

The Park

Edition 35 Summer 2017

10th Consecutive Green Flag Award

The Quarterly Magazine of
The Friends of Harrold-Odell Country Park

Why not try a walk (just a little) on the wild side?

Most visitors know and walk the hard surfaced path around the main (Grebe) lake. A lesser known but very attractive path crosses the river meadow and follows the Great River Ouse, then enters the Park and rejoins the main lakeside path.

* Start in the corner of the main car park, just past the River Meadow Information Board.

* Cross the meadow following the well trodden path.



* The path splits with the left branch following the line of trees and the right branch heading off towards the river bank. Go right and join the path that follows the river bank.



* Look out for the herons that frequently fish here. If you're lucky, you might even spot an otter.

* The path eventually curves away from the river and back into the Park.

Gentle reminders

- This path is unsurfaced and is unsuitable for wheelchairs and buggies.
- Because of the cattle that graze here, dogs must be kept under control.



Friends of Harrold-Odell Country Park

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Newsletter No.35

Summer 2017

Congratulations!

to the Park staff

Janet Munro and Richard Dowsett

and to all the

***volunteers who are active on weekdays,
weekends and monthly***

for

helping the Park win its

10th consecutive

Green Flag Award

So what's this Green Flag Award all about?



So what's this Green Flag business all about? Well, for a start it is not a trivial matter. The awards are national and celebrate excellence in the management of green spaces across the country.



The scheme is managed under licence from the UK Government Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) by Keep Britain Tidy, which also administers the scheme in England.



The aims of the scheme are:

- To ensure that everybody has access to quality green and other open spaces, irrespective of where they live.
- To ensure that these spaces are appropriately managed and meet the needs of the communities that they serve.
- To establish standards of good management.
- To promote and share good practice amongst the green space sector.
- To recognise and reward the hard work of managers, staff and volunteers.



How is the Park judged? Independent judges visited the Park earlier in the year and carried out an inspection of the site. They also interviewed the staff and examined documents.

The judging looked at the following aspects of the Park:

1. The welcome afforded to visitors
2. Health and safety
3. Cleanliness and maintenance
4. Sustainability
5. Conservation and heritage
6. Community involvement
7. Marketing
8. Management



What happens next? The Park will be supplied with its 10th Green Flag which will be flown over the Park for the next year.

In their report, the judges identified areas where, in their opinion, improvements might be made. The Friends of the Park, through the volunteers, look forward to working with the staff to implement these where practicable.

David Taylor
Chairman, Friends of HOCP

Friends being Sociable in new facility

The new Outdoor Classroom and associated Learning Area were formally opened on the evening of June 12th. The occasion was the Summer Social held for the Friends of the Park who give their time as volunteers to help maintain and improve the Park.



Not the warmest of summer evenings but despite that about 40 Friends and partners were present to see Cllr Alison Foster conduct the opening ceremony. She thanked Next Energy UK for donating the money for this new facility for visiting schools. Next Energy was represented by Rebecca Hall (Wise Energy EU) and Kay Sammer (Next Energy Capital).

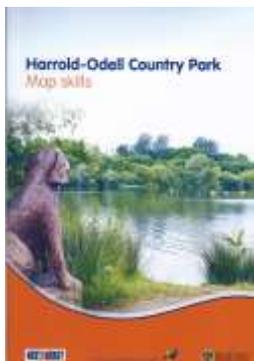


The Learning Area hosted a splendid buffet which underlined the fact that the area is open to visiting families as a shaded picnic area.

Thanks are due to Rachel Halton and Janet Munro for organising the evening and the food; to Barry Halton for the refreshment service and to Cllr Alison Foster for opening yet another new facility developed by the Friends of the Park and funded by Next Energy.

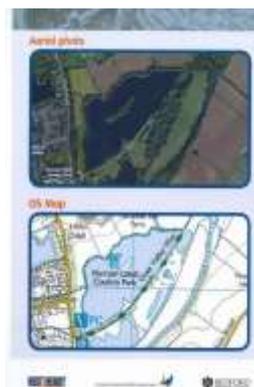
NextEnergy Teaching Materials

In addition to funding the construction of the outdoor classroom and learning area, NextEnergy UK also agreed to fund the production of learning materials for visiting schools to use in the Park.



