



## Wrenthorpe Environmental Society Newsletter Spring 2008

Dear Members

Here is your annual WRENS newsletter which, amongst other things keeps you up to date with what your committee has been doing on your behalf in the last year. I am sure you would like to thank that hard working band for their efforts to make Wrenthorpe a better place for us all to live.

Now here are details of your AGM. Do try to come along for what is always an enjoyable evening.

*The annual general meeting of Wrenthorpe Environmental Society will be held on Wednesday 2 of April at 7.30 p in Wrenthorpe Village Hall. It will be followed by a talk on the plans for setting up a new nature reserve at Wrenthorpe and Alverthorpe Meadows. There will be time for discussion and refreshments will be served, Non members welcome to the talk at £2 which is the cost of joining WRENS.*

Now what have your hard working committee been doing during the year? Some of their activities are weekly, monthly or seasonal while others are ongoing throughout the year.

- A member has monitored planning applications each week in the Wakefeld Express and reported back to the committee if action has been required. Particular attention has been paid to the Snowhill and Silcoates School plans.
- Our Wrencare scheme continues to provide a twice weekly litter pick in the centre of the village.
- The committee has met every month.
- Bulbs have been planted in the autumn and monitored in spring. This year more crocuses were planted on Wrenthorpe Road opposite the post office while daffodils were planted around the

health centre and in the triangular gardens opposite the recreation ground.

- The possibility of placing recycling bins locally has been discussed although new recycling arrangements by the council have reduced the need for more bins.
- Litter picks have been undertaken in co-operation with the Methodist Church.
- We have had stalls at the Garden Show and Plant Swap in Normanton and at functions arranged by the Aged Welfare and the local Hospice Support Group.
- We have pledged financial support for developing the George Newton Centre for use by young people although this scheme seems to have come to nothing through lack of support from Wakefield District Housing.
- We have also pledged support for the newly formed Valley Crescent Community Group which is trying to save the Valley Crescent Community Centre for community use.
- We have purchased a limited number of sweatshirts and polo shirts bearing the Wrens logo-ask a committee member if you want one.
- We continue to monitor for signs of activity on the former fat factory on Lindale Lane.
- A grant from WMDC was used to install picnic tables, benches and seats in the vicinity of the football pitch, the pavilion, and the former putting green.
- And finally, our biggest achievement this year has been to develop a plan for improving the park with pathways, signage, seats, and bridges. With help from the council we have been successful in being awarded a grant of £25000 from the Waste Recycling Group to cover much of the cost and are currently seeking matching funding. This is the biggest scheme ever undertaken by WRENS and much credit is due to the small working group which has taken on the project.
- So a very busy year for the committee and very good value for the very modest membership fee of £2. I wonder if you knew you were getting so much for your money?!

In June 2007 flooding on a massive scale was widely reported by the media. Although it went unnoticed, **Earthwatcher** can report that eight houses in Wrenthorpe also experienced serious flooding. The streams that converge in the centre of the village carry water off the motorway and the J41 industrial estate. Not only that, they pick up debris, compost bins, fence panels, discarded timber and the like, from stream side gardens. All this water and rubbish cannot get under the bridge arches-bingo-flooding! Flood damage is as much a result of human neglect and error as of rainfall.

### **WRENTHORPE PARK AND ALVERTHORPE MEADOWS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

During the first half of 2007 WRENS gathered information in order to apply for a grant for improvement work in the park and meadows. As a result, a grant of £25,000 was obtained from Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd in December, but a further £25,000 is still required if the full project is to be started. Work continues to raise this match funding

So what is the project all about?

Several areas have been identified as being in need of improvement. For example when you go into the park how do you know where you are or what you might see? Signs telling you that you have entered Wrenthorpe Park and Alverthorpe Meadows are to be erected at the Wrenthorpe Road and Silcoates Street entrances, along with Interpretation Boards giving examples of what can be seen.

Is that all?

No. Some recent resurfacing of paths and cycleways has been done, but more is needed along with the replacement of the narrow cycle bridge near the lagoon, upgrading of the rotting sleeper bridges in the meadows, and the construction of appropriate steps to replace paths down muddy slopes.

What about activities in the meadows?

Well, a pond-dipping platform is to be built into the lagoon so that anyone with a net and a jam jar can have a go..

We are also looking at providing a screened off bird watching area overlooking the lagoon, with feeding stations to help attract the local birdlife.

