



## **The Friends of Debdale Park**

# **Annual Report 2019-20**



**The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service**

*Registered Charity Number 1154238*

Debdale Park, 1075 Hyde Road, Gorton,  
Manchester M18 7LJ

[friendsofdebdalepark.co.uk](http://friendsofdebdalepark.co.uk)



**LOTTERY FUNDED**

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*Looking across the lower reservoir towards Debdale Park*

Report compiled and produced by Paul Kirkham & Vicki Kennedy



# 1. Aims and Purposes

The Friends of Debdale Park work to provide a welcoming, healthy, accessible, safe and high quality park which meets a diverse range of needs and aspirations on a sustainable basis.



*The Heritage Garden*

The Friends Group consists of members of the public and representatives of organisations working in the park. These include Debdale Bowling and Social Club, Debdale Angling Society, Cycling for Health, Gorton Horticultural Society, The Nursery in the Park, Greenfingers and Hammer & Nails, Gorton Pagan Moot and Men's Shed-Debdale.

The Friends meet monthly in the park and meetings are open to the public. They are regularly attended by volunteers, project managers, park staff and management, local councillors and representatives of various organisations as appropriate.

The website [friendsofdebdalepark.co.uk](http://friendsofdebdalepark.co.uk) publishes information about all the activities of the Friends and is regularly updated.

## 2. Activities in the Park



1. **Cycling for Health**

Monday from 10:30am, meeting at the Barn Complex  
Bicycles provided, rides related to ability

2. **Health Walks**

Tuesday at 10:30am, meeting at the Barn Complex  
Group led around local paths for around an hour

3. **Great Run Local**

Sunday at 9am  
Short 2k & 5k runs

4. **Gorton Pagan Moot**

Regular meetings coinciding with Sabbats, in The Aviary Community Rooms  
Family friendly meetings relating to spiritual and Pagan themes

5. **Debdale Bowling & Social Club**

A variety of activities and social events throughout the year including Social  
Bowling on Tuesday afternoons from Easter to October

6. **Men's Shed - Debdale**

Monday from 10:30am - Cycling & Bicycle Maintenance  
Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 10am-3pm Gardening  
Friday 9am-2pm Woodwork and Craft Activities  
A place for men and women to socialise and engage in a range of activities

7. **Greenfingers and Hammer & Nails**

Wednesday and Thursday 10am - 2pm  
Gardening and woodworking for adults with additional needs

8. **Debdale Diggers**

Volunteer gardening project, looking after several areas of the park.

9. **Gorton Youth Forum**

Various events and activities throughout the year, giving young people a voice.

10. **FREE Children's Activities**

A range of different activities on offer throughout the school holidays, provided  
by Gorton Pagan Moot

### 3. Projects

#### Volunteer Gardening Project; The Debdale Diggers

During the year the Debdale Diggers have undertaken continuous upkeep on the flower beds. Particular attention has been paid to the rose beds and they have benefitted considerably from this attention. Beds have been allocated to individual volunteers for them to work on them when convenient.



*The Debdale Diggers at work*

Attempts to recruit further, much needed help in maintaining the garden areas is on-going and anyone is welcome to come and join in this healthy activity in a pleasant environment, with friendly support. No previous experience is needed!



The volunteer gardeners now use the restored park lodge as their meeting point. Though designated as a Visitor Centre and feature of the **Gorton Heritage Trail**, it is proving ideal for the project with space for changing and storing basic equipment, and giving easy access to the beds.

For more information email **[olwyn-109@outlook.com](mailto:olwyn-109@outlook.com)**



## Volunteer Days



*Volunteers from Brother International at work restoring the reservoir path on an away-day in May 2019*

A number of Volunteer days have been held in the park to improve the grounds.

In May, 30 volunteers from **Brother International** spent a day refurbishing the walk along the side of the reservoir. This included cutting back the overgrowth spreading on to the path, widening the path where it was constricted and spreading 20 tons of road chippings to improve the surface.

