

**Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG)**

Registered Charity Number: 1157957

Principal Address: c/o 25 The Birchlands,  
Forest Town, Mansfield NG19 0ER



Registered Charity No. 1157957

## **Forest Town Nature Conservation Group**

### **Annual Report and Accounts 2016**

(for the period 1 April 2015 - 31 March 2016)

#### **Object of the Charity:**

*'to promote for the benefit of the public the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment in and around Forest Town'*

Produced by **Josh Downen** (Treasurer) and **Shlomo Downen** (Chair)

Approved by **all Trustees** on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2016

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### Declaration

The Trustees of the Forest Town Nature Conservation Group declare that they have approved this Trustees' Report and Accounts for the period 1 April 2015 - 31 March 2016.

Signed on behalf of the charity's Trustees

Signature: 

**Full name:** Shlomo Downen

**Position:** Chair

**Date:** Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2016

## **1. Introduction**

The inaugural meeting of the Forest Town Nature Conservation Group took place at the Whitegates Hotel Public House on Clipstone Road East, Forest Town, Mansfield on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011. Regular meetings of the Group were held at various locations around Forest Town, and copies of the notes of these meetings are available from: <http://www.foresttown.net/index.php/nature/ftncg-minutes/>

On 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2014 the Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG) was formally registered as a Charity with the Charity Commission (Registration No. 1157957).

This is our second formal Report and Accounts as a registered charity. This Report and Accounts was written to ensure compliance with FTNCG's obligations under the Charities Act 2011 in accordance with Section 27 of our Constitution.

As of 9<sup>th</sup> April 2016 the Forest Town Nature Conservation Group comprised 52 members under the terms of Section 8 of FTNCG's Constitution. In accordance with Section 12 of FTNCG's Constitution, this means that the quorum for the AGM would be 5 members entitled to vote on the business to be conducted at the meeting.

In accordance with Sections 10, 11, 12 and 31 of the Constitution, formal notice for the AGM was deemed to have been issued on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April 2015 (48 hours after posting) to all FTNCG members and trustees, for the AGM to be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 2016, i.e. at least 14 clear days before the AGM and within 15 months of our previous AGM. The notice set out the date, time and place of the meeting and the general nature of the business to be transacted at the AGM.

## **2. Structure, Governance and Management**

The Forest Town Nature Conservation Group's (FTNCG's) Constitution, adopted on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2013 and amended on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2014, is the governing document that establishes FTNCG as an association with the following charitable object: *'to promote for the benefit of the public the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment in and around Forest Town'*.

FTNCG Membership confers no financial benefit, and is set at £2 (waivable on request).

The Spa Ponds Nature Reserve, located off Clipstone Drive near Garibaldi Wood (with an entrance opposite the Whitegates Hotel Public House), is a local wildlife site that is also a valuable part of our mediaeval heritage.

As a community we decided to purchase the site to improve Spa Ponds for nature conservation, community access, and as part of the heritage work taking place throughout Nottinghamshire. Thanks to many kind individuals and organisations we raised the funds, and now own the site for public benefit.

Following the Group's purchase of Spa Ponds Nature Reserve, we agreed a vision for the future of the site with the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust who previously took the lead on managing the site. The deeds for Spa Ponds are held in trust by the Official Custodian for Charities.

FTNCG Trustees for 2015/16 were as follows:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Office / Role</b>	<b>Date of Trustee Appointment</b>
Lorraine Downen	Secretary	1 <sup>st</sup> February 2011
Shlomo Downen	Chair and Minutes Secretary	1 <sup>st</sup> February 2011
Josh Downen	Treasurer	1 <sup>st</sup> February 2011
Richard Smith	Vice-Chair (from 6 <sup>th</sup> May 2015)	22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2013
Alan Alberry	Spa Ponds Warden	2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2014
Barry Housley	Spa Ponds Warden	2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2014*
Rosemary Powell	Trustee	2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2014
Ross Lacey	Trustee	2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2014

\* Barry Housley resigned as a Trustee effective from 25<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

Barry remains a Spa Ponds Warden.

