

Friends Of Willow Park Inc.



Educating and involving the community in protecting, preserving and valuing parklands

NEWSLETTER — November 2009

Annual General Meeting Report – Another Great Year for Friends of Willow Park

Friends of Willow Park held its third Annual General Meeting earlier this month. Those attending were treated to an insight into our positive relationship with Council as seen through the eyes of Peter McLarty from City of Wodonga, who was our guest speaker.

A number of our committee members showcased our achievements over the past year. Julie Hind, our President, reported on a very successful Community Conversations project that will contribute significantly to the development of the Master Plan. The project not only allowed large numbers of our community to have a say, but also confirmed what we believed to be true. That is, the overwhelming feedback from our community was their desire to protect and enhance the natural aspects of Willow Park. The project also demonstrated what can be achieved when Council is willing to take a risk and work with its community. We are now eagerly looking forward to the next step in the Master Planning process in which the concept plans will be developed and priorities set. We will continue to report on the progress of the Master Plan in future editions.

Julie told of the success we have had in the past year with grant funding (\$25,383) and how we are now self-sufficient with respect to our activities in the Park. Funding has also allowed us to employ a part-time Coordinator, which has made a significant difference to our group and the progressing of our goals. We expect to successfully apply for additional grant funding in the coming year as the Community Conversations project and our strategic planning have given us great directions and a sound base to make application.



Enjoying a light dinner following our AGM

Julie also spoke of a key piece of new work for us - the Biodiversity by Design project, funded by the Victorian Government through the Second Generation Landcare Grant program. This project will allow us to develop a landscape design for the Pearce Street entrance to Willow Park that will increase the biodiversity of the area.

Patrons: Professor David Mitchell, Professor Allan Curtis, Dr Juliet Bird

Postal Address: c/- P.O. Box 1083, Wodonga, 3689

Website: www.friendsofwillowpark.org.au

Phone: Julie: (02)6056 1787, Ali (02) 6056 1938

Another important project for us in the coming year is our Gardens for Wildlife. Watch our newsletter and website for more details on these projects and their progress.

Julie also welcomed Friends of Belvoir Park/Sumsion Gardens to our family and was quick to point out how she was inspired by their energy and commitment. We look forward to working together to advocate for our two great parks and the important corridor (for people and nature) that links them.

Finally, Julie thanked the very many wonderful people who have given their time and effort to progress the objectives of the group.

A copy of all of the AGM reports can be found on our website.

Your New Committee

Friends of Willow Park is very pleased to announce that your new Committee members are:

Julie Hind, President
Alison Mitchell, Vice President
Stephen Anderson, Treasurer
Bart Citroen, Secretary
Pauline Anderson
Paul Day

Please feel free to contact us at any time. Our contact details are on our website: www.friendsofwillowpark.org.au



Left to right: Bart Citroen, Julie Hind, Alison Mitchell, Pauline Anderson, Paul Day. Stephen Anderson was absent.

End-of-Year Party

Come and join us for a FUN evening!

Friends of Willow Park has had a wonderful third year and we hope you will join us for our end-of-year party to celebrate our achievements for 2009 and chat about our plans for 2010

When? Thursday 17 December 2009

What time? 6.30 p.m.

Where? Willow Park, BBQ Area, Wodonga

Please bring a picnic dinner, drink, chairs and games for a fun and relaxed evening with friends



Further information: Contact Alison on 6056 1938 or email coordinator@friendsofwillowpark.org.au

Have You Seen Anything in the Nest Boxes?

Please let us know if you see anything using the nest boxes. This information helps us with our research into what is using the boxes and if the type of box, height or orientation have an effect. If you see anything using the boxes call Alison on 6056 1938 or email coordinator@friendsofwillowpark.org.au Please note the number of the box, which is located on the bottom of each nest box.

October Guest Speaker Report – Julie Hind

Friends of Willow Park was delighted to have Julie Hind as guest speaker at our information evening in October. Julie presented an analysis of the data from the Community Conversations project that forms a significant part of the Master Planning Process.

Julie outlined the Community Conversations project and noted that the survey and Play and Say Day were particularly successful. Of 300 surveys sent out 35% were returned and over 200 people came along to Willow Park to have their say on the Play and Say day.

Some interesting and exciting things emerged from the data. What was particularly exciting was that the views about Willow Park were the same whether they were responding to the survey or participating in the Play and Say Day. The overall picture that emerged is that our community loves Willow Park the way it is – a shared space for (primarily) passive and unorganised recreation.

The vision for Willow Park is also largely shared. Our community would like to see the natural bushland area of the park enhanced with things such as nature walks and bridges over House Creek. People, clearly, want to greater access to, and interaction with, nature in an urban bushland.



Julie Hind speaking at our Information Evening in October

Not surprisingly, then, people expressed a desire for amenities and activities that promote nature, play, socialising and low-key recreational activities.

These findings confirmed what *Friends of Willow Park* has believed and focussed its energies on for the past three years. This is not only wonderful news for us, but also encourages us to remain on our current path and expand our activities to meet the requirements of our community.

