



Next meeting
7.30-9.00pm
Monday 18th
September 2017.
at
Union Chapel
Wellington Road
Fallowfield
M14 6EQ

Hello and welcome to our September newsletter. We have seen lots of activity and developments on the Fallowfield Loop since the beginning of 2017 and anticipate that this will continue over the coming months.

AGM

The Friends of the Fallowfield Loop AGM took place on 17th July. The committee reports showed that the group had been active over the previous 12 months in promoting and representing the Fallowfield Loop and its large user community, and in supporting and participating in a wide range of activities that have taken place on the Loop. The most significant change in Committee membership was that after 13 years holding the role of Secretary David Beetham stepped down and has been replaced by Frances McCann, a long-time member of the group. David will remain involved with the group, working primarily on identifying funding and development opportunities and overseeing the community orchards on the Loop.

PROMOTING THE FRIENDS GROUP

Whilst we are an active group with a good size membership it is important not to become complacent and isolated from the communities that enjoy the Loop. In recent months we have had publicity and information stalls at two community events. The Jo Cox memorial evening at Levenshulme night market, and at the Donkey Sanctuary Summer Fair in July. The Donkey Sanctuary event gave us an opportunity to do some outreach at the Eastern end of the Loop. For those who don't know – the Donkey Sanctuary is right beside the Loop, just before Wright Robinson School, and you can drop in and find out about their work any day.

Other promotion and extended community links take place via the Facebook page – do check it out and link with us there if you haven't done so already. We also try to keep the website up to date with events and activities, and are working on distribution of the new leaflet in communities along the loop.

DAVID BEETHAM – an appreciation of long service along the Loop, by Dick Venes on behalf of Fotfl committee.

David retired from his post as Honorary Secretary of the Friends at the AGM in July. He was one of the founding members of FotFL, attending the exploratory meeting in 2001 which led to the setting up of the group. He took over as Hon Sec in 2004 and has achieved so much for

the group over his 13 years of service. His management of committee affairs has been exemplary, his patience and diplomatic skills has ensured everyone has felt their contributions are valued. Whilst others have thrown up ideas for improvement of the Loop, David has been the driving force to bring things into existence. It would take too long to record all of his achievements as secretary, but here are just a few.

David has been our 'go to' man for dealing with grant applications to funding bodies such as Transport for Greater Manchester and the National Lottery. Few people realise the amount of bureaucracy that has to be waded through to produce a successful grant application, but he has persistence and skill, and although we haven't always been successful this is not because of a lack of effort. Notable among the successes have been funds for the bridge signs, arts projects and three editions of the Fallowfield Loop leaflet, the latest completed earlier this year. Under his watch, the Friends won the 'Contribution to the Environment' award in the Manchester City Council 'Be Proud' competition in December 2010.

He has also managed well our relationship with Sustrans in ensuring a working partnership that has always kept the priorities of FotFL members high on the agenda. This has been vital because some policies decided at higher levels in the organisation and turnover of local personnel have occasionally led to problems and disagreements. David has skilfully negotiated a way through these, resulting in projects such as the three community orchards and opening of the internal Loop barriers coming to fruition. This has not just been down to management skills – David has always been willing to get out on the Loop to conduct surveys of users to back up our grant applications, litter pick, and help with keeping the orchards in trim.

Finally, I must mention his dedication to getting out a newsletter 6 times a year prior to each general meeting. This has been a great way of keeping members who do not attend meetings in touch with events and I'm sure has made a difference to members continuing to support the efforts of FotFL activists. Many thanks David, it has been a pleasure working with you and we look forward to it continuing in a less formal way!

VOLUNTEER LOOP MAINTENANCE:

The Floop Task days are continuing twice monthly led by Ian Barker. There has been much work done by the volunteer team over August with scythes, sickles, secateurs which has kept the growth at the side of the Loop in check.

In June the task team worked alongside Sustrans staff to install and the wooden sleeper posts that you may have noticed at 9 entrances on the route. The posts each have a wildlife carving on them, designed by Vicky Holden, and were carved and sponsored by M3 industries in Salford.

To get latest information about the task days and to register to join in contact volunteers-nw@sustrans.org.uk or telephone 0161 923 6050.

The Loop is also cared for and maintained by people who individually take on lengths of the route either of their own initiative or as part of Sustrans volunteer programme. For example the route close to St Werbergh's Metro Station is cared for by a local resident, Christopher. He does litter picks on a frequent basis and alerts Sustrans about any issues that need input from Tom, who works for Sustrans on Loop maintenance and oversight. Christopher has worked on the railways for many years and remembers travelling on the freight trains in the final days of the Loop railway line.

OBITUARIES

It's with sadness that we are letting you know of the passing of two founder members of the Friends of the Fallowfield Loop earlier this year. Our belated condolences to family and friends of:

Les Jones, who died in March, was a long time supporter and member. He and his wife Liz occasionally turned up on our organised rides. Les was always interesting to talk to about the Loop and politics, but he was much better known for his involvement in the Chorlton music scene, specifically sessions at the Beech pub.

Andrew Tullo, who was a renowned Manchester eye doctor who had to take early retirement due to ill health. However, this didn't prevent him from getting involved in all sorts of community projects in the town he moved to, Oswestry. One of these is a community orchard set up by members of a railway preservation group, next to a disused line just north of the town. Although much grander in scale than our orchards, and on much more productive land, Andrew was always interested to compare experiences of setting up our own three orchards. He was keen that his group followed our example of an annual 'wassail' to encourage the trees. See www.cambrianrailways.com/html/railway_orchard.html for more information on this 'sister' orchard. Cos Harnasz and Dick Venes were pleased to represent FotFL at Andrew's memorial service in May.

STOP PRESS

The next members meeting will be at Union Chapel, Wellington Road Fallowfield at 7.30pm. on Monday 18th September.

Amongst other items of business we will be talking about will be: next steps in the development of the Levenshulme Quadrants, future activities on the Loop including a Big Litter Pick project in half term week along the disused canal branch of the Fallowfield Loop near Debdale Park, an update on Sustrans Wildlife Champions, and the distribution of the new map and guide.

If you have ideas, suggestions or comments you would like us to hear about but can't get to the meeting let us know through the contact page of the Fallowfield Loop website.