**The Forest Town Nature Conservation Group is a member (or affiliate) of the following organisations:**

- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
- Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (and associated Mansfield & Ashfield Local Group)
- The Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group (NottsBAG)
- WatersideCare
- The Rufford-Clipstone Landowners Group
- Sherwood Catchment Partnership
- Council for British Archaeology (CBA)
- CBA East Midlands

### **3. Review of the Past Year**

Throughout the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 Forest Town Nature Conservation Group Trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

Over the year, FTNCG undertook the following activities in relation to our objective '*to promote for the benefit of the public the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment in and around Forest Town*':

- Holding meetings, open to the public without charge, to consider, plan and carry out the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment in and around Forest Town in general, and in particular at sites of ecological interest including Stinting Lane, the Rushpool Open Space and Spa Ponds.
- Maintaining both electronic and hard copy communications with more than a hundred members and supporters, providing ongoing updates and promoting activities of potential interest, via e-mail, our website and Facebook pages, and by sending printed copies to postal addresses.
- Working as a Group to deliver a total of more than 2,500 volunteer hours carrying out litter picking and conservation work in and around Forest Town, including at both the Rushpool and Spa Ponds sites. These efforts resulted in recognised improvements of the physical and natural environment.
- Joining or renewing membership of / affiliation with charitable organisations with similar objects to FTNCG, including: The Conservation Volunteers (TCV); Notts Wildlife Trust (NWT) and the associated Mansfield & Ashfield Local Group; the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group (NottsBAG); WatersideCare; the Rufford-Clipstone Landowners Group; the Sherwood Catchment Partnership; the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) and CBA East Midlands.
- Working with other like-minded public benefit organisations and agencies, including: Forest Town Community Council (FTCC) and FTCC's Planning Sub-Committee; Forest Town Heritage Group; Samworth Academy; Notts County Council (Public Rights of Way); Forestry Commission; Environment Agency; Mansfield District Council; Nottinghamshire Fungi Group; MBArchaeology and consultant archaeologist Matthew Beresford; the Notts Amphibian & Reptile Group (NARG); Birklands Ringing Group; EMEC Ecology; Mansfield & Ashfield Rights of Way Network / Ramblers Group; Nottinghamshire Police; Friends of Clipstone Park; the Nottinghamshire Biological and Geological Record Centre, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Entomology Society and a variety of County Wildlife Recorders.

Throughout the period FTNCG Trustees met, both formally and informally, including holding three 'formal' Committee Meetings that were open to all FTNCG members (on 16<sup>th</sup> September and 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015, and on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016). Minutes of these meetings were circulated to all FTNCG Members and Supporters, and are available from: <http://www.foresttown.net/index.php/nature/ftnccg-minutes/> Printed copies are available on request. These minutes provide a record detailing FTNCG public benefit contributions.

This Report provides some examples of FTNCG public benefit contributions:

- Cooperating with the Forest Town Community Council (FTCC) and FTCC's Planning Sub-Committee, including providing monthly FTNCG updates at FTCC meetings, and making complementary submissions to Mansfield District Council's Local Plan Consultation.
- Contributing to efforts to manage invasive non-native species (such as Himalayan Balsam), in conjunction with NottsBAG; and contributing as an active partner in the Sherwood Catchment Partnership, to "*conserve and enhance the Rivers Idle, Ryton, Poulter, Meden, Maun, their tributaries and surrounding land, to create a healthy and wildlife rich water environment for the benefit of both people and biodiversity*".
- Meeting with fellow local landowners and police to address anti-social behaviour, e.g. to curb illegal off-road biking, to protect the physical and natural environment.
- Promoting recording and reporting of wildlife sightings. In December 2015 some 870 FTNCG-recorded sightings covering the period 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015 - 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015 were reported to the relevant County Recordors.
- Carrying out regular water quality testing and sharing results with WatersideCare, the County Biodiversity Officer, and the Environment Agency, as appropriate.
- Playing an active role in International Clean Up Mansfield Day on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2015, including litter-picking and rubbish-clearing activities at both the Rushpool and Spa Ponds sites.
- Attending public events with displays promoting wildlife and raising awareness of FTNCG activities, e.g. at the Clipstone Gala and at the Robin Hood Festival.
- Supporting the annual Making A Difference Day balsam pulling with 200 Samworth Academy students and staff, alongside members of the Forestry Commission.
- Carrying out site surveys of Rushpool Open Space and Spa Ponds (including a toad count at Spa Ponds), identifying, photographing and recording wildlife.
- Training and skill sharing.

