

The Friends of Mount Edgcumbe Country Park
Report to the Joint Committee, 22 November 2019

Membership

Membership is open to all who wish to support and assist the Park in preserving, maintaining and enhancing the amenities available for the benefit of all users.

The number of members currently remains around 625. While the total constitutes a minor percentage of those visiting the Park the input from the members in financial and practical terms is significant.

Financial Support

The Charity Commission has provided new guidance for charities with a connection to a non-charity and The Friends are in the process of revising its General Policy to take this guidance into account in our association with the Park Management. The guidance also provides greater clarity on where The Friends are 'permitted' to provide financial support and is likely to mean that while we may be sympathetic to requests for funding of certain items they will fall into the category of those that have to remain the ultimate responsibility of the Joint Committee.

Quarterly meetings with the Park Management will result in a mutual prioritisation of projects. We are in the process of investigating a significant improvement to the toilet provision at the Orangery and the creation of a shelter structure for use by school groups in inclement weather.

While we understand the drive towards the Park being self-funding we remain concerned on the apparent shortfall between the Park budget and the requirement to maintain the buildings and plant in safe and useable conditions. The Friends again request that a comprehensive audit of the condition of the Park, its buildings, contents, vehicles and plant be undertaken to provide a realistic guide as to how fast the aim of reducing the support budget to zero could be achieved.

Since the last meeting of this committee the Friends purchased a replacement 'Bat Cam' system to enable the bats in the Stable Block to be viewed without disturbance

Practical Support

People join The Friends because they care about the Park and our aim is to persuade more of the members to join the ranks of those who volunteer to help in a practical way. The majority of volunteers are members of The Friends and they drive the buggies, act as house stewards, assist the gardeners and rangers, make the costumes for the 'dressing up' room in the House, and provide traffic management advice. The Friends provide volunteers for the Park and third party organised events including The Proms and Wondernights.

Social and Other Events

The Friends aim to provide an annual programme of social events catering for a wide range of tastes and ages. Since July 2019 we have, jointly with Cornwall Hospice Care, organised the Annual Summer Fayre/Classic Car Show in August and also organised a children's Halloween Trail in October. The Fayre was the most successful ever and raised over £37,000. Since 1995 the event has raised over £320,000

shared between the two charities. Last year's difficulties in accessing the event were overcome by the employment of an alternative traffic management contractor. Similarly the Halloween event attracted a record number of children.

Friends Lodge

The Friends vacated the Orangery Lodge in May 2018 to facilitate its conversion to a holiday let. A replacement wooden lodge behind the Gardener's Lodge was opened in May 2019, acting as an information point for visitors to the Park and to raise funds through the sale of pre-owned books. Since then it has raised over £3,000 and the total annually is expected to be 2 to 3 times higher than achieved in the original location.

Website

Our website has been refreshed to appeal to the younger generation, to stimulate a greater attendance to our events and an increase in the funds available to support the Park.