The first learning package for Primary Schools has been produced on Map Skills and is aimed at Key Stage 2 pupils. It has been authored by Jette Randall, one of our active volunteers, in close co-operation with Carlton Lower School. Jette has been ably assisted by Olli Piombino, the Senior Designer at the Reprographics and Design Department at Borough Hall.

The emphasis of the pack is on practical activities that can be carried out in the Park and in the classroom. The materials have been tested by the teachers and pupils at Carlton Lower School during one of their annual visits to the Park.



Copies of the pack have been supplied to local Primary Schools who are invited to request additional copies free of charge. It will be made available to a wider audience in the fullness of time. We intend to produce other packs over the next five years.

**Some plants to find in the Park this summer
How many can you spot?**



Field Scabious

Common Centaury



Lords-and Ladies Berries

by Lindsey Alton

Selfheal



Perforate St John's-wort

Purple Loosestrife



Discover the Park by following the Information Board Trail

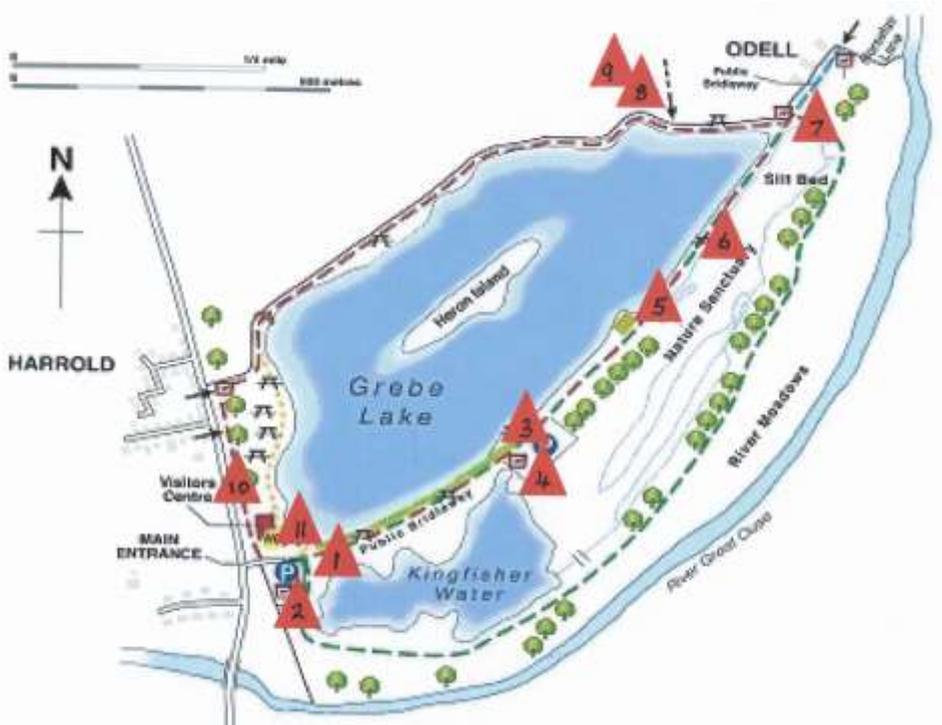
As you walk around the Park on the path that follows the largest lake, Grebe Lake, you will come across a series of information boards. These describe and explain aspects of the environment, its past history, features, flora and fauna.

Finding these provides an interesting and informative trail around the Park. If you set out in search of all the boards you probably need about 90 minutes but you can always cut this short if you run out of time.

The map opposite and the location/ subject guide below will help you on your way.

Number	Location	Subject
1.	Exit main car park into the Park	The Ouse Valley Way
2.	Exit main car park into the river meadow	The River Meadows - flora & fauna
3.	Lakeside edge of overspill car park	Now You Are Here—welcome map & information board
4.	Start of path down the side of the Rabbit Warren	The Rabbit Warren—origin, flora & fauna
5.	Bird Hide	Out of the Ashes—history of the bird hide after the fire
6.	Start of the boardwalk	Origin of the Dragonfly Pond, and common flora and fauna

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| 7. | Edge of the Silt Lake near the crossroads | Origin, flora and fauna of the Silt Lake |
| 8. | Adjacent to the old bus shelter | On & Around the Lakes—flora & fauna |
| 9. | The old bus shelter | Quarrying at Harrold & Odell;
Under Your Feet—archaeology |
| 10. | Inside the Outdoor Classroom | Map of the Park;
Quarrying and archaeology |
| 11. | Path from car park to Visitors' Centre | Under Your Feet;
Archaeology in the Park |



Discover more about the Park

Take a look at the Friends' website at www.hocp.co.uk.