## **4. Financial Review**

### ***Estimated basic annual running costs***

Current running costs for FTNCG amount to more than £500, but if necessary these costs could be limited to around **£500**, for example, as follows:

#### **£125 for Membership:**

- **£40** - Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust (NWT)
- **£40** - The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) Community Network
- **£40** - Council for British Archaeology (CBA)
- **£ 5** - CBA East Midlands

#### **£135 for Insurance:**

- Includes Public & Products Liability (for up to £5m cover) and Personal Accident

#### **£240 for Other General Running Costs:**

- **£150** - Education and training
- **£ 50** - Sundry items for Spa Ponds (e.g. signs, tools, plants, seeds, etc.)
- **£ 20** - Printing and postage
- **£ 20** - Volunteer travel expenses

### ***Reserves policy for 2016/17***

**Running Costs (Reserved £1,000; target £1,000):** There are some basic expenses that must be met, e.g. various forms of insurance, alongside health & safety equipment and training. Trustees have set the reserve at a level equivalent to two years' running costs at £500 per year, although in reality we expect to spend more than £500 in the coming year, and we expect to attract further funds to replenish some or all of this spend.

**Contingencies (Reserved £500; target £500):** To cover unexpected expenses, Trustees have set a target of £500 for contingencies, rising in future years as finances allow.

**Match-funding (Reserved £0; target £2,000):** To position FTNCG to take advantage of match-funding opportunities, Trustees set a target to ring-fence £2,000 of uncommitted funds for our contribution to such funding bids. This financial element would be used alongside using volunteer hours (i.e. in-kind contribution) to support the success of bids where appropriate, rising in future years as finances allow. As there are no specific match-funding projects foreseen in the near future, and because it is important to spend money now on charitable purposes and we have other worthwhile purposes for which to spend the money, the reserve is currently set to £0 so as to allow for more money to be spent on projects to be realised in the coming year or so.

**Spa Ponds Heritage Management Plan Project (Reserved: £1,000; target £1,000):** To complement our Habitat Management Plan for Spa Ponds, Trustees have identified £1,000 to be spent in addition to any other funds raised, e.g. through a successful Heritage Lottery Fund bid, to pay towards costs associated with related training, researching and producing a Heritage Management Plan for Spa Ponds, and other

publications and activities intended to highlight aspects of the history of Spa Ponds. The scope of the project will depend greatly on the availability of external funding, but its main focus will be to produce an initial Heritage Management Plan to ensure that the Spa Ponds site is managed, maintained and improved in a manner consistent with, and sensitive to, its heritage value. The greater understanding of the site's heritage would also be able to contribute to support future bids for nature conservation work.

Spa Ponds Site Improvement Works (Reserved: £1,500; target £2,500): In accordance with the March 2015 Habitat Management Plan for Spa Ponds, Trustees have identified improvement that we would like to see carried out in the coming year or so, including installation of fencing, management of the trees, and other work necessary to maintain and improve access and public safety. As this work is expected to require external contractors and the purchase of materials it will incur costs over and above the money budgeted for FTNCG's ordinary, volunteer-led, running costs.

