FRIENDS OF TRENDLEWOOD PARK (FoTP)

Annual Report 2025 for AGM on 10th February 2026 (15th)

1. Introduction and context

2025 will go down in history as the year we experienced the driest Spring for 100 years, and the hottest Summer on record. Most of Trendlewood Park and the Golden Valley Meadows were affected by drought for months, but the wetland area remained as a delightfully green oasis throughout. Late in the Summer, welcome rain caused plants and insects to recover and flourish, so the year ended on a more promising note. It was another 'mast' year when oak trees produced huge numbers of acorns, and fruit trees were laden with berries and fruits. These are happening more frequently with climate change impacts. Due to the damp and warm conditions in Autumn, fungi were prolific both in species and numbers, and there were some amazing displays in the wood and on grassland. Yet again, we were reminded of the extraordinary resilience of nature.

In addition to the routine work of looking after the park and meadows, the year was dominated by the impact of the extensive felling of diseased ash trees in Nowhere Wood by council contractors, and the continuing work to enhance the pond and wetland area.

In spite of the vagaries of the weather, 2025 was overall a good year for the Friends group. The committee was almost at full strength, and achieved a huge amount. Monthly workdays were better attended than ever, and we hosted outside groups for 3 additional workdays. A Tree Trail was installed, a Facebook page created, and other projects carried out. At the end of 2025, FoTP was concerned to find a young man rough sleeping in Nowhere Wood. We supported him in practical ways over the coldest Winter weather, and liaised with NSC and Homeless teams until he was suitably accommodated.

Throughout 2025, a couple of FoTP committee members worked with Nailsea Town Council on a related project, looking at the health and biodiversity of the small river (River Kenn) that forms the parish and park boundary, and acts as drainage channel across the farmland of Backwell Common. This exciting project will continue into 2026.

2. Organisation

- **North Somerset Council** In spite of severe budgetary constraints, park infrastructure continued to be well-managed by council contractors, and FoTP was supported monthly by the Green Team. Play equipment for small children was replaced by NSC, and necessary work carried out when structures such as fences were damaged, or fallen or hazardous trees needed attention. Extensive tree felling took place in Nowhere Wood. We recognised that NSC officers were very occupied in delivering the Devolution agenda, as plans to transfer public open spaces to local town and parish councils evolve. Although the biannual Park Management meetings did not take place in 2025, NSC officers always responded to queries and provided support. We appreciated input from the NSC Ranger, Jodie, who helped to arrange corporate workdays and oversaw the design construction and installation of the Tree Trail. As ever, we are grateful to the officers for all their support and guidance.
- **Park Patrol** Monthly reports to NSC continued, and provided a useful way to communicate issues to officers. In a heavily used park, surrounded by housing, there are always matters to report such as litter, vandalism, fallen trees, inappropriate work on the park by residents, etc.
- **Nailsea Town Council** FoTP was grateful to receive a generous grant for general expenditure (£1,200), with an additional amount from CIL monies (£1,400), specifically earmarked for the pond and wetland project. Throughout 2025, and in conjunction with NSC and FoTP, NTC worked on a big project to surface additional

sections of the path along the Kenn hedge. This work will go ahead in 2026 funded by NTC, and will ensure that park users can use the entire length of this compartment on surfaced tracks. We appreciated the increased interest in the work we carry out on the park by NTC councillors, and the generous financial support.

- **FoTP Committee** met four times during the year. The new members have added greatly to the work of the group, and we thank them for their enthusiasm and support. Thanks to Treasurer Andrew, the finances are well managed. He has successfully applied for grants, and is supportive in other ways. Neil liaised with schools and the preschool, created and administered a successful Facebook page, produced workday posters contributed to the creation of the Tree Trail and wrote entertaining and informative blogs –'Stories from Nowhere Wood'.
- **FoTP website, Facebook page and publicity** Over the year, Simon has again worked with our Web Manager, Violet, to improve the appearance and content of the website and add more features. Neil launched the Trendlewood Community Park Facebook page, which has a growing membership. It enables us to share park news, workday updates, photos of the park and links to Neil's blog. It is an opportunity for park visitors to express their appreciation and enjoyment. Andrew Town continued to delight and inform us with his regular sequences of wildlife photos from the park and meadows.
- **3. Workdays, projects, events**
  - **Workdays:** Number of volunteer workdays = 12 (3rd Tuesday every month)
  - **Additional workdays** = 3
  - **Numbers of volunteers per workday** = 8-15.
  - **Green Team support**: 12 workdays

  Over the course of the year, Simon has organised all the workdays very competently and provides strong leadership. To be compliant with NSC insurance Simon has updated the Risk Assessments for workdays and instigated a signing-in sheet. Workdays are increasingly well attended, and we are grateful to all volunteers for giving their time and energy to looking after the park. The work often involves strenuous and repetitive jobs such as bramble bashing, but volunteers carry out the tasks cheerfully.

