



Welcome to our Spring newsletter!

As we leave winter behind, it's wonderful to see the first signs of spring appear in the park with snowdrops pushing their way through and the daffodils ready to burst into flower. If you walk through the gardens, you will no doubt see the gardeners hard at work, preparing the flower beds and vegetable garden, ensuring we have a wonderful display of flowers over the summer months, and a rich harvest of vegetables later in the year, ready to supply many charitable organisations.

Our work party has also resumed activities on a Monday, and are currently meeting every two weeks, working on various projects in conjunction with the countryside rangers and gardeners.

We hope you enjoy our spring edition, and this month we're delighted to provide the latest update from Glasgow City Council on the Stables & Sawmill project, along with our 'day in the life of' feature covering Andy Bradbury and his gardening team, and our very popular 'Creature Feature' article by our wildlife photographer Karen Sweeney.

Our committee have been busy in the background planning activities for the year ahead, and an update has been included within this edition. We also held our AGM & General Public Meeting on the 22nd March at Eala Bhan Bar & Kitchen, thank you to all who attended!

If you would like to help the Friends of Pollok Country Park, or if you would like to become a member, we would love to hear from you. **Please contact us at:** membermojo.co.uk/ friendsofpollok.com

AGM & General (Public) Meeting

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM), together with a General Public Meeting (GPM) was held in Eala Bhan on Wednesday 22nd March 2023. 22 people were in attendance. As well as hearing an annual report, financial report, work party update, social media update and bench project update, the meeting considered questions and comments by FOPCP members and members of the public.

The new committee for the coming year was agreed as follows: -

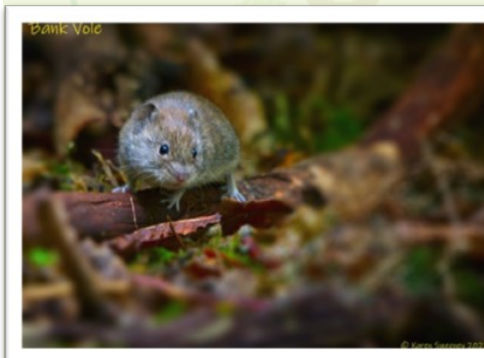
Chair – Des Gallagher, Vice-Chair – Catherine Todd, Secretary – Rachel Clark, Treasurer – Brian Willett and IT/Social Media – Gavin Winterbotham, plus 5 ordinary members – Jane Black, Bob Marshall, Patricia McCarthy, Charlie Turner and Gina Lundy.

Two members of our committee stepped down at the AGM, Phil Wray and Peter Gore, and we would like to thank them for their efforts and contribution over the last year.

In terms of the constitution, the committee can co-opt up to 5 members per year so, if you missed the meeting but are interested in getting involved in Pollok Country Park, we would love to hear from you.

Creature Feature

Pollok Park represents an ideal habitat for both **bank voles** and **wood mice**; but how do you tell them apart? Hopefully this article will come to the rescue with that identification and leave you with some facts about both of these feisty little rodents. To see them you have to stake out their food sources and wait; sitting very still.



Bank Vole (Myodes glareolus)

- Breeds March till October
- Chestnut brown fur, small ears and eyes
- Has 3-4 litters per year of 3-5 young at a time
- Can live up to 2 years but rarely does so due to predation
- Diet consists of vegetation, roots, fungi, fruits, nuts and sometimes insects. Particularly fond of bramble.
- Tail is hairy and is 50% of body length
- Active both by night and day
- Predated upon by foxes, kestrels, stoats, weasels, badgers, owls



Wood Mouse (Apodemus sylvaticus)

- Breeds February till October
- Brown fur, large eyes and ears
- Has up to 6 litters per year of 4-8 young at a time
- Only lives for 1 year, very rarely more than that
- Diet is varied; seeds, fruit, nuts, fungi, roots, earthworms, caterpillars, snails, centipedes and sometimes hibernating bats in winter
- Tail is very long, if caught the tip can detach to allow escape; it does not grow back.
- Mainly nocturnal
- Predated upon by foxes, badgers, stoats, weasels, owls

A Day in the Life of... Pollok Park Gardening Team

Hi, I'm Andrew Bradburn, supervisor of Pollok Country Park estate. I have worked at Pollok Park for 20 years now and it's been a pleasure to work in this beautiful park every day.

We have a dedicated team of 13 staff who look after the estate. Every day is different - as the seasons change so does the work. In the winter months we are clearing leaves and cutting back hedges and shrubs - and making sure the park is safe for visitors by gritting the roads and paths on the icy mornings and checking for fallen trees on the windy ones. The staff have also been busy planting the tulip and hyacinth bulbs in preparation for the Spring display and digging in the manure in the vegetable garden to get ready to plant up our lovely vegetables that we demonstrate and provide to various charities and food banks each year.