Spa Ponds Donation Fund: Money donated specifically for Spa Ponds will only be spent on expenses related to Spa Ponds, e.g. on general running costs attributable to FTNCG's involvement in Spa Ponds, on Spa Ponds Site Improvement Works, etc.

### ***The charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising)***

For the period covered by this Report and Accounts, FTNCG's total income was just over £3,350, of which £350 was donated specifically for Spa Ponds. The principal sources of this income were as follows:

Donations from councillor division/ward funds	£1,450
Donations from individuals, inc. membership	£ 890
Other fundraising	£ 340
Donation from CIIGI	£ 320
Donation from ASDA	£ 200
Gift Aid from HMRC	£ 150

In addition to funding bids for specific projects, members of the Group intend to continue general fundraising efforts and FTNCG will continue to seek funding through membership donations, general appeals, and grant funding from Councillors' constituency pots. As well as obtaining Gift Aid on future donations, in the coming year FTNCG expect to receive a small sum for Gift Aid from donations made during 2015/16.

There is also potential for funding to be set aside for Spa Ponds as a result of Section 106 money associated with nearby future housing development. Such funds, if forthcoming, could be used to pay for improved access and signage.



### ***How expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity***

Expenses were incurred in relation to the Forest Town Nature Conservation Group undertaking activities to carry out the charity's object '*to promote for the benefit of the public the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment in and around Forest Town*'.

Expenditure during this period amounted to just over £1,400, and consisted of:

Tools, seeds, tree guards, petrol, etc	£405
Membership & Insurance	£345
Training	£265
Contracted Work on Spa Ponds	£250
Printing & Postage	£ 60
Speakers fee	£ 50
Legal fees / disbursements	£ 40
Travel reimbursement for volunteers	£ 10

## **5. Annual Statement of Accounts**

### **Accounts for 1 April 2015 - 31 March 2016**

Opening balance (Total)			
	Cash	£32.80	
	Bank	£1,999.18	£2,031.98
Total income			£3,353.07
Total expenditure			£1,429.14
Closing balance (Total)			
	Cash	£28.90	
	Bank	£3,927.01	£3,955.91

### **Accounts for 1 April 2014 - 31 March 2015**

Opening balance (Total)			
	Cash	£0	
	Bank	£17,606.85	£17,606.85
Total income			£1,269.40
Total expenditure			£16,742.62
Closing balance (Total)			
	Cash	£32.80	
	Bank	£1,999.18	£2,031.98

The above total figures include the amounts in the Spa Ponds Fund

## Spa Ponds Fund

The Spa Ponds Fund was created as part of the 'Spa Ponds Appeal' which was set up to purchase the Spa Ponds Nature Reserve site.

Donations have been sought and given for FTNCG to spend on Spa Ponds. Such money is ring-fenced and is only spent on Spa Ponds, e.g. the purchase, maintenance and improvement of the site for nature conservation, heritage and recreation purposes.

Total fund income from start of appeal to 30 March 2016: **£16,606.38**

Total fund expenditure from start of appeal to 30 March 2016: **£16,451.04**

Total remaining in Spa Ponds fund at 30 March 2016: **£155.34**

<b>Spa Ponds Fund</b>	
<b>1 April 2012 - 30 March 2013:</b>	
Opening Balance	£0.00
Income	£17.60
Expenditure	£0.00
Closing Balance	£17.60

<b>Spa Ponds Fund</b>	
<b>1 April 2013 - 30 March 2014*:</b>	
Opening Balance	£17.60
Income	£15,978.85
Expenditure	£83.38
Closing Balance	£15,913.07

<b>Spa Ponds Fund</b>	
<b>1 April 2014 - 30 March 2015*:</b>	
Opening Balance	£15,913.07
Income	£259.93
Expenditure	£15,338.35
Closing Balance	£834.65

