



**Wrenthorpe
Environmental
Society
Newsletter 2010**

The annual general meeting will be held on Wednesday 24th March at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall. There will be a very brief business meeting followed by refreshments and a talk from Steve Hamer who is the engineer in charge of the flood alleviation work in the village and the park. There will be a chance to ask questions about this work and matters to do with our environment in general.. Do come and join us.

Dear member

2009 has been another interesting year for WRENS with one project completed and involvement in two other significant changes affecting the park and meadows. It was also the year in which we celebrated our 20th anniversary.

1. In the 2008 newsletter the improvements to be carried out in Wrenthorpe Park and Alverthorpe Meadows were detailed.

All these jobs were completed by May 2009.

2. To celebrate the completion of the park project an official opening was held on Sunday 7 June when the opening ribbon was cut, and a commemorative tree planted by WRENS' President Keith Orrell and Councillor Betty Liles. The Wakefield Express provided press coverage of the event.

3 The great majority of people who use the park and meadows appreciate the improvements that have been made, but the decking at the lagoons has suffered vandalism, as have some of the information boards. Fires have also been started in some areas including the destruction of one of the picnic tables that was installed about two and a half years ago on the old putting green area. Regardless of these incidents we will continue to work with Wakefield MDC to maintain standards within the park.

4. WRENS contacted Wakefield MDC when the latter publicised the Government's Playbuilder Funding for new and updated play areas. As a result we have been involved in several consultation exercises, the results from which have been fed

into the final design of the new play area in Wrenthorpe Park. Work is due to start on 15 February and be completed by the end of March 2010.

A new play area is also scheduled for the Silcoates Street end of the park, the design for which is just starting and the work is due for completion by March 2011.

5. The Environmental Agency is to carry out major flood alleviation work for Wakefield in Wrenthorpe Park during 2010. WRENS has attended several meetings involving the EA and Wakefield MDC to understand the scope of the work, and to discuss possible environmental enhancements to the park. Drop-in sessions have been held by the EA around the area of the park to allow all people who may be affected to understand the scope of the work.

6. The Wrencare scheme continues to provide litter clearing in the village centre. Finance for the scheme, which celebrated its 10th anniversary in March 2009, continues to be provided by The New Wheel, The New Pot 'Oil, Sax for Hair, Wrenthorpe Community Association, Wrenthorpe Post Office and South Yorkshire Mental Health NHS Trust.

7. Litter picks have been part of our work once again. The park was targeted in May and Lindale Lane in November. On both occasions the turnout was disappointing.

8. This year planting has taken place in several areas of the village. Early in the year some saplings were planted around the fenced CSO station in the park. These will mask the unsightly fencing when the plants mature. In October, 2000 native bluebells and 50 great mullein plants were planted in the park, and in November a Bhutan Pine was placed in the grounds of the Valley Crescent Community Centre.

9. A Treasure Hunt around the village for families and younger children took place in September and this year 113 people participated. The sunny weather contributed to making it a pleasant afternoon for all.

10. The Annual General Meeting was held in March 2009, where the guest speaker was Mrs Margaret Mottram of the Thurlston Owl Sanctuary who talked about and displayed several owls.

11. The annual WRENS newsletter was produced and distributed to members.

12. WRENS continue to monitor and comment on planning applications.

13. As in previous years stalls publicising WRENS were taken at the local Wakefield Hospice Fair and at the Aged Welfare Summer Fair. New members were recruited at each of these events.

14. Whenever possible, the monthly local VOX meeting and PACT meetings have been attended by a WRENS' committee member

Colin Firth, WRENS secretary

WRENCARE

The WRENCARE litter collection scheme continues into its 11th year clearing litter from around the village centre with the support of many of the villages businesses. For most of this time, Brian Collinson, conscientiously on every Monday & Friday, in all weathers, completed the litter pick - which he enjoyed and never tired of. However it was with immense shock & sadness that we lost Brian Collinson in July, after a short illness. Brian is fondly missed, being a familiar face to many of us and enjoying a passing chat with many village folk young & old during his time. In remembrance and as a tribute to all the community work Brian undertook, a bench is to be placed, this coming July, within the triangle garden overlooking the village he loved so much.

