley's parks team to get communities actively involved in the management of the Meadows.'



Receiving First Prize

# Chairs Chat

Early on a damp day last July the committee welcomed the judges of the Bexley Environmental Challenge to their assessment of our Green Group entry.

We explained how the Meadows mean so much in different ways to all who visit. That we are an activity based group striving to developing ways to involve people and get them doing things on the Meadows; with our Tree Planting sessions, Family fun events, History, Nature and Bat walks. How we work closely with Bexley Parks Team with woodland management through our family tree planting sessions and with Froglife to introduce the new standing water habitats (of course it is of some concern that they are not holding water as well as intended). At the awards evening in January we were pleased to receive a Gold Award in our Category and then surprised and thrilled to be declared the overall First Prize winners.

These awards recognise the hard work of the committee and those members who regularly turn up and support our events. It is only as a team that the Friends can get things done, allow people to join in and appreciate the: biodiversity, history and how such a large and popular open space needs to be managed.

With teamwork the Friends can make a difference; as ever my sincere thanks to all who work so hard for the Meadows.

Any committee must be adaptable and mindful of its purpose. Ideally there should be a succession process for officers etc. However, for a group of this size and with today's lifestyle demands this may not be practical. Notwithstanding, that I believe we have a genuine desire to continue (as previously) to welcome new people and ideas to the committee; the likelihood is that for the most part the existing committee will stand for election again at the AGM in June; we do not want to 'throw the baby out with the bath water' that said there is much work for the Friends to continue to do, to give you the opportunities to get involved.

Margaret and her team are preparing to repeat our successful Fun Dog Show (23 June your help wanted) Tree work, More walks and the possibility of some river enhancement work with yours truly.

To keep up to date visit our website [www.footscraymeadows.org](http://www.footscraymeadows.org) from which you can print off a membership form and send us next year's subs, also do e-mail us on [ffcm06@gmail.com](mailto:ffcm06@gmail.com) with your comments

On a personal note not being content with sticking my head above the parapet as the Chair of the Friends. I was in October selected as the new Thames21 River keeper on the River Cray in Bexley.

Michael Heath  
FFCM Chairman

## Kingfishers

Reports of Kingfishers being sighted above and below the Five Arches Bridge is good news as



Photograph David Mercer

they have not been seen on the River for a couple of years. Reason for not seeing them as much as we have previously is mainly thought to be due to the water quality and the fish in the river not being

as abundant. So its good news they are back

# Editorial

As can be seen from the front page FFCM have had a very successful year. In order to ensure that we continue to be successful we need to encourage more people to support us by becoming members. Membership costs only £4 per household per year *(if you haven't yet renewed your membership yet please use the form on page 5 - editor).*

By having a large number of members on our books it gives us a greater degree of influence over the Meadows future. I'm sure we all want to pass onto future generations what we take for granted now.

A number of super photographs by David Mercer appear in this edition. If you want to see more use the link <http://davidmercer.zenfolio.com/>

No moans from me this time I've left that to our new columnist AJ. Although I would go further and say putting poisonous materials on the Meadows is downright dangerous.

I'm not sorry for mentioning awards a few times we're actually very pleased with our efforts.

*Editor*



Photograph David Mercer



## Committee Members

- **Chairman - Michael Heath**
- **Secretary - Karen Wheeler**
- **Vice Secretary - Margaret Dodd**
- **Treasurer - Margaret Dodd**
- **Membership Secretary - Margaret Dodd**
- **Events Manager - Lesley Grant**
- **Publicity Manager - Sally Lands**
- **Newsletter Editor - Nick Grant**
- **Committee Members - Vera Heath, Jan Harmer**

**We need a Conservation Manager.  
Please contact us if interested.**

[www.footscraymeadows.org](http://www.footscraymeadows.org)

email : [ffcm06@gmail.com](mailto:ffcm06@gmail.com)

# Information Centre

We have been opening the Information Centre on an irregular basis for some time, usually on some of our publicised events. We are now looking to open the centre on some weekends for a few hours each day.

In order for us to do this we need a pool of volunteers who are able to give some time to man the centre. If you would like to be involved or want to find out more about volunteering please either email [ffcm06@gmail.com](mailto:ffcm06@gmail.com) or ring **07858762530**.

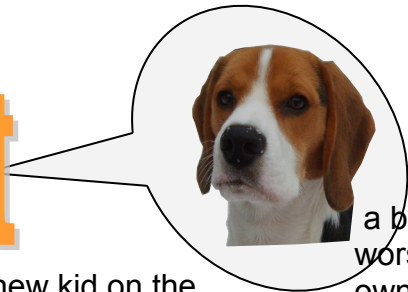
## Aims and Objectives

- Working in partnership with Bexley Council to encourage public interest in, and the conservation of Footh Cray Meadows (FCM).
- To protect the wildlife and its habitat within FCM.
- To provide a focus for involvement by the community and users in the open space, to volunteer and work with the Council, in the conservation of FCM and its development as a public open space.
- To advance the public's awareness of the open space by promoting FCM its plants, wildlife, landscape, sustainability and supporting appropriate recreational facilities for the benefit of community groups and the general public.
- To develop and deliver information, interpretive material and educational opportunities for FCM
- To raise funds for the purpose of achieving the above aims.