<b>Spa Ponds Fund</b>	
<b>1 April 2015 - 30 March 2016</b>	
Opening Balance	£834.65
Income	£350.00
Expenditure	£1,029.31
Closing Balance	£155.34

\* Correction of the figures shown in the 2014-15 accounts

**BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MARCH 2016**

	2015/16	
	£	£
<u>Assets and Liabilities</u>		
FIXED ASSETS		
<i>Tangible assets</i>		
Tools, Seeds, Tree Guards, etc (Cost)	402.07	
Tools etc (Accumulated depreciation)	(402.07)	
Total fixed assets		0.00
CURRENT ASSETS		
<i>Cash at bank and in hand</i>		
Current Account - Coop Bank	3,927.01	
Petty Cash	28.90	
Total cash at bank and in hand	3,955.91	
Total current assets		<b>3,955.91</b>
LIABILITIES		
<i>Creditors due within one year</i>		0
NET CURRENT ASSETS	3,955.91	
<b>Total net assets</b>		<b>3,955.91</b>
<u>Represented by funds</u>		
<i>Unrestricted funds</i>		
General Fund	3,800.57	
<i>Restricted funds</i>		
Spa Ponds	155.34	
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>3,955.91</b>

**BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MARCH 2015  
(W/ CORRECTED SPA PONDS FIGURES)**

	2014/15	
	£	£
<u>Assets and Liabilities</u>		
FIXED ASSETS		
<i>Tangible assets</i>		
Tools (Cost)	0	
Tools (Accumulated depreciation)	(0)	
Total fixed assets		0.00
CURRENT ASSETS		
<i>Cash at bank and in hand</i>		
Current Account - Coop Bank	1,999.18	
Petty Cash	32.80	
Total cash at bank and in hand	2,031.98	
Total current assets		<b>2,031.98</b>
LIABILITIES		
<i>Creditors due within one year (Note #1)</i>		80.26
NET CURRENT ASSETS	1,951.72	
<b>Total net assets</b>		<b>1,951.72</b>
<u>Represented by funds</u>		
<i>Unrestricted funds</i>		
General Fund	1,197.33	
<i>Restricted funds</i>		
Spa Ponds	834.65	
<b>Total funds</b>		<b>2,031.98</b>

**Note #1:** £38.26 owed from Spa Ponds fund to reimburse cost of torch purchased for toad counts, and £42.00 owed to Dawson for Spa Ponds deeds transfer

## Summary of 2015-16 FTNCG Activities

### April 2015

- At the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 FTNCG meeting we announced that the deeds for Spa Ponds had been transferred to the Official Custodian for Charities as part of the Charity Commission's Landholding Service.
- From 2<sup>nd</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> April 2015 FTNCG members, led by Richard, recorded 1,657 toads, a Smooth Newt, and 6 Common Frogs at Spa Ponds.
- On 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2015 FTNCG representatives attended the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group (NottsBAG) Annual Forum Event held at Nottingham Trent University's Brackenhurst Campus near Southwell.
- Litter-picking session at the Rushpool Open Space took place on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2015.
- Committee Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2015 - Trustees considered the content and resource implications of the Spa Ponds Ecology Report and Habitat Management Plan produced by EMEC Ecology. Notes of this meeting are available at: [http://www.foresttown.net/nature/FTNCG Committee Notes from 29 April 2015.pdf](http://www.foresttown.net/nature/FTNCG%20Committee%20Notes%20from%2029%20April%202015.pdf)

### May 2015 - More than 90 volunteers hours delivered

- FTNCG held our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2015. In addition to our AGM business we listened to Andy Lowe tell us how GPS is being used to track the birds of Sherwood Forest and what the results mean for protecting local wildlife. AGM notes: [http://www.foresttown.net/nature/FTNCG 2015 AGM Minutes.pdf](http://www.foresttown.net/nature/FTNCG%202015%20AGM%20Minutes.pdf)