We welcome John Smart to WRENCARE, who will continue the litter collection scheme together with Nick at The New Pot Oil and Sally back in business at The New Wheel, these being two of our valued contributors to keep WRENCARE going into the next decade.

John Coles

New Play Area in Wrenthorpe Park

An article in June's edition of Wakefield MDC's newspaper "The Citizen" alerted WRENS to projected work on improving, and providing new play areas throughout the district. Wakefield MDC had secured moneys under the government initiative called Playbuilder Funding to work on 22 areas over two years. Two of the areas identified in the article were Wrenthorpe Park, and Silcoates Street (entrance to the park).

Following the Park Improvement Project that was completed in 2009, WRENS had already identified that the funding and provision of a new play area in the park to replace the existing inadequate facilities would be its next project. It therefore seemed an obvious move to talk to the council's play strategy co-ordinator and see how we could become involved in the work.

An initial meeting with council officers allowed WRENS to understand the scope of the work allowable within the funding. As a result a series of consultation exercises were organised by WRENS and Wakefield MDC to understand what people considered important in a new play area.

- Questionnaires were distributed to groups both in Wrenthorpe village and at Balne Lane Community Centre.
- At the Treasure Hunt in September pictures of types of play equipment were displayed, along with a first draft proposal, and questionnaires were available to be completed.
- In October, a further consultation was held in the Wrenthorpe Methodist Church Hall at which WRENS and Wakefield MDC officers, who have experience in the provision of play area, were available to discuss the project and the possible outcomes
- A drawing of the Wrenthorpe park play area was displayed at WRENS' Exotic Animal Event in January 2010

Information gained from these exercises was fed into the tenders that were issued

to potential contractors for the work.

Both the Wrenthorpe Park and Silcoates Street play areas were originally due for completion by the end of March 2010, otherwise the funding would be lost. Because of difficulties encountered at the Silcoates Street area this has been put back and will now be completed by the end of March 2011.

The present situation with the new play area for Wrenthorpe Park is:

- Funding of £70,000 has been allocated to the work.
- The play area will be on the site of the old putting green (where the picnic tables now are), as this is much more open area than the old playground.
- Under the rules of the Playbuilder Funding the old playground will be removed.
- The contract for the play area has been awarded to a company called Proludic Play.
- Construction is due to start on 15 February 2010.
- Children to be playing in the new area by the end of March 2010.

This new amenity will provide pleasure for children for years to come and will be welcomed by many people in the area. Roll on March 2011 when the Silcoates Street play area will also be in operation.

Colin Firth
(secretary tel 01924 781546)

MORLEY EXOTIC ANIMAL RESCUE CENTRE.

WRENS organised this event especially for children at the village hall on 24 January. So many children & their families came along that we had to turn people away. Unfortunately the main attraction, a young meerkat was too ill to travel & very sadly died shortly afterwards despite an operation. However, the children were thrilled to be able to stroke a skunk, a 14ft python, a monitor lizard & a tarantula. The Centre, which rescues & re-k homes exotic animals, is run by husband & wife team Alan & Heather Hewitt & volunteers. The cost of running the Centre is enormous, for example £250 a week for food plus huge vets bills. They were delighted to receive the £163 collected at the end of the afternoon plus £100 donated by WRENS.

Gloria Lowry

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Flood Prevention in Wrenthorpe

In Wrenthorpe Park over the next few months you will notice a difference. Wakefield has a long history of flooding, mainly due to river modifications to provide power and transport for industry. The "Ings Beck Flood Alleviation Scheme" will help reduce flooding to over 750 people in Wakefield itself.

We have shown that by collecting rainwater, storing it in purposely designed

storage areas and slowly releasing this water, flood risk can be reduced. This scheme includes two of these storage areas; one at Fenton Dam, Kirkhamgate and the other in Wrenthorpe Park.

The reduction in water due to these storage areas means that many flood defence walls or banks are not required. However, we still need to build walls in a few gardens in Wrenthorpe Village itself.