In June a group from **Allianz Insurance** spent a day tidying up the Community Garden area and in January 2020 groups from **Auto Traders** helped tidy the paths and beds.



*Volunteers from Allianz Insurance in June 2019, tidying the Community Garden*

There have been periodic visits of a student group from **Melland High School**, who have concentrated on tidying the **Butterfly Garden** on the **Heritage Trail**, and helping on the **Greenfingers Allotment Gardens**.



*Volunteers from Melland High School at work tidying the Butterfly Gardens*

## Men's Shed –Debdale

The Men's Shed is now fully operational with two cabins in place to provide a work base. These have been equipped with funds provided by **One Manchester** and **Manchester City Council's Neighbourhood Investment Fund (NIF)**. More recently **Arcon and Bolton At Home Housing** Trust have provided help to repair the flooring and ceiling in one of the cabins. This much needed second cabin will provide a space for members to take part in craft activities and have a social space, which is an integral part of the Men's Shed Movement.



*The Grand Opening of the Shed was attended by our MP Afzal Khan and all our local councillors*



*Members working on woodwork projects in the first cabin*

There is a management group overseeing the project, and the Shed is open five days a week with weekend days being added soon. Once the second cabin is open, there are plans to open a 'Repair Café' which will enable local people to bring along broken items and either get some help with fixing it themselves or have a volunteer fix it for them. This lines up with the Friends ethos of being environmentally friendly.

For more information email **[mens.shed.debdale@gmail.com](mailto:mens.shed.debdale@gmail.com)**



*The Management Committee*



## **FREE Children's School Holiday Activities**

There have been a number of free children's activities throughout the year in the Aviary. These have included Bird Box Making, Hama Bead Magnets, Suncatchers, Pom Pom Animals and the annual Easter Egg Hunt. These events are very well attended and enjoyed by the families taking part. There was also a Teddy Bear's Picnic, which was relatively well attended, despite awful weather. They are funded by **Manchester City Council** and provided by **Gorton Pagan Moot**.



*The Teddy Bear's Picnic in August 2019, which featured fun fair rides, a children's entertainer and a free photo booth*



*Making and decorating bird boxes*



*Ta-da! Poppie is proud of her creation!*



## **Heroes Wood**

Six new lecterns have been donated by **Wright Robinson College** which contain information about Gorton and the Great War. The information was researched by the school history group. A website to compliment the project is also being constructed. A final lectern was installed in February 2019 with a board to acknowledge all those who have supported the project.

Volunteers from **Walking With The Wounded** are now helping with the upkeep of the project and it is host to an annual service at Remembrancetide, which coincides with the longstanding service at **Gorton Cemetery**.



*Trees being planted at Heroes Wood*



*The annual Remembrance Service at Heroes Wood*

## Green Fingers Debdale

This project provides a gardening experience for adults with additional needs.



*Some of the members of the project*

The project attracts between twenty and thirty regular attendees on Wednesdays and Thursdays. It is run as part of **Manchester City Councils Adult Social Service Provision**. The project has now got charitable status in it's own right and has recently received an **RHS award** for it's work

During the year they have restored a section of the site with a new polytunnel and the reflagging of the surrounding area. Work has also been on-going restoring the Community Garden and the bio-rhythmic garden. With the closure of the **Eco-Centre**, Green Fingers have taken responsibility for the maintenance of the growing area.



*The Green Fingers Debdale Allotment*



## **Debdale Bowling and Social Club**

During the year there have been major changes in the club organisation, prompted partly by the threat of cuts to Council funding for the cutting of the greens and the need for the club to take more responsibility in the running of its affairs.

As a result, a new committee of men and women players has been formed, with a new constitution and a bank account with the intention of becoming a charitable trust. Applications for funding have already been made and there are plans to expand the functions of the club to make it more open to new members, and provide extended social facilities.



**Social Activity Days** are now taking place each Tuesday and Thursday from 11am –2pm. These have proved a great success with a whole range of activities available for older people, including bowling. Anyone is welcome to come, without any previous connection to the club.



