



## **Project leader Margaret Milner tells *Heswall Magazine* readers what ‘The Friends of Hill House Park’ are doing to improve the area at the back of Heswall Library and the garden at the side of The Jug and Bottle.**



This park and garden has been in the hands of the Wirral Borough Council for some years so it is the Council that has maintained the area to date. Sadly, the current and future financial climate Chester Zoo Community Connections does not allow the Council to continue with this maintenance, so during the summer months a group of local volunteers got together and gave some thought as to how best to ensure this attractive, but ‘hidden oasis’ could benefit from some TLC.

Over the months there has been much beavering away, with volunteers clearing, digging, planting and tidying and unearthing areas not seen in a very long time! The volunteers then discussed how this work could continue, so the idea of a ‘Friends’ Group’ was developed to ensure a more structured approach and a longer-term commitment to the park and garden.

There are numerous such areas across Wirral, many of which already have a Friends’ Group in place, so we had the benefit of using the knowledge and best practices of other groups. Discussions and meetings took place with the first committee meeting of the Friends’ Group being held on 30th November 2017.

The Friends Group has worked closely with the Council, and will continue to do so. The Group is keen to seek the input and help of those living immediately around the park and garden. A resident told us that a particularly overgrown area of the park encouraged antisocial behaviour activity, so as part of the ‘tidy up’ the area was cleared of rubbish and overgrown bushes and branches cut back to make such activity almost impossible.

An integral part of this project is the encouragement of wildlife to the area and how our work can contribute to that important task.

One of the aims of the Friends is to provide continuing TLC and put a structured programme in place to ensure the future of the Hill House Park and Garden. We aim to ensure it remains the oasis of Heswall – but no longer hidden!

Wirral Borough Council and Wirral South Constituency are great supporters of the Friends Group, along with Wirral Borough Council’s Parks & Countryside Service, The Heswall Society, Heswall Hall Community Trust, Wirral Parks Forum, Chester Zoo Wildlife Connections, and, of course, the wider Heswall Community, especially the park’s neighbouring properties.

### **What’s next?**

Not surprisingly there won’t be much work during the winter months – perhaps a couple of tidy-up days and some preparation for spring – weather permitting, See below for more details on our Facebook page and the date for the first main working party.

Given that the Friends will need to raise funds toward the upkeep of the area, we are seeking ‘behind the scenes’ thoughts on how to raise awareness of the area with local businesses and to ask for their support. If you are a local business, please don’t hesitate to contact us to see how you can show your support – no matter how small your contribution might seem.

The Facebook page will be updated as and when events are planned (as above, this will mainly be tidying up and preparing for spring. If you are not on Facebook and want to be sent diary dates by email, let me know and we can arrange for that to happen. Watch out for ad hoc dates dependent on the weather, but the first main working party of the year will be on Sunday 4th March 2018 – this coincides with the Keep Britain Tidy Campaign, which the Group will be an active part of!

### **Joining the Friends**

It couldn’t be easier. Message us via Facebook – Friends of Hill House Park and Garden – or by emailing Margaret Milner: [heswallwildlife@aol.com](mailto:heswallwildlife@aol.com)

To become a Friend of Hill House Park and Garden will cost £5 each year, which will be collected at the AGM. The funds will be put towards developing the Group and funding activity when needed. It might only be a small amount, but every penny will help. Fundraising and sponsorship will also contribute to the funds. More about this in due course.