Click on **Discover the Park** then on **Information Sheets and under Fact Sheets** you will find out about lots of interesting things in the Park including:

[Archaeology in the Park](#) - Description of the ancient settlements found under the waters of Grebe Lake.

[Coppicing](#) - Traditional tree management method explained.

[Cormorants](#) - The main lake is home to large numbers of resident breeding pairs of cormorants. Learn more about them.

[Crayfish](#) - Lurking below the surface of the River Great Ouse as it runs through the Park is a deadly enemy, the American crayfish.

[Dragonflies](#) - "Dragons of HOCP" an article by Jaimie Barnes.

[Drowned Settlement](#) - Below the quiet waters of Grebe Lake lies evidence of ancient settlements and the people who lived there.

[Herons](#) - The resident herons can often be seen around the Park. Others pop in from other sites along the Ouse valley.

[Landscape & Geology](#) - Forces that shaped the Park explained.

[Otters](#) - Otters visit the park and sometimes breed here. Learn

New Bird Hide open to the public



On the north side of the Park, close to the bridge, we have a new bird hide. This gives bird watchers a clear view over the area of Grebe Lake that is favoured by migrant birds in winter.



It also overlooks one of the areas of water where otters can be seen by the patient and lucky visitor. Funded by the Friends of the Park and built by Peter Hall, we hope it will be enjoyed by both serious and amateur bird watchers.

Why is this fence standing in the water?

This is called a spiling and you will find them in lots of places around the shore of Grebe Lake.



The spilings are made out of willow by the volunteers who help maintain the Park. They protect the shores of the lake from the action of waves driven across the lake when the wind is strong. Without them, the edge of the lake would be washed away.

Activities in the Park

Health Walks



These take place on a Thursday every two weeks and are led by Janet Munro who is a trained leader and Park Guardian.

The walks are open to everyone looking for a healthy and sociable pastime. There is no need to book, just meet outside the Visitors' Centre Café at 10.30am.

**The next Health Walks will take place on
July 27th; Aug 10th & 24th; Sept 7th & 21st;
Oct 5th & 19th.**

Friends' Task Days

These are held once a month and provide an excellent opportunity to sample what it's like to be a volunteer. They are also ideal for people who have limited time available in which to volunteer.

Task Days are led and supervised by Park Guardians, who will provide the necessary kit and training. If you enjoy the experience, you may feel inclined to join a weekday group of volunteers on a regular basis. Alternatively, you may wish to continue on a monthly basis.

**The next Task Days will take place on
July 31st, Aug 21st, Sept 25th and Oct 30th**

In An Emergency

Emergencies can arise anywhere, whether as a result of a health problem or an accident. If you witness or are involved in any emergency in the Park:

Contact the emergency services without delay

Ring 999 from your mobile

If this is not possible you should:

Return to the café in the Visitors' Centre;

Seeking Help or Information in the Park

- Your first point of reference is Park Rangers. (see below)
- You will frequently see volunteers working around the Park. Depending on the weather, they wear blue jackets or shirts with **Friends of Harrold-Odell Country Park** on them. They

Contacting the Park Rangers

The Park Rangers have an office in the Visitors' Centre where they can be reached. However, as they can be deployed either in the Park or elsewhere in the Borough, the office may be closed.

Contact Richard Dowsett and Janet Munro

ephone: 01234 720016 **Email:** hocp@bedford.gov.uk

Tel-

The Bell at Odell



Walking in the Country Park this Summer?

A warm welcome awaits you at The Bell in Odell

Just walk through the Park along the main bridleway on to Horsefair Lane and 150 yards along the road you will find us serving a fine selection of ales, wines, gins and excellent food.

Walkers, cyclists, dog walkers and children will find a warm welcome. As will visitors arriving by car, as there's parking to the front and rear.

**Facebook — [TheBellinOdell](#) Tel — 01234 910850
Website — thebellinodell.co.uk**

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