- **Tree works/woodland paths** NSC contractors carried out felling of dead and diseased ash trees in Nowhere Wood in two prolonged bursts during 2025. The work focused on the quarry area and Tetbury Gardens which are now largely denuded of trees. The impact was stark and distressing especially during the drought, but after rain, signs of regeneration were quick to appear. We noted the large number of plant species growing on the newly cleared woodland floor, and the insects that come in to forage in the cleared glades.
- **Tree Trail** FoTP was involved in helping NSC to create a Tree Trail around the park. Member and botanist Lindsay Moore, and committee member Neil, worked with NSC Ranger Jodie to devise a circular route & identify 15 native trees. Jodie designed and commissioned signs which were installed in late 2025. These were made using wood from Somerset Wood Recycling, crafted by Nailsea Shedders and installed by the Green Team. We will plan a public launch event in Spring 2026. This was a successful example of collaboration between several different groups.
- **Kenn hedge** This long and important hedge continues to be managed routinely by Glendale, under a separate contract with NSC. FoTP looks after several short sections planted by volunteers to gap up open sections along it's length.
- **Gully/Wetland project**: This project has been at the forefront of our work in 2025. In spite of several setbacks, Simon masterminded the deepening of the pond, installation of an overflow pipe and construction of a dam and surrounding protective brash hedging. The drought ensured that the pond area was dry for several months, allowing volunteers to work there on many workdays. Additional workdays with volunteers from Avon Wildlife Trust and Belmont Estate focused on work in this area. When rain arrives excess water will now drain from the pond to the gully, reducing flooding of the area. We look forward to this area developing into a valuable wildlife habitat and a beautiful green oasis on the park. Our thanks to Simon for his hard work and endless enthusiasm for this project.
- **Antisocial behaviour and damage**: There were several small incidents of vandalism around the park in 2025 but littering and dog fouling remained at a low level. Some residents continued to dump their green waste on the park and others carried out unauthorised work to park hedges and boundaries. Most park neighbours are appreciative and cooperative.

- **Golden Valley meadows, Nailsea School playing fields** After negotiations with Nailsea School, their contractors did not cut the tall grass and hedgerow margins in 2025, and they are now recovering. The meadows were again rich with wildflowers and insects in 2025, and bats used the meadows for foraging. As the previous contractors withdrew, we had to employ a new company who used a robotic flail to cut the meadow grass and margins. This was more expensive, but effective option.
- **Land between Birdlip and Bibury Close (formerly compartment 4)** This piece of land was put up for auction again in 2025. FoTP and NTC worked together to notify prospective buyers and the public that the land is protected. At auction, the owner withdrew the lot, as bids did not reach his reserve. In the meantime, this area is rewilding naturally, attracting a variety of wildlife, including deer.

4) Award of the Green Flag - 13th year The park was Mystery Judged in 2025 and was awarded the Green Flag for a further year. We await the report and any comments. Along with the three other Green Flag sites in North Somerset, Trendlewood Park and volunteers were praised in an article in the press on 23 July

5) Joint working: FoTP has tried to create links with all the schools in the area, but with limited results. A positive relationship developed with Golden Valley House Day Nursey, who use the wood and park on a regular basis.

As described, FoTP worked with many other organisations and individuals in 2025 We were please to forge links with Avon Wildlife Trust WAG volunteers and Belmont Estate, and hope these will continue. FoTP is leading on the River Kenn Survey Project and members are working with neighbouring parishes, local land owners and BART (Bristol Avon Rivers Trust) to survey the river and establish it's health. Depending on the results, the group will think about ways in which the biodiversity and health of the river might be improved. This is likely to have a positive long-term impact on wildlife in Trendlewood Park

The FoTP Chair took part in the North Somerset Bat Survey and represented FoTP at the first Wild Summit Conference in Bristol. The Chair attends a monthly meeting of the NTC Climate Emergency and Biodiversity Working Party.

6) Public events: FoTP did not have a presence at any public events in 2025. However, Neil delivered an interesting and entertaining presentation on 7th October 2025. We plan to take part in another Eco Fair in March 2026

7) Future plans and concerns:

- Change in the management and ultimately ownership of the park will continue to take place as the Devolution agenda is implemented. FoTP hopes to be involved in the discussions as changes take place. From many years of experience, FoTP can offer Nailsea Town Council support and advice as they think about the challenges of looking after such a large and diverse park.
- FoTP hopes that the level of support currently given by NSC officers will be maintained when Devolution is being implemented. As a group of volunteers, FoTP will continue to need professional advice and support, as well as the reassurance that larger landscape features will be managed by contractors.
- The impact of climate change is being felt on the park, as everywhere, as is the inexorable decline in many species. All we can do to mitigate against this locally is to create more habitats such wetlands, hedges and copses and wildflower areas to increase biodiversity and allow plants and animals to thrive.
- Nailsea and adjacent villages are under enormous pressure as a result of rapid housebuilding and expansion. Much of the open green space around the town have been, or will be lost to development. As the population grows, Trendlewood Park will come under more pressure from park users who want to get out into nature for fresh air, exercise and enjoy the wildlife. We will have to monitor the impact of this on the park and it's wildlife.
- Overall, 2025 was a year of positive change and progress for FoTP, and with a strong committee, sufficient funds and a band of willing volunteers we hope to continue to enhance the park and meadows into 2026 for the benefit of both people and wildlife.

Pat Gilbert, Chair – 28.1.26