### June 2015 - More than 333 volunteers hours delivered

- Our 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2015 FTNCG meeting provided an opportunity to discuss forthcoming events and to hear about Mark's work surveying trees along the historic deer leap.
- On 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2015 FTNCG volunteers joined others for evening balsam pulling sessions at Maun Valley Park organised by NottsBAG.
- On 12<sup>th</sup> June FTNCG contributed to International Clean Up Mansfield Day with litter-picking and rubbish clearing sessions at Rushpool Open Space and Spa Ponds.
- Spa Ponds Site Management Action Plan produced 10<sup>th</sup> June 2015 by Shlomo, Josh, Lorraine, Ian, Rich, Alan, Barry and Mark, in advance of 17<sup>th</sup> June's on-site meeting.

### July 2015 - More than 350 volunteers hours delivered

- Regular sessions pulling balsam, picking litter and surveying wildlife, primarily at Spa Ponds. Also water quality testing, and bridleway maintenance.
- FTNCG's membership of both the Council for British Archaeology East Midlands Branch and the National Organisation announced at 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015 FTNCG meeting.
- On 6<sup>th</sup> July 2015 FTNCG volunteers contributed to Samworth Academy's *Making A Difference Day* pulling balsam in and around Spa Ponds alongside students and staff as well as the Forestry Commission.
- FTNCG had a stall at the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2015 Clipstone Community Gala event.
- On 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015 FTNCG volunteers joined others for an evening pulling balsam at Maun Valley Park. This was organised by NottsBAG.

### August 2015 - More than 150 volunteers hours delivered

- Regular sessions litter picking and surveying wildlife, primarily at Spa Ponds. Also water quality testing, as well as bush cutting and strimming to clear the bridleway.

### September 2015 - More than 250 volunteers hours delivered

- 12<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2015 - Fungi identification training session at Spa Ponds led by Nottinghamshire Fungi Group's Ann Ward.
- 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015 FTNCG Open Committee Meeting - Notes available at: [http://forestown.net/nature/FTNCG\\_Committee\\_Notes\\_from\\_16\\_September\\_2015.pdf](http://forestown.net/nature/FTNCG_Committee_Notes_from_16_September_2015.pdf)
- 19<sup>th</sup> September 2015 - Spa Ponds work session focussed on maintaining the bridleway and progressing site management plans, e.g. creating a silt trap, maintaining and widening the path, repairing the hedges and planting trees.

### October 2015 - More than 247 volunteers hours delivered

- 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2015 - Spa Ponds Work Session
- 7<sup>th</sup> October 2015 - FTNCG Meeting including presentation on wildlife sightings.
- 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> October 2015 - Spa Ponds Work Sessions with special focus on dead hedging and preparing for tree and seed planting.
- 30<sup>th</sup> October 2015 - Spa Ponds Work Session

### November 2015 - More than 300 volunteers hours delivered

- 4<sup>th</sup> November 2015 - FTNCG Meeting with Mercian Archaeological Services CIC's finds specialist David Budge who spoke about the medieval pottery of Sherwood, including the development of ceramics and how pottery was made and used during the medieval period, and sources of pottery used in medieval Sherwood Forest.

### November 2015 (Continued)

- 7<sup>th</sup> November 2015 - Spa Ponds tree planting, including: 30 trees (from Woodland Trust) planted 6 each of Hawthorn, Hazel, Holly, Dog Rose, and Dogwood, also planted service tree and blackthorn (from Charles).
- 13<sup>th</sup> November 2015 - Unable to access Spa Ponds due to police action.
- 21<sup>st</sup> November 2015 - Planting trees, including: 10 each of Wayfaring, Guelder Rose, Spindleberry, Dogwood, and Goat Willow; also clearing bramble and nettle.
- 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015 - Strimming Spa Ponds entrance, litter picking, dead hedging, clearing bramble and nettle, planting trees, including red oak, hawthorn, and ash (including some donated by Dougie B).