Come Spring and as the weather starts to warm up (hopefully!) we are starting to sow seeds in the glasshouse and propagating, ready to start planting up the veg plot again. Our team is out cutting the grass and edging the plots to get the sharp edges back from a wet, cold Winter. The daffodils and crocus are on full display and the tulips and hyacinths not far behind - Summer is not far away now.

Once Summer arrives it's all systems go! The grass is never endingly being cut, the veg plots are in full flow, the glasshouses are full of juicy tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, melons, and hot and spicy chillies that all need constant watering and attention. Once the tulips and hyacinths have done their job of providing us with early colour and scent, it is time to get the beds in the main lawns planted up with our wonderful bedding display to see us through the Summer months with marigolds, dahlias, antirrhinums, begonias etc - all beautifully edged with lobelias.

The Park looks great and is bustling with the sound of families enjoying picnics and kicking balls about. This is why we do it.



Samantha and Paul from our gardening team.

GCC Updates & The Active Travel Plan...

Visitor Survey- This survey started at the end of March and will continue into June, and will include interviews with questionnaires as well as observation shifts. This will be conducted by researchers over a selection of weekends and weekdays.

EV chargers- Installations have been made at the Burrell and Pollok House car park and will go live once cabling is complete and the battery has been installed.

Children's play park- Plans being finalised to improve access/exit routes.



Lochinch Road- Plans being finalised to improve passing places and repair potholes.

Work Parties

The Friends volunteers started back with the Monday work parties on 13th February this year - and we had a good day for it! Our first task was to clear some willows that were overgrown around the riverside path. This let in more light for people to see the riverside - and wildflower seeds will be sown there together with some young trees later in the year.

It was good to see so many people using the Park and we really appreciated all the chats and the good wishes and thank you messages from people - that really means a lot to us!

We continued with this work on 20th February and after that work party we had a small event in Pollok House with coffee and cake to thank all of our work party volunteers for their hard work and dedication in all weathers - which we really appreciate.

Other work being carried out has included weeding in the wildlife garden, planting poppies behind the Burrell and primroses at the Covid Riverside Grove memorial site.

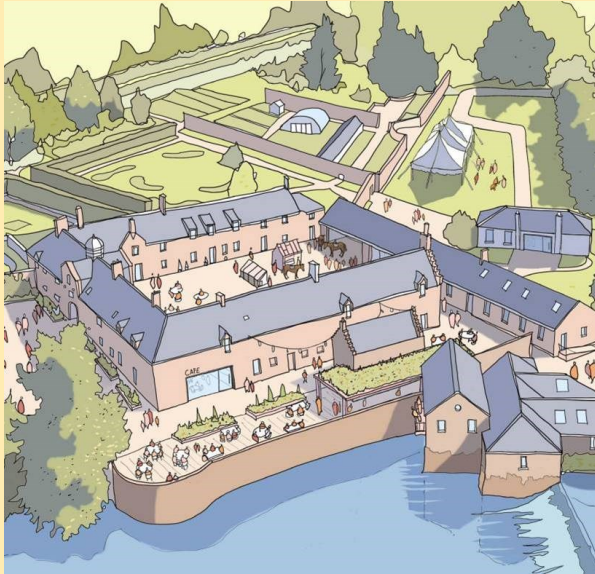


Stables & Sawmill Refurbishment Project (update from GCC)

Work has continued throughout the winter, with ongoing discussions with all potential partners and operators. At present it is anticipated that the refurbishment, once completed, will transform the current buildings into a living heritage centre which will include showcasing elements of the working sawmill, Clydesdale horses, a café with outdoor seating and the potential for overnight accommodation as well as events.

The following provides a progress update on the project:

Phase 1- which dismantles and protects the existing structure is due to be complete by March 2023.



Phase 2 and 3- (rebuild and fit out for end use) are ongoing, with completion of works estimated at August 2025.

Information events- A number of information events are planned with initial dates scheduled for 18th April at Pollokshaws Library between 12pm – 7pm, and 25th April from 10am – 7pm at Pollok Civic Realm. Dates and times will be advertised and promoted over the course of March and early April.

Hydro scheme- This initiative will be incorporated within the 'Stables and Sawmill' refurbishment project and there is ongoing engagement with SEPA around revisions to the scheme. Two replica turbines will be introduced, and the electrical output will provide power to the Stables buildings, while the existing turbines will be conserved and showcased for the public.