Wrenthorpe Village

Work in Wrenthorpe Village has already started. The majority of these are within private gardens in School Lane, Lyndale Drive, Jerry Clay Lane, Johns Crescent and Wrenthorpe Lane. However, residents not directly affected by the works will also benefit.

The flood walls will restrict the flood waters coming out of channel during heavy rain and will reduce the threat of flooding to your community. The roads affected in 2007 will also be protected. Under the bridge in the centre of Wrenthorpe flow has been partially constricted by service pipes. As part of this scheme services will be diverted to open up this section to its original capacity.

So how will you be affected by these works in Wrenthorpe Village?

We have contacted people whose gardens we are working in and we are working with them to be as unintrusive as possible

General

- There will be additional traffic in the area and men will be working
- Working times are confined to 8am till 6pm
- The working areas will be fenced off to protect the public from our work
- Noise will be reduced and will be considerate to the neighbours

Lyndale Drive off Jerry Clay Lane

- Lyndale Drive will be partially closed to single lane only
- The footpath at Lyndale Drive will be diverted
- Finished work will result in a walled defence on either side of the channel enclosing the beck

Dental Centre

- The access road will be partially closed to a single lane only
- Several parking spaces will be lost during the works
- The lighting will need to be removed, but will be replaced
- The footbridge over the river at the dental centre will remain open during the work
- Finished work will result in a walled defence on either side of the beck with a new concrete bed

Johns Crescent

Access to the garages will be restricted to single lane only

All other works are within the beck and in people's gardens

Finished work will result in a walled defence on either side of the beck

Wrenthorpe Lane

- Work is within the channel and one resident's garden

Finished work will result in a walled defence on either side of the beck

This area is the most visible and we will try and match finishes with existing walls

The service pipes will be diverted as parts of this work, which may involve one lane closure of Wrenthorpe Lane above the culvert

Wrenthorpe Park

The old railway embankment will soon be modified to create a formal embankment. Currently there is an old screen at the end of the lagoon, a culvert running through the embankment and an outlet near Pear Tree Walk. We plan to use the natural basin upstream of this embankment to store water from heavy rain, increasing the protection to downstream properties in Flanshaw and Westgate from flooding. In normal flow conditions, once the works are complete, there will be no change to the existing arrangement. However, in heavy rain the area behind the dam will store water, initially at the existing lagoon, spreading further into the natural basin. A stepped section will be cut into the embankment to allow water to pass over once the dam has reached its capacity. This will allow the water to pass downstream and back into the beck as quickly and safely as possible. We will ensure this by building what is known as training bunds downstream of the dam to steer the water away from the houses and back into the beck.

The first stage of this work is due to start in the next few weeks when we will need to remove trees from the embankment. The stepped down section, known as a spillway, needs to have as few trees as possible to enable the safe passage of water should the capacity of the dam be reached. The main part of the work, including cutting the section into the embankment, building a new culvert through the embankment, building training wall embankments downstream of the dam and constructing new access roads and screens will start in April. We aim to be complete by December this year. However, the work is dependent on dry conditions, so it may over run.

We aim to be taking some material from the park itself to reduce the amount of material being bought into the park. We are planning on creating wetlands and meadowlands within the park itself in collaboration with the WRENS and Wakefield Council.

How will you be affected by these works in the park?

- There will be additional traffic in the area and men will be working
- Working times are confined to 8am till 6pm
- The working areas will be fenced off to protect the public from our work
- Noise will be reduced and will be considerate to the neighbours, but we will need to do some piling which will be noisy at times
- The footpath along the top of the embankment will be diverted along existing footpath routes within the park
- Site access will be via the Silcoates Street and we will be using the existing

Wakefield Council access route

- The site compound will be near the existing screen at the lagoon, the whole working area will be closed to the public during the work

How the park will change following the works?

