



## Community Empowerment in Green Spaces - Midwinter News, Dec 2021

*Please forward and share widely!*

We are pleased to be able to report that the movement of over 7,000 local greenspace Friends Groups throughout the UK continues to grow and become ever more vital for the current and future maintenance, management and protection of our vital public green spaces. This is in the face of having to deal with the challenges of continuing greenspace budget cuts and the current devastating pandemic. As the democratic voice of this inspirational grassroots movement of tens of thousands of volunteers, the NFPGS is committed to ensuring that those who love and champion their local greenspace get the recognition they so richly deserve\*. To that end we have some very important news to be shared! [See the full details and links below].

This week we are..

- publishing our new and pathbreaking '**Better Friends' NFPGS report** - a detailed nuts-and-bolts analysis of the activities, character, needs and influence of Friends: <https://natfedparks.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/NFPGS-PCUK-Report.pdf>
- publishing a new '**Benefits of Friends Groups' Infographic** showcasing the immense value Friends Groups bring to green spaces and local communities: <https://natfedparks.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/NFPGS-PCUK-Benefits-of-Friends-Groups-Infographic-2.pdf>
- upgrading our **parkscommunity.org.uk online presence** and support for grassroots activists
- circulating the new '**State of UK Public Parks' report** (by the Association for Public service Excellence) on the effects, implications and challenges due to the deepening financial and staffing crisis being imposed by years of Government cuts to Local Authority budgets for local public services: <https://www.apse.org.uk/apse/index.cfm/research/current-research-programme/state-of-uk-public-parks-2021/#>

We send our thanks and admiration to all those who care passionately about greenspace, and are doing their best to ensure that such crucial facilities for all communities are properly championed and looked after. We look forward to continuing to work together with you all throughout 2022.

Best wishes for the coming year

Dave Morris

Chair, National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces

*\* The NFPGS is unfunded and entirely reliant on volunteers and donations. If you wish to support our work, please give generously here: <https://www.justgiving.com/nfpgs>*

### PLEASE CHECK OUT THESE VERY IMPORTANT REPORTS AND RESOURCES

#### **Better Friends - The State of the Movement of Greenspace Friends Groups throughout the UK**

<https://natfedparks.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/NFPGS-PCUK-Report.pdf>

This pathbreaking and important report, produced by the Parks Community UK (PCUK) team of the NFPGS, analyses in depth what Friends Groups do, how they do it (through the efforts of approx 60,000 activists), their memberships (around 840,000 people), their groups' character, needs, partnerships and successes. It is based on the statistics

emanating from the parkscommunity.org.uk Better Friends strength checker - a state-of-the-art audit tool freely available to all local greenspace community groups. The report turns a spotlight on the ever-evolving influence of an inspirational grassroots movement now central to the future of the UK's public green spaces.

### **Benefits of Friends Groups for Parks and Green Spaces - a poster/infographic**

<https://natfedparks.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/NFPGS-PCUK-Benefits-of-Friends-Groups-Infographic-2.pdf> [Mobile friendly version]

<https://natfedparks.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/NFPGS-PCUK-Benefits-of-Friends-Groups-A4-Infographic.pdf> [A4, printable version]

The benefits of having an active Friends Group for each of the UK's 27,000 green spaces are profound and unique. This new infographic explains the value of such groups for the greenspace itself, for its managers, for the volunteers involved, and for the wider local community. Feel free to use, circulate or print out!

### **The parkscommunity.org.uk website/platform is re-launched**

<https://parkscommunity.org.uk>

Please check out the revamped Parks Community UK website. Its a free online knowledge hub for all Friends of parks and green space community groups created by and for the movement, as coordinated by the NFPGS. Its aim is to 'help UK Friends Groups thrive'. These groups play a vital role to ensure our parks and green spaces become and remain well-run and welcoming. The website's role is to celebrate, support and help empower these community volunteers to be effective and resilient. Wondering where to start? Take a look at the most popular pages:

- Case Studies: <https://parkscommunity.org.uk/case-studies/>

- Advice Guides: <https://parkscommunity.org.uk/how-to-guides/>

### **State of UK Public Parks 2021**

<https://www.apse.org.uk/apse/index.cfm/research/current-research-programme/state-of-uk-public-parks-2021/#> A

new report was published last week by the Association for Public Service Excellence, based on their survey of Local Authorities throughout the UK. It finds that our local parks have lost £690 million in funding over the past decade - and it calls for serious additional Government investment. It also notes the continued growth and importance of the Friends Groups movement and volunteers, references our own new 'Better Friends' report, and includes a quote from the Chair of the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces: "*The Friends Groups movement, with now over 7,000 local groups throughout the UK, continues to grow, helping to promote and bring to life, maintain, protect and fundraise for our green spaces. However, these passionate and dedicated volunteers face many challenges of their own (not least during the pandemic) and must be actively supported rather than taken for granted. The added value they bring needs to be backed up by well-staffed and well-resourced parks teams. The Government needs to match the public's love for and commitment to their local green spaces by ensuring that adequate funding is provided to maintain and sustain such essential public infrastructure both for current and for future generations.*"

### **National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces**

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[www.parkscommunity.org.uk](http://www.parkscommunity.org.uk) @ParksCommUK