### December 2015 - More than 112 volunteers hours delivered

- 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015 FTNCG Open Committee Meeting - Notes available at: [http://www.foresttown.net/nature/FTNCG Committee Notes 2 December 2015.pdf](http://www.foresttown.net/nature/FTNCG%20Committee%20Notes%20December%202015.pdf)
- 11<sup>th</sup> December 2015 - Strimming and dead hedging at Spa Ponds, alongside litter picking, clearing bramble, tidying paths, and water quality testing.

### January 2016 - More than 171 volunteers hours delivered

- 8<sup>th</sup> January 2016 - Path clearing, dead hedging, and water testing at Spa Ponds.
- 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2016 - Spa Ponds path clearing, removal of bramble and nettles, adding to dead hedges, blocking inappropriate access to pond by laying down trees.

### February 2016 - More than 210 volunteers hours delivered

- 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2016 - Met with Nottinghamshire County Council Rights of Way Team on-site at Spa Ponds to discuss public safety concerns.
- FTNCG February 2016 representations on MDC Local Plan Consultation Draft. See: [http://www.foresttown.net/nature/FTNCG Local Plan Submission from February 2016.pdf](http://www.foresttown.net/nature/FTNCG%20Local%20Plan%20Submission%20from%20February%202016.pdf)
- 28<sup>th</sup> February 2016 - Meeting with community historian/archaeologist Matt Beresford re: Spa Ponds Heritage Management project.
- FTNCG sub-contracted Chris to add some barriers to deter off-road bikers from using Spa Ponds as a thoroughfare from Mansfield Woodhouse to the Desert.

## March 2016 - More than 182 volunteers hours delivered

- 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016 FTNCG Open Committee Meeting - Notes available at: [http://www.foresttown.net/nature/FTNCG Committee Notes 2 March 2016.pdf](http://www.foresttown.net/nature/FTNCG%20Committee%20Notes%20March%202016.pdf)
- 6<sup>th</sup> March 2016 - Litter picking at Spa Ponds, alongside preparing for planting trees, and chopping back bramble in 'Fern Gulley' (at Spa Ponds).
- 19<sup>th</sup> March 2016 - Litter picking, planting trees received from the Woodland Trust, including: 30 osier and 15 each of downy birch, goat willow, hawthorn, rowan and hazel. Also water quality testing with Les Warren of WatersideCare.

Throughout the year:

- More than 2,500 volunteer hours delivered - this is based on hours recorded, and does not capture all of the hours delivered by FTNCG volunteers.
- Our Spa Ponds Wardens, Alan and Barry, carried out regular litter-picking sessions. FTNCG's Spa Ponds Wardens were helped to maintain the bridleway and the flow of water between the ponds by other FTNCG volunteers.
- FTNCG is also blessed in attracting a number of photographers, who have been very generous in sharing their wildlife photographs of Spa Ponds.
- As a Tree Verifier for the Woodland Trust, Mark has logged more than 100 trees on Spa Ponds. See: <http://www.ancient-tree-hunt.org.uk/discoveries/interactivemap>
- In response to feedback from FTNCG members, Josh redesigned the Spa Ponds welcome sign to be friendlier and more welcoming.
- Over the winter several FTNCG members supported each other to begin to assemble a chronology of Spa Ponds land ownership.

## **Looking ahead**

There is still work to do, including buying in support for coppicing and pollarding some trees to open up the ponds to receive more light, and also planting some oxygenating plants near the spring that is the source of the water in the ponds.

There is also more work to do researching and gaining a better understanding of the potential heritage value of the site, and we are working on this too. Indeed we hope to make substantial progress towards a Heritage Management Plan for Spa Ponds in the coming year or so.

FTNCG continues to attract new members, and these new members have much to offer. We are grateful for all our members support and enthusiasm, and for the ongoing support of our Mansfield District and Nottinghamshire County Councillors.

All in all, there is plenty for FTNCG members, and indeed the wider Forest Town community, to be proud of and excited about.