Completion of the project should make the area a more enjoyable place for all.

Is bio diesel the answer to oil shortages? **Earthwatcher** thinks not, unless its made from used chipshop oil. Already food prices are rising as a result of animal feed crops being diverted to bio diesel production. The felling of tropical forests to make way for palm oil and soya bean production will only hasten climate change. We may have to face the fact that we cannot go on being able to drive thousands of miles a year or fly around the world at will.

### **SPRINGTIME IN WRENTHORPE**

In spring daffodils and crocuses adorn many of Wrenthorpe's grassy corners and verges. And most of the bulbs have been planted by WRENS members. Our first bulb planting scheme was on Lindale Hill almost 20years ago when native daffodils like the ones seen in Farndale at this time of year were planted. It was not an easy task as the soil on the hill is only a shallow layer over the sandstone which is the reason for the hill being there in the first place. Have any survived? Have they begun to spread and form a natural colony? Let WRENS know if you have seen any. Some wild daffodils, along with snowdrops and bluebells were also planted in the large wood in the park which by the way was also planted by WRENS.

Thousands of the cultivated varieties of daffodils have been planted around the village and Jerry Clay Lane in particular looks a picture at this time of the year. At the bottom end of the lane homeowners with a grass verge have planted bulbs while beyond the school the hedgerows

are lined with them as far as Brandy Carr. Most of these have been planted single handedly by bulb man Ian Carthew. Our most recent planting has been of crocuses on the banks opposite Conroyds Fish and Chips Shop. Perhaps one day we will have enough bulbs for us to hold a daffodil festival!

We shall plant more bulbs this autumn so if you would like to help or can suggest places to plant them do contact the committee.

On one of his infrequent trips into the city centre, **Earthwatcher** noticed that massive building works have started on Marsh Way, he understands that this development to be known as Trinity Walk is meant to transform the city centre. The scheme will include a Debenhams, an art library, and a relocated Sainsbury's along with 72 residential units. The development will be good for Wrenthorpe residents being on 'our side' of the city. Lets hope it does n't become a new concentration of night clubs and take-aways.

### **A LOCAL NATURE RESERVE FOR WRENTHORPE?**

At our Annual General Meeting in the village hall on 2nd April Andrew McGuinness, Countryside Ranger/ Outreach Officer and Paul Andrews, Ecologist/Management Planner, will talk us through Wakefield Council's plans to create six new Local Nature Reserves around the district to compliment the nine existing ones, which include such well known locations as Newmillerdam Country Park, Haw Park Wood and Stanley Marsh Nature Reserve. And-great news, one of these six new reserves will be Wrenthorpe and Alverthorpe Meadows.

You will have read elsewhere about WRENS plans for the Park and Meadows, providing we can obtain all the funding necessary, and this news regarding a proposed Local Nature Reserve in the Meadows was received, with great delight, at a very opportune moment. We look forward with great anticipation to hearing more about it from Andrew and Paul at the AGM. Do show your support by coming along to the meeting.

It occurs to **Earthwatcher** that if your leylandii hedge is too tall, plunging your neighbour into permanent darkness and sucking thgoodness out oof the soil for yards around you could lop off all the branches and shoots and cut across the the top to the desired 2 metre height. Behold a ready made row of firm fence posts to last for years. Take off any new shoots that appear and they will soon give up. Far easier than trying to dig out the roots! And your neighbours will breath a sigh of relief too!

Did the earth move for you? Unfortunately **Earthwatcher** slept through the earthquake but then 5.3 on the Richter Scale is a very modest quake. 6.3 would have been something different because for every point on the scale there is a tenfold increase in severity. This explains why we do not feel the hundreds of events tha effect the British Isles every year because they are very weak. For instance , one at 3 on the scale is a hundred times less severe than the one we experienced. Earthquakes occur as a result of stresses in the earth's crust set up by plates in the Earth's crust grinding together. Eventually something gives but luckily not too often in our country.

We do hope you are happy with all that WRENS have been doing this year. The committee do feel that Wrenthorpe is a better place to live as a result of our efforts. But we need more of our members to get involved.

So why not contact us with ideas and suggestiions and better still offers of help. You could email us on [Contact.wrens@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:Contact.wrens@blueyonder.co.uk) or write to WRENS secretary at Croeso, 233 Bradford Rd Wakefield WF1 2AT. The committeee meets every third Thursday in the Valley Crescent Community Centnre at 7.30pm so why not pop in to see us?