- There will be less trees around the spillway but we will be planting additional trees within the park, The new locations will be agreed with Wakefield Council and the WRENS.
- There will be embankments built around the field at the back of Pear Tree Walk and Silcoates Street to direct any overflow back into the beck. These have been designed to reduce the amount of land take and retain as much of this area as possible as flat open space.
- We are aiming to create several wetland areas adjacent to the becks within the park to create habitats and also a wildflower meadow on the hill adjacent to the existing lagoon leading up to the embankment, next to the Yorkshire Water pumping station.
- A new screen will be constructed that will be safe and easy for us to maintain. This will replace the existing screen within the lagoon.
- Access will be created between the lagoon and the embankment, opening up a new route within the park.
- Finished work will mean flood storage will limit the amount of flow downstream and properties downstream will benefit from an increased flood protection enabling many to get insurance

How will the dam work?

- During prolonged heavy rain we will hold water back in the natural basin of the park, making some paths and fields under water. This will be for a period of up to 20 hours. Water will be released via a built in culvert of a designed diameter to restrict flow downstream, to alleviate flooding to vulnerable properties.
- In a large event (1 in 100) the natural basin will be filled and the water will start to spill over the stepped in section of embankment, water will also continue to pass through the embankment via the culvert.
- The water level will gradually decrease until it is back to the existing layout

The works in Wrenthorpe are only part of the scheme for the whole of the catchment area.

If you have any comments please contact either myself sally.leng@environment-agency.gov.uk 0113 2134912 or Anthony Myatt Anthony.myatt@environment-agency.gov.uk 0113 2134897

Sally Leng

TREASURE HUNT

On Sunday 20th September 2009, one hundred and thirteen people turned out to take part in the **Wrens** Annual Treasure Hunt, and once again boards and paper

bags and set off following the clues that were in rhyme. All participants arrived back safely!

The quiz sheets were marked and three teams got maximum points of 40/40. As there was only one prize the three teams had their team name put into a bag and Adrian Robertson made the draw. The successful team were "The Badgers" Congratulations to them and commiserations to "Millie's Team" and "Tomlinson's Tiggers" who lost out in the draw.

Liz Firth

Planting in Wrenthorpe

Spring is here and we can all enjoy the roadside daffodils and crocuses planted throughout the village by WRENS members over many years.

Last October about 30 people helped to plant 2000 native bluebells in the "Bluebell Wood" in Wrenthorpe Park. Look out for these flowering in May. Before then we should see the snowdrops and wild daffodils that were planted in previous years. Some clumps of mullein have also been planted and their downy leaves and tall spikes of yellow flowers should be visible in July and August.

During Tree Week in November WRENS planted a Bhutan pine in the grounds of Valley Crescent Community Centre. Wakefield Council planted a sessile oak in the Triangle Garden at the bottom of Silcoates Lane. These new trees will provide interesting and attractive features for future generations to enjoy.

WRENS has a number of new planting projects on the pipeline for 2010 and beyond. These include new meadow areas in Wrenthorpe Park; native wetland plants near the lagoon; native honeysuckle and other climbing plants to increase biodiversity in our hedgerows. Please contact any committee member if you would be interesting in helping with future planting activities.

Judith Fox

Membership

This year we are trying to update our membership records. At the end of 2009 records show that we had 459 individual members at 326 addresses. 120 of the 459 individual members are Life members, some having joined at the very start of WRENS 20 years ago. Some of our Life members may now have moved away. As we don't call to collect money from Life members each year, we have no idea whether they are still living at the house this newsletter is delivered to. If you receive a newsletter and know that you are not a member, could you please let me know so that I can amend my records accordingly.

We have a dedicated group of people who collect subscriptions in all weathers. If you are out when they call they will leave a note with an alternative collection date. Should you know that you will be out on that date, could you please leave the money (£2 per person) with your nearest committee member or put it in an envelope and post it into the village hall letterbox which is checked every day.

When I come round collecting subscriptions, I am often asked, "What do I get for my money?" Well, you only have to read through this newsletter to learn of the many activities carried out by members during the year. You have a clean village centre, thanks to the Wrencare initiative; you have a beautiful park and nature reserve with free parking and very soon a brand new children's play area being installed by Wakefield Council; you have a wonderful display of roadside flowers in the Spring; someone is always keeping watch to ensure Planning Applications are monitored and acted upon, if necessary; donations are made towards worthwhile community projects, such as. the refurbishment of Valley Crescent Centre to ensure a clean, safe environment for the elderly and the young.

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