## **Cycling for Health**

The cycling club meets every Monday near the Barn Complex at 10:30am for a local ride, and attracts a regular response of up to 20 riders. All rides are related to capability and are off-road. The club also boasts a bicycle repair and maintenance service and is affiliated with the **Men's Shed**.



## **Wheels for All**

This project to provide a cycling experience for people with disabilities, has been suspended for several years, pending the creation of a proper cycle track in the park. Section **106 funding (from the building of new houses in Ryder Brow)** has finally been approved for the construction of a stretch of pathway in the park, which will create a cycle circuit around the main playing field.

A new group has been set up to oversee the development of this project, with training planned for its members. Inquiries are being made into the purchase of two cabins for the storage of the specially adapted bikes that are currently in storage in the Barn. The cabins will be placed next to the Aviary with easy access to the new circuit.



## **Health Walks**

The Debdale walking group meets every Tuesday morning and attracts as many as 20-30 people, who enjoy a walk on the many paths through the park and surrounding areas.



## **Great Run Local**

Every Sunday there is a 2k or 5k run in the park, starting from the main park gate at 9am.



## **Gorton Visual Arts**

The art group has continued to run a variety of projects in the community and is based in the **Aviary Community Rooms**.

One project was called '***I'll put the kettle on***' in which the group hand-painted 32 tea pots and 43 mugs with each piece visually telling the story of 44 local people's lives. A special ***Tea Time*** event was staged in **Gorton Library** on 14th October, providing a celebration with tea and cakes.

## The Nursery in the Park

The nursery has proved very popular in the community, and though run as an independent business, it is an important feature of the park.

The nursery now provides over 100 places and has a baby area. It currently has spaces for new children.



## Debdale Angling Society

The angling society has over 100 members and has installed 20 fishing pegs around **Gorton Upper Reservoir**, which it stocks with carp. It also maintains the access routes and reservoir path and provides regular patrols of the area for security.

This year it has installed two new fishing pegs and opened up a new pathway to make access easier to the water's edge from **Fairfield**.





## **Gorton Pagan Moot**

Gorton Pagan Moot has been established for well over two years now, and is one of the most well attended moots in the country.

A moot is a gathering of like-minded people, sharing stories, knowledge and information. Gorton Pagan Moot has a strong focus on community events and frequently has guest speakers. Throughout the year it has held a number of activities and events for children and families, including the annual Easter Egg Hunt and a Teddy Bear's Picnic.

In 2020 they are planning to host the first ever Gorton Pagan Pride.

For more information, email **[gorton.pagan.moot@gmail.com](mailto:gorton.pagan.moot@gmail.com)**



*Imbolc Altar*



*TV historian, **Mark Olly** joined in with the Imbolc Moot*

## **Gorton Youth Forum**

Based in the **Aviary Community Rooms**, Gorton Youth Forum gives young people a voice. The Youth Forum is run by Alex Kennedy, with support and backing from all our local councillors and our **MP Afzal Khan**.

They were recently awarded funding from **One Manchester** so that they can organise activities and events for local young people.

Once the new **Youth Zone** opens on Hyde Rd, they will be split between there and the park, but it will always have **Debdale Park** at it's heart.

Contact **[gorton.youth.forum@gmail.co.uk](mailto:gorton.youth.forum@gmail.co.uk)** for more information



## **Gorton House**

Despite a variety of applications in search of the £2-3M needed to restore Gorton House, no further progress has been made, despite considerable community interest.

## **Manchester Bees**

Two model bees were purchased, which have been painted by the children of **Abbey Hey Primary Academy**. One will be mounted on a plinth in the park, the other has been delivered to **Gorton Market**.



The Friends contributed £1000 towards the cost of the bees which will be a striking feature in the local community.

## **Gorton Parade, Carnival & Car Show**

Every year the Gorton Events Committee, in collaboration with the Friends of Debdale Park join together to organise this event. The parade takes place through the streets of Gorton, ending up in the park, where the Carnival and Car Show take place.

