



Season's Greetings to all FTNCG Members and Supporters

Here we are again! Another year nearing an end, and another year of amazing Forest Town Nature Conservation Group (FTNCG) achievements to celebrate.

As the frost steadily melts in the garden it is warming for heart and body to recall July, when once again Kingsway Hall hosted FTNCG's Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Our AGM was a chance to gather (indoors), endorse our Trustees and Officers, listen to presentations about the group's funds and projects, enjoy a guided tour around FTNCG's ever-improving website, and hear the wonderful news that both Sam and Joe had landed jobs, with Sam becoming a Ranger / Ecologist at idverde and Joe welcomed as a Forestry Commission Apprentice Forest Craftsperson.

Sam and Joe have been back to help at Spa Ponds, and you'll be pleased to hear they are enjoying their new roles.

Throughout 2023 Josh transformed FTNCG's website. This included adding new features such as videos, more about visiting and managing Spa Ponds, a new Wildlife Sightings section (including instructions for reporting sightings using iRecord), a Projects section that includes Then and Now photos of Spa Ponds (thanks Dennis!), and a ten-part tale of the history of Spa Ponds that Josh curated and narrated.



Pond 1 on 3rd December 2023 (Photo by Dennis)

FOREST TOWN NATURE CONSERVATION GROUP
Community-run charity who own and manage Spa Ponds Nature Reserve in Mansfield

[INTRODUCTION](#) [FTNCG](#) [SPA PONDS](#) [PROJECTS](#) [FOREST TOWN](#) [DOCUMENTS](#) [OLD WEBSITE](#)

History of Spa Ponds

The History of Spa Ponds, a ten-part tale, curated and narrated by Josh Downen:

1. [The origin of the springs at Spa Ponds \(Pre-history\)](#)
2. [The Domesday manors of Mansfield and Clipstone \(1066-1102\)](#)
3. [The King's creation of Clipstone Park \(1176-1180\)](#)
4. [The people and the Peel \(1316-1328\)](#)
5. [The desolation of Clipstone Park \(1642-1660\)](#)
6. [The Grate Harakan and the steel waters \(1714-1748\)](#)
7. [Flood Dykes, enclosure and first maps showing the ponds \(1819-1850\)](#)
8. [Pond reconstruction after subsidence \(1983-1994\)](#)
9. [Living memories and community ownership \(1940s to present\)](#)
10. [Then and now photographs \(1980s to present\)](#)

Other documents:

- [Spa Ponds Heritage Management Plan, including Appendices \(Google Drive\)](#)

<https://www.foresttown.net/index.php/spa-ponds/history-of-spa-ponds/>



Some of those who attended FTNCG's AGM at Kingsway Hall

2023 saw FTNCG receiving record levels of support, including both financial support and help from volunteers.

Financial support came from personal donations and grant funding, including from the Co-op Local Community Fund, the Severn Trent Community Fund, LocalGiving, and the Sherwood Landscape Partnership's Miner2Major project.

In addition to FTNCG volunteers – including many who were new to FTNCG – our activities were supported by volunteers from the Co-op, Galliford Try, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, Severn Trent Water, O2 and Virgin Media.

This amazing support enabled us to move forward with several projects, including our Pipes, Paths and Ponds project; Biodiversity Improvements at Spa Ponds; Woodland Management Skills Training with Sherwood Ecologic's Andy Hollis; and the production of both Freshwater (Aquatic) and Terrestrial Invertebrate Surveys of Spa Ponds.

These projects improved the site for both people and wildlife. Some of these improvements are easy to see, others are more subtle. For example, the three signs installed at Spa Ponds provide visitors with vital information about FTNCG, the site rules, a chronology of the site's proud history (from common ownership to Royal then aristocratic ownership and back to community ownership), and a map of the site.

Less obvious are the two hibernacula (near Pond 2 and Pond 3) created by EMEC to provide shelter for amphibians (mostly toads) looking to overwinter at Spa Ponds.

Visitors to Spa Ponds will also notice the long stretch of hedging that continues to be maintained to help protect the pollinator corridor that runs alongside the Chestnut Walk.

Those familiar with the site will also appreciate the new pipes connecting the ponds, and the new barriers on the paths between the ponds. EMEC's barriers make the paths safer, while using some of the timber from other parts of the site.

And those with Internet access can see additional photos of this year's work and much more by visiting FTNCG's revamped website at: <https://www.foresttown.net/> and our Facebook pages, and the new Instagram account at: <https://www.instagram.com/spaponds/>

On behalf of my fellow FTNCG Trustees – Alan Alberry, Lorraine and Josh Downen, Mark Fretwell, Phil Goodall, Sam Nicholson, and Dennis Platts – I thank you for your support for FTNCG in 2023 and wish you and yours a wonderful Christmas and a happy New Year.

Shlomo

FTNCG Chair

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<http://www.foresttown.net/nature>

<http://www.facebook.com/FTNCG>

<https://www.instagram.com/spaponds/>



Hedge planting training with Ecologic's Andy Hollis



Sam and EMEC Entomologist Adrian Dutton



EMEC creating a hibernaculum near Pond 2



Dead hedge along pollinator corridor