



## Newsletter January 2016

**A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR MEMBERS!**

### **Another award for FotFL!**

Cos and Dick attended a Sustrans volunteers event in late November. The meeting included volunteers from all over Lancashire and beyond. In addition to the usual discussion of issues of mutual interest to volunteers we had a guided tour of Hulme garden centre. We also attended an interesting workshop session on the identification of tree species in winter, which may prove useful in future habitat surveys. Cos and I were very pleasantly surprised to be called up during the day to be presented with a certificate of appreciation awarded to the Fallowfield Loop volunteers, who had been shortlisted for volunteer group of the year. The picture accompanying this email shows us receiving the certificate. Incidentally, the group which won the overall award were volunteers who have been busy restoring the brickwork and related structures of an old railway turntable on the Apethorne to Godley section of the Trans Pennine Trail. They showed some great aerial pictures of their work (taken with a drone camera) and the site looks well worth a visit if you are visit or use that section of the TPT.

### **Levenshulme Quadrants development.**

Following representations from FotFL and others we are pleased that Sustrans have confirmed that they are happy to continue with the installation of the additional 3 raised beds at the quadrants in the early spring to allow for the full benefits of the growing season in 2016. However, this is dependent on a maintenance plan being drawn up in advance by Incredible Edible Levenshulme (IEL) and being signed off by Sustrans ahead of the purchase of materials and installation of the beds. A donation from United Utilities will be partly used to finance this. It's important that we and ICE are able to carry out the maintenance plan, so if you or anyone you know would be interested in helping with this, please let us know. The

work will require a regular hour or so of time to weed the beds and trim the grass round them to make sure they remain prominent.

### **Wassail wash-out and rearrangement.**

Unfortunately, for the first time, the terrible weather got the better of our annual event, scheduled for 3<sup>rd</sup> January. We cancelled it early on the day, a decision which proved correct as the afternoon wore on with continuous heavy rain. Apologies to any of you who turned up to find a deserted site, we did send out an email to members but not everyone may have opened it in time. Thanks to all who had made arrangements to put on the event: the singers, gazebo providers and mulled wine mixers! **We hope to have a smaller low key event on 'Old Twelfth Night', 17<sup>th</sup> January, 4.30pm, again provided the weather is suitable.** Contact Dick Venes on 0161 224 3843 to check.

### **Orchard maintenance.**

The fruit trees that should be pruned in the winter have been lovingly tended to. The softer fruit trees (plums, greengages) are best pruned at a different time of year, so please do not think they have been neglected. Growth of wild woody shrubs continue to be an issue in some areas so we will be looking to organise some maintenance sessions during the coming months to remove them. Many species of non woody plants grow in the orchard areas and we aim to keep these as they provide food for pollinating insects such as bees and moths.

### **Barriers along the Loop.**

Following the successful trials of open barriers along the Loop from Chorlton to Levenshulme on a couple of Saturdays in the autumn, FotFL member Lorenza has been following up progress with Sustrans and Manchester City Council. She has been able to confirm that there are no planning permission conditions relating to construction of the Loop that prevent barriers being open – good news! Lorenza is now going to draw up a feasibility study for a more regular barrier opening programme, which will be discussed at our January meeting.

### **Loop user statistics.**

We have confirmed that the cycle counter on the Loop (near the Yew Tree Road overbridge) has been recording user data for the past two years, albeit sporadically. Thanks to TfGM, we

have been sent user data which covers the periods: September to December 2014; January to mid February 2015; and mid June to December 2015. Is there anyone out there who would be interested in turning the raw data into a summary of how cycling usage is changing year on year etc? One interesting snippet from the TfGM spreadsheets is that the Loop appears to be used by cyclists at all hours of the day and night!

### **Stop Press**

Our November members' meeting will be held next **Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January at 7.30 pm**, at the Union Chapel, Wellington Road, Fallowfield. All are welcome to what are usually lively discussions. The Agenda will include discussion of the following items:

- Trial barrier opening;
- Trans Pennine (train operator) grant;
- Raised beds at Levenshulme quadrants progress;
- Water leaks on the Loop;
- Open Forum – a chance for anyone to raise issues of interest.