

The Friends of Mount Edgcumbe Country Park

Report to the Joint Committee, 19 July 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 600. 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

Since the last meeting of this committee the Friends have facilitated the purchase of Lady Emma's Cottage, taking the level of financial support to the Park to over £830,000 since 1985. A system of quarterly meetings with the Park Management has been established to enable a more formal dialogue to take place on priorities and criteria for the expenditure of the charity's funds. These meetings will result in the establishment of a combined list of projects proposed by The Friends and the Park Management which can be assessed and prioritised. The list should contain projects that comply with the Constitution of the charity and exclude those which fall within the responsibility of the Joint Committee. In respect of the latter The Friends wish to continue to alert the Joint Committee over their concerns on the apparent shortfall between the Park budget and the requirement to maintain the buildings and plant in safe and useable conditions. Indeed, The Friends would like to see the results of a comprehensive audit of the condition of the Park, its buildings, contents, vehicles and plant to be used to provide a realistic guide as to how fast the aim of reducing the support budget to zero could be achieved.

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 providing traffic management advice. The Friends provided volunteers for the Christmas Fayre and Green Man events. The Friends also undertook a car park study which resulted in the resurfacing and increase in spaces at the Cremyll car park.

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 November 2018 we have held the Annual Easter Egg Hunt, which brought 870 children plus their families into the Park on the day and a further 145 children took part during the following fortnight. The Friends also decorated a Christmas tree in Millbrook Church, arranged a tour of the Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth and attended a family history day in Liskeard. Members of the Joint Committee are invited to attend The Annual Summer Fayre/Classic Car Show in August, organised jointly with Cornwall Hospice Care.

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 finally received planning permission in January and 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. It is proving to be very popular.