# AJ's bit



Hi my name is AJ and I'm the new kid on the block. Many of you will recall Tuppence my predecessor in writing this column. I never met him but I'm told he wrote a cool column.

I can't wait to get out on the Meadows each morning for my walk. Its really fantastic and I know all my doggy friends have a really great time. It's a pity though that despite having the Dog Bins dotted around there is still mess on the ground. What is more annoying are the owners who pick it up put in

a bag then put the bags on the ground or worse still hang them on a branch. Come on owners pick it up and bin it there are enough bins located around the meadows for this purpose.

Recently there have been incidents of Dogs being made sick by items of food deliberately placed on the Meadows with some form of poison in them. If its aimed at Foxes they are not the only who will try to eat it dogs will and there are other animals it can affect as well.

## Foots Cray Meadows - Council Management update.

The following update covers most of the major works that have recently taken place as well and giving notice of others that are planned. It will not however cover the range of small tree planting that has been undertaken by the Friends and other volunteers over the winter. Although the Council directly supports this work this is not in the Council Programme.

### North Cray Woods

- Over the winter another section of the woods have been coppiced, this means that the trees are cut to the base but will be allowed to re-grow in the spring. Non native trees are to be controlled and new native trees such as hazel and oak will be planted here. Look out for the increase in spring flowers that should occur with increased light hitting the woodland floor, such as bluebells around late April/ may time.
- Another section of the Alders wet wood down near the river towards the royal park end of the site have also been coppiced recently. Here the aim is to regenerate the alder trees and remove the invasive sycamores. The main ride from the stable block down past the site of the old house has also been managed again to open it up to make it more welcoming and to control invasive species as well as over grown brambles. This should increase the spring flowers and insects and birds associated with them.

If you have any concerns or comments about management on the Meadows or see behaviour by the public that is antisocial or damaging please contact the Council on 020 8303 7777 24hrs 7days a week. Or go to [www.bexley.gov.uk](http://www.bexley.gov.uk) In a emergency please call the police.

Over the last few months the Environment Agency (EA) has been working with the Council to develop a number of schemes along the Meadow's stretch of the River Cray, with the aim of to improving water quality. As you may know, there are several surface water drains that discharge in to the River Cray within the Meadows. Surface water drains are those that take water from our roof gutters and drains in the roads. These do not get treated, they run straight into the river. Fowl water from baths, toilets etc is sent in a different system to a treatment plant.

Pollution from miss connections in properties into the surface drains as well as oil spills and items poured down road drains all end up in the river. The EA is trying to limit the impact of this pollution. However, at time of writing it is not clear if these schemes will get the go ahead this year. If they do you will see work taking place along the river at the drain outlets in the next month or so. The work may be quite disruptive and more trees will have to be trimmed or coppiced. At one of the locations we have already coppiced and felled some sycamores -near the outlet next to the green bridge. If you need more information please contact the number that will be displayed on site by the EA at time of the works.

Bexley Parks Team



# Dates for your Diary: Future Events

We hope you are interested in joining in the many events we will be hosting in the coming months. At all the events listed there will be Committee Members attending. Dates (where known) and a brief description are below; look out for publicity in the weeks leading up to each date. For further information please contact the Events Manager on 07858762530

- Saturday 24th March 2012 - Wildlife Garden Work
- Sunday 29th April 2012 - Bluebell Walk with the Friends of Foots Cray Meadows
- Saturday 19th May 2012 - Work Day on Meadows
- Tuesday 19th June 2012 - FFCM AGM
- Saturday 23rd June 2012 - The 2nd Friends of Foots Cray Meadows Fun (Olympic) Dog Show
- July 2012 - Love Parks Week Walk (Date to be advised)



## Join Today Membership costs just £4 per household annually

The Friends of Foots Cray Meadows is a voluntary group funded by its membership & fund raising activities.

### Membership will grant you

- Seasonal Newsletters that will include updates on projects.
- Reduced admission on any talks or events that we are not able to host for free.
- Additional Meadows related contacts, whether you would like help with
- Getting an event off the ground or simply would like to share some ideas or concerns regarding Fooms Cray Meadows.
- Early notification of meetings, events and talks.

### Money raised will help to:

- Fund projects that will both protect and benefit The Meadows.
- Encourage interest & enthusiasm in the area.
- Organise outdoor events & talks.
- Improve facilities (initially the Wildlife and Information Centre).

*Any names and contact information gathered by The Friends of Fooms Cray Meadows will only be used by themselves or Bexley Council on their behalf and not passed onto any third parties.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my/our subscription. £4

Children's Names (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is a donation to The Friends. £ \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please make cheque's payable to:  
**Friends of Fooms Cray Meadows**  
and send them along with your completed form to:

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Margaret Dodd**  
**FFCM Membership Secretary**  
**32 Riverside Road**  
**Sidcup**  
**Kent DA14 4PU**

Email \_\_\_\_\_

*Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Committee or Bexley Council (unless otherwise stated).*

