**Presented to Friends of St George Park AGM 2019**

**Monday 10th June 2019, 2pm-4pm - Bethesda Hall**

**Annual Report**

***Summary***

This year finally sees action for the groups major ‘Lake Project’ which has been ongoing since 2012; we also had a very successful Redfest at which we carried out a community consultation. Our Litter picks are picking up momentum and gaining popularity and the community gardens see changes and expansion. Several new groups have emerged around St George and the park, we hope and aim to work with and alongside these groups to benefit our Park.

***Litter picks***

Now every second Sunday of the Month between 11am and 12pm. We joined in the Bristol Clean Streets campaign this year but there wasn’t publicity as in previous years, the park did get a clean-up and we now have a contact in Bristol Waste for bags, including clear bags for recycling – a step in the right direction. Litter pick dates will continue throughout the summer until October when we finish for the winter months.

***Gardens and Gardeners***

Changes have taken place in the Community Garden team on the bandstand, with most of the original members moving on, the new team is going strong with regular gardening days, the team will soon be looking for volunteers and money to repair the sides of the raised beds which are starting to collapse. (Dates are on the website)

New Bee and Butterfly garden at the park entrance, was the idea of one of the ex-community gardeners. The St George In Bloom group have helped to raise money for this and received much publicity, FOSGP gained all the permissions needed from BCC and our volunteers have done the designing along with most of the preparation and original planting. We wait to see how this project will move forward.

The two flower beds a little further into the park are still being looked after by another member of the group, and his trusted volunteer, this year has seen a new wooden fence (funding help from SGIB) to try and keep the dogs off!!

A big thank you to all the gardeners who quietly look after areas of the park that would otherwise be neglected.

***The Lake Project***

The Group made a successful application to the National Lottery for a grant of just under 9k to enable us to organise ‘Visual Concepts’ of what a regeneration of the lake could actually look like and also for a detailed plan of how the project will practically take shape including a breakdown of costs.

The Wildfowl and Wetland Trust Consulting Dept from Slimbridge were commissioned to undertake this task and have produced Visuals which have been on display in the park since last August and have had several outings with the group to gauge public opinion – all of which has been very positive.

Visual concepts can also be viewed online at <http://stgeorgecommunity.org.uk/network/projects/>

Scroll down the page to click on the small pictures. These can be seen on our new website.

Our next move is to apply and obtain all the permissions required from BCC. This may involve planning permission for the new footpaths if our preferred design is approved.

We have had an initial meeting with Asher and Ricard Fletcher to get the ball rolling, Richard is having a meeting this week with WWT to clarify some technical and operational questions.

If all goes well it will be up to us to draw up a funding strategy against the projects practical plan, the lake improvements and enhancements are estimated at £230,615.00. The repairs to the lake edge are estimated by Bristol City Council at £300,000.00. With a contingency to cover all the unexpected extras we are aiming to raise approx. £600,000.00.

We have already put in a bid for £150,000.00 form the CIL fund.

The next year will see us undergoing some serious fundraising, so any help will be greatly appreciated.

***Other initiatives***

Duck food sales – the group have been selling duck food through the park kiosk for several years, sadly this stopped when the kiosk closed so the birds have had to go hungry! We hope to continue this practice when the kiosk reopens, it is educational for the public to engage with the birds and healthy to feed them nutritional food.

“Alien Wildlife” – the Group wrote to Kerry McCarthy about the Killing of grey squirrels, Canada geese, muntjac deer and other so-called invasive species, Kerry has responded and supports us in our efforts to get the new law stopped but the government – Natural England- are determined and have sneaked this through while Brexit takes centre stage. There has been a huge reaction to this law once people found out, however too little too late.

***Positive change and actions for 2019.***

You will be aware that we now have a website as well as a very active Facebook page with a membership of over 1,100 people.

We plan to use the website to show the things we are doing and encourage people who support us on Facebook and in other ways to actively get involved in supporting the park and working with the Council to maintain and where appropriate, improve, the park.

Some of the areas might look at are:

* The Lake Project
* Security, safety and reducing misuse of the park
* Options for the buildings in and around the park (in conjunction with other groups)
* Developing the community garden
* An active wildlife and environment policy
* Refurbishing the John Deasy Play Park
* Refurbishing the skatepark

This is ambitious and we will need more members to make these things happen.