In 2019, there were approximately 200 participants in the parade, and over 4000 people enjoyed a sunny July day in the park, where a wide range of activities took place, including a fun fair, bowling competition, classic car show, with music from jazz and brass bands.





## **Gorton Pagan Pride**

This year Gorton Pagan Moot will host the first ever Gorton Pagan Pride event.

The event came into being after a local faith leader started giving out cards offering 'witch burnings'. Pagans have forever suffered from persecution and misunderstanding and so it was felt it was time to address the issue and bring together the whole community. The event aims to dispel some of the common myths and preconceptions and to help the wider community understand that there is nothing to fear.

It will be a family friendly event, with people of all faiths and none made welcome.

There will be stalls, workshops and talks, entertainment, food and lots of fun.

The event has attracted the support of our local MP Afzal Khan and generated interest from Pagans all over the country. It promises to be a fantastic day out.



## 4. Awards

**Heroes Wood** was awarded The RHS & Britain in Bloom's It's Your Neighbourhood Award - Level 5 - Outstanding.

**Green Fingers Debdale** was awarded The RHS & Britain in Bloom's It's Your Neighbourhood Award - Level 4 - Thriving.

**Debdale Bowling and Social Club** was awarded The Age Friendly Award - Bringing Neighbours Together

**Gorton** as a whole was awarded an Age Friendly Neighbourhood Award with Merit, recognising all the projects and groups in the area that deliver activities for older people. Lots of these projects are based in the park.



## 5. Our Partnership with Manchester City Council

*The Friends work closely in partnership with the park staff and local councillors to improve the park facilities. During the year we were sorry to lose the park manager, **Debra Conroy**, who was moved to another position with **Manchester City Council**. The main improvements to the park over the year included a new perimeter fence to the tennis courts, repairs to path surfaces, new vehicle signage and a new outdoor table tennis table for public use.*



MANCHESTER  
CITY COUNCIL



## 6. Governance and Management

The Friends of Debdale meet monthly to oversee and approve all activity. The meetings are open to the general public and advertised in the park. All decisions are taken after discussion by means of a general vote under the direction of the Chair.

At the committee meetings The Friends appoint a number of designated trustees of the CIO. Currently the trustees are:

1. Allan Grafton, MBE JP - Chair
2. Peter Rees - Vice Chair
3. Chris Kennedy - Treasurer
4. Paul Kirkham - Secretary
5. Vicki Kennedy - Gorton Pagan Moot/Men's Shed - Debdale
6. Olwyn Taylor - Debdale Bowling & Social Club/Debdale Diggers
7. Kim Stevenson - The Nursery in the Park
8. Andrew Parsons - Green Fingers Debdale



### **President**

Afzal Khan, MP

### **Chair**

Mr Allan Grafton, MBE, JP

**Vice Chair** Peter Rees    **Secretary** Paul Kirkham

**Treasurer** Chris Kennedy

### **Committee**

Peter Rees (Cycling for Health/Men's Shed - Debdale)

Andrew Parsons (Green Fingers Debdale/Men's Shed - Debdale)

Phil Parkin (Learning Disability Partnership)

Vicki Kennedy (Gorton Pagan Moot/ Men's Shed - Debdale)

Olwyn Taylor (Debdale Bowling & Social Club/Debdale Diggers)

Irene Hargreaves (Debdale Bowling & Social Club)

Ian McKay (Gorton Visual Arts)

Doreen Grafton (Wheels for All)

Mark Cosnett (Debdale Angling Society)

Kim Stevenson (The Nursery in the Park)

Alex Kennedy (Gorton Youth Forum)

### **Advisors**

William Eastwood (Park & Neighbourhood Manager MCC)

Andrew McCleary (Neighbourhood Engagement and Delivery Officer)



## **7. Financial Review**

The Friends have sought to raise funds through donations and by application for grants. Fundraising is publicised through leaflets which includes a Legacies Policy.