Clydesdale Horses- The four horses currently owned by GCC are being retired from work and will continue to stay in their accommodation at a farm in Ayrshire, where they are well looked after. The refurbishment project will still reintroduce Clydesdale horses to Pollok Country Park, it is just that these specific four horses will not be returning to the work.

If you have any questions regarding the project, please contact us on PollokStablesRefurb@glasgow.gov.uk, & someone from the team will respond to you.



RSPB Birdwatch in Pollok Park

As part of the 2023 RSPB Birdwatch on 27-29 January, the Friends came together in two groups with countryside ranger Denise on Saturday 28 January.

Our aim was to count the numbers of different types of birds we could see in a one-hour period. The weather was kind to us and, although the Park was well used along the riverside path, we were pleased to see a wide range of birds including red wing, nuthatch, long-tailed tit and great spotted woodpecker.

Without Denise we wouldn't have seen such a variety of different birds – she was able to identify the different species from their calls, so we knew where to look and what to look out for! Our top ten birds were as follows:- Jackdaw, Feral Pigeon, Blue Tit, Magpie, Woodpigeon, Carrion Crow, Bullfinch, Coal Tit, Dunnock and Robin.

We also met Frank who feeds the birds on a daily basis with mixed seeds and suet pellets. Keep up the good work Frank – and all the other kind park users who feed and help to look out for our wild birds in all weather!

Blue Tit



© Karen Sweeney 2023

Nature walks and talks—plans for the months ahead

Members of the Friends of Pollok Country Park will receive regular emails inviting them to register for the walks and talks in the coming months. As always, places for the events will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Some of the dates have still to be confirmed but we hope to have tours of the Burrell Collection and Pollok House as well as ‘pond dipping’ – no, you don’t have to get wet, this will be for children to help them identify wildlife lurking just beneath the surface of the water!

The countryside rangers will again be leading some walks and talks throughout the year and this will include a talk in the wildlife garden on medicinal plants and meeting the Highland Cattle.

In January we held a birdwatch, of course, and registered our results with the RSPB! Thank you to all those who came along on the day and to countryside ranger Denise for leading that event.

In March we had an in-field photography session and then, in early April, the follow-on workshop to learn some tricks of the trade to enhance our photographs.

We will keep you updated but below are some of the confirmed dates / topics so far:-

- 15 April – Tour of the Burrell Collection
- 13 May – Wildflower ID, in wildlife garden
- June tbc – Butterfly Transect

In July and August we hope to hold a couple of events for our younger park users.

If there is anything you would like to suggest please do let us know.



Upcoming Park Events (April & beyond)

Pollok House (NTS) — 1st Sunday of each month (until 5th Nov), 10am to 4pm — The Market at Pollok House

7th—10th—Easter Egg Trail

4th July - BBC Antiques Roadshow

Burrell Collection— Each Wednesday @12.30pm—Burrell Bites (a talk on a specific collection item)

18th & 22nd @2pm—LGBTQ+ histories 22nd, 11am to 4pm—Earth Day 2023



New benches in the park

The Friends group has installed 5 new benches in the park – 2 along the riverside and 3 near the North Wood. They were funded by donations by Friends members. They add to the 5 we funded a couple of years ago. These simple and attractive benches are of recycled wood and made by Glasgow Wood Recycling and were installed for us by Adam Richardson of Ground Maintenance Glasgow Ltd.

We hope park users will enjoy a quiet time watching and listening to the wildlife or just sitting in the sunshine.

National Covid Memorial—Day Of Remembrance

At midday on 23rd March 2023, a minute’s silence was held at the Riverside Grove in Pollok Country Park, the site of the National Covid Memorial. This marked the third anniversary of the first lockdown of the pandemic and the first deaths from Covid-19.

A wreath was laid by Bailie Thomas Kerr, representing Glasgow’s Lord Provost, Jacqueline McLaren. Thereafter the poet and artist Alec Finlay and Scotland’s Makar, Kathleen Jamie read out some of the poignant ‘I remember’ messages before a memorial walk through the park. This led up the Ash Path/Road to the Birch Grove, passing some of the ‘I remember’ tree supports, representing physical poses of people affected by the pandemic and the support given to each other during this difficult and emotional time.



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contact@friendsofpollokpark.com

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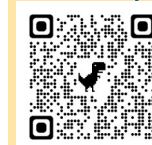


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Management Committee 2023

Chair: Des Gallagher

Vice Chair: Catherine Todd

Secretary: Rachel Clark

Treasurer: Brian Willett

IT/Social Media: Gavin Winterbotham

Members: Jane Black, Bob Marshall, Patricia McCarthy, Charlie Turner and Gina Lundy

To contact Glasgow City Council for a complaint or compliment www.glasgow.gov.uk/contactus