Next Community Gardening in the Park & Waterwatch

Community gardening in the park will resume on 28 March 2010
9.30 am

Waterwatch will continue over summer
on the fourth Sunday of the month
27 December 2009
24 January 2010
28 February 2010
4.30 pm

BYO refreshments, sunscreen, hat
Meet near the BBQ area in Willow Park

Phone Pauline – 6056 6275 (Gardening)
or Ali - 0409 032 490 (Waterwatch)

Friends of Belvoir Park/Sumsion Gardens

Ron Elkner reported on *Friends of Belvoir Park/Sumsion Gardens* at our AGM. Ron outlined the challenges of getting up and going and the successes of this group of “new chums” since inception in May of this year. This is a very active group that has so far participated in National Schools Tree Day with children from St Augustine’s Primary School and held a meeting at The Grange to involve the residents in their activities.

Friends of Belvoir Park/Sumsion Gardens has also been working hard to build a good working relationship with City of Wodonga and has met with a number of Council staff in the park to jointly plan future plantings and activities.

The final activity for this group for 2009 is a clean-up day in the park on Sunday 6 December at 10 am. Please join them and then sit back and enjoy a BYO lunch.



Belvoir Park/Sumsion Gardens

If you are interested in participating in *Friends of Belvoir Park/Sumsion Gardens* activities or better still, become a member (membership is free), contact: belvoirpark@friendsofwillowpark.org.au

Minimising Exotic Birds in Your Garden

Friends of Willow Park recently came across some interesting information about minimising exotic birds in your garden that we wanted to share.

If you are like us you probably keep a vigilant watch for exotic bird nests and remove them before the birds have a chance to lay their eggs. We condone this practice because we feel that that old wisdom "prevention is better than cure" is a great approach.

Other approaches that may also be effective without leading to any cruelty to the birds is to blow the eggs and return them to the nest. We are told that the birds will then sit on the eggs for the rest of the season and not breed at all for the year.

Exotic Species in our Waterways – Parrots Feather

Members of *Friends of Willow Park* recently discovered an exotic plant species in House Creek and the wetland in Les Stone Park. Parrots Feather (*myriophyllum aquaticum*) is a perennial plant that is distinctive for its feather-like appearance. It is native to Central and South America and was introduced to Australia for use in aquaria and aquatic gardens. Incorrect, irresponsible disposal of the plant has led to its release to the environment and it is now widespread throughout our waterways.

Like many pest species, Parrots Feather has social, environmental and economic impacts. This plant can form dense mats and interfere with recreational use of waterways, alter the aquatic food web and ecosystem dynamics, reduce yields in rice production and block waterways and channels.

Parrots Feather prefers still or slow flowing, warm, nutrient rich waters. Leaves are finely divided, feather-like, bright to blue-grey green and form in whorls of 4 to 6. Stems can grow up to 2 metres in length and can protrude 30 centimetres above the water surface.



Parrots Feather covering a wetland. Source: <http://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/>

Parrots Feather spreads by vegetative means. If a piece breaks off the parent plant it can float and take root in the sediments somewhere else. Removal and control of this plant requires specialist knowledge and tools.

If you see Parrots Feather in our waterways contact Alison on 6056 1938 or coordinator@friendsofwillowpark.org.au

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FRIENDS OF WILLOW PARK

MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: _____ EMAIL: _____

DATE: _____

MEMBERSHIP IS FREE
Donations always welcome

I wish to join *Friends of Willow Park*. I agree to be bound by the rules of the Association and to support the group's objectives (below).

Donation: _____

Payment: (circle) Cash/Cheque
Cheques payable to: Friends of Willow Park Inc.

Receipt Number: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

Send your completed form to:

Friends of Willow Park Inc.
c/- P.O. Box 1083, Wodonga, 3689
Email:
membership@friendsofwillowpark.org.au
Fax: 6056 2694

Participating in Friends of Willow Park

Friends of Willow Park is an active group and we encourage you to get involved. Please indicate how you would like to participate (you can tick as many of these as you want). I would like to help out with:

- Helping with the campaigns to save Willow Park from undue development
- Being part of the Committee of Management
- Helping with the newsletter
- Walks, talks, tours, socials
- Hands-on environment projects
- Water quality testing
- Information stalls and publications
- Interest Groups
- Fundraising

Our Objectives

- (a) To promote the protection and preservation of Willow Park as public open space parkland;
- (b) To promote the protection and preservation of the social, economic and environmental value of Willow Park including the flora, fauna and features (scenic, archaeological, geological, historic or scientific);
- (c) To educate and inform the community about the role and value of Willow Park; and
- (d) To foster community involvement in, and enjoyment of, Willow Park in accordance with the above objectives.

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Friends Of Belvoir Park/Sumsion Gardens

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NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: _____ EMAIL: _____

DATE: _____

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- Helping with the campaigns to save Belvoir Park from undue development
- Being part of the Committee of Management
- Helping with the newsletter
- Walks, talks, tours, socials
- Hands-on environment projects
- Water quality testing
- Information stalls and publications
- Interest Groups
- Fundraising

Send your completed form to:

Friends of Belvoir Park/Sumsion Gardens
PO Box 5233, Wodonga Plaza, VIC 3690

Email:
belvoirpark@friendsofwillowpark.org.au

Our Objectives

- (a) To promote the protection and preservation of Belvoir Park as public open space parkland;
- (b) To promote the protection and preservation of the social, economic and environmental values of Belvoir Park including the flora, fauna and features (scenic, archaeological, geological, historic or scientific);
- (c) To educate and inform the community about the role and values of Belvoir Park; and
- (d) To foster community involvement in, and enjoyment of, Belvoir Park in accordance with the above objectives.

Postal Address: PO Box 5233, Wodonga Plaza, 3690
Phone: Ron (02)60243907, Teresa-Ellen (02) 60560670