### **Donations**

Donations have been made by members of the public including:

- CAF Voucher £50
- Gorton Visual Arts £1265

### **Grants**

The main source of funds for the Friends is through the application for grants:

- Brother International £3,000
- Manchester City Council £1600
- MCC NIF Grant £455
- One Manchester £4000
- ARCON £500





## Friends of Debdale Park Accounts 2019 - 2020

Bank:

Registered Charity: 1154238

	Date	Item	Amount	Balance
<b>Brought forward:</b>				
	08/04/2019			£6,096.37
<b>Income:</b>				<b>Running total</b>
	23/04/2019	GVA Room Donation	£250.00	£250.00
	30/04/2019	Brother Active Living donation	£3,000.00	£3,250.00
	17/06/2019	GVA Room Donation	£250.00	£3,500.00
	19/06/2019	MCC Payment for Holiday activities	£450.00	£3,950.00
	12/07/2019	GVA Room Donation	£250.00	£4,200.00
	30/07/2019	CAF Voucher	£50.00	£4,250.00
	19/08/2019	MCC NIF for Teddy Bear's Picnic	£455.00	£4,705.00
	02/09/2019	MCC Payment for Holiday activities	£450.00	£5,155.00
	04/09/2019	GVA Room Donation	£250.00	£5,405.00
	30/10/2019	MCC Payment to Men's Shed (Infrastructure)	£700.00	£6,105.00
	04/11/2019	GVA Room Donation	£265.00	£6,370.00
	23/01/2020	MCC - Reimbursement for Insurance	£99.31	£6,469.31
	23/12/2020	One Manchester Community Soup - Men's Shed	£4,000.00	£10,469.31
	01/03/2020	GVA Room Donation	£30.00	£10,499.31
	09/04/2020	Bank account switch incentive	£1,250.00	£11,749.31
	20/04/2020	One Manchester Soup money for GYC	£1,000.00	£12,749.31
		<b>Total Income:</b>		<b>£12,749.31</b>
<b>Expenditure:</b>				
	09/04/2019	(27) Heroes Wood Lectern	£540.00	£540.00
	25/04/2019	(29) Payment to GPM for Holiday Activities	£720.00	£1,260.00
	30/04/2019	(30) Key cutting for Aviary	£7.50	£1,267.50
	14/05/2019	(32) Petty cash for Men's Shed	£500.00	£1,767.50
	22/05/2019	(34) Reimbursement to P Kirkham	£248.00	£2,015.50
	29/05/2019	(35) Donation to Outdoor Centre	£200.00	£2,215.50
	30/05/2019	(33) Contractor & Digger	£575.00	£2,790.50
	04/06/2019	(31) Tools from GHS	£375.00	£3,165.50
	12/06/2019	(36) Mens Shed Money to C Kennedy	£2,000.00	£5,165.50
	20/06/2019	(38) Mens Shed Infrastructure work	£700.00	£5,865.50
	21/06/2019	(37) Mower repair	£56.40	£5,921.90
	09/07/2019	(41) C Kennedy - Money for Laptop	£500.00	£6,421.90
	12/07/2019	(40) GPM - Money for Holiday activities	£450.00	£6,871.90
	13/08/2019	(42) C Kennedy - NIF Money for Teddy Bear's Picnic	£455.00	£7,326.90
	10/09/2019	(43) C Kennedy - Men's Shed Money	£500.00	£7,826.90
	12/09/2019	(44) P Kirkham - Tree Station reimbursement	£25.20	£7,852.10
	28/11/2019	(46) Public Liability Insurance	£99.31	£7,951.41
	20/12/2019	(45) GPM - Money for Holiday activities	£450.00	£8,401.41
	28/01/2020	(47) C Kennedy - Men's Shed money	£1,000.00	£9,401.41
	01/03/2020	(48) C Kennedy - Men's Shed Money	£500.00	£9,901.41
		<b>Total Expenditure:</b>		<b>£9,901.41</b>
			<b>Total:</b>	<b>£8,944.27</b>