

# FRIENDS OF KETT'S HEIGHTS

## Annual Review 2016

### Highlights of the year

- One of Norwich's finest views restored for the public to enjoy
- 1,300 people welcomed to Kett's Heights on tours and the Common Lot theatre production
- Regular clearing of litter and sweeping of paths to keep the site attractive and welcoming
- Regular practical work to improve the diversity of the vegetation and renovate the fruit trees

### January to March

Following the official setting up of the Group at a meeting in November 2015, the Executive Committee spent time organising matters such as a bank account, website and insurance. Once the latter was in place, practical work could start. We were aided (and again later in the year) by a visit from Mousehold Heath warden Will Stewart with his chainsaw: this enabled the view from the viewpoint to be restored. We were aided in other clearance work by several visits from Community Payback teams, and staged several bonfires to deal with much of what had been cleared. We also cleared the pond.

Carol Jones from Norwich City Council, who had been instrumental in supporting the formation of a Friends group, encouraged us to apply for a City Council community grant, a bid that resulted in £500 worth of funding. The City Council's Cabinet also agreed to award £10,000 of Community Infrastructure Levy funds for an infrastructure feasibility study. However, without any consultation with us, a condition was attached that any future bid for Lottery funding would have to be led by the Friends: this caused the study making little progress later in the year, and the issue remained unresolved at the year end.

During the quarter we welcomed the City Council's Leader, Councillor Alan Waters, to Kett's Heights: in common with many other visitors during the year he said it was the first time he had been there for many years. Although we have not undertaken any formal monitoring of the number of visitors anecdotal evidence suggests that, specific events aside, use of Kett's Heights by the public has increased. We have also appreciated the support from local City Councillors Lesley Grahame and Ben Price.



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## April to June

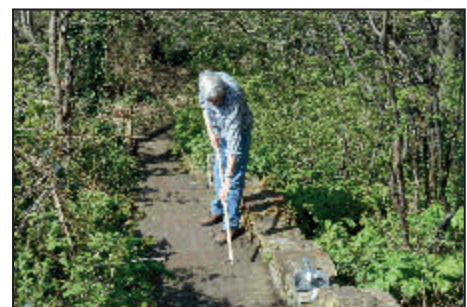
Our Publicity and Events sub-committee held its first event in early April, part of the BBC's Get Creative day and on the following day the first of our regular public tours on the first Sunday of each month. Further work included a walk led by Brian Ayers from the Cathedral to Kett's Heights on the monastic heritage, a plant sale to raise funds, a meeting with Stacia Briggs of the Eastern Daily Press, which led to excellent publicity, and discussions with the Common Lot theatre company, which led to their reviving their play on Kett's Rebellion.

Less successful was an attempt to hold a Friends' picnic on what proved to be one of the wetter Sundays of the summer. In April high winds brought a tree down across a path, and this was quickly cleared by the City Council. Practical work undertaken by the Friends included preparation and painting of the railings at the viewpoint, commissioning and erection of a sign at the entrance, paid for by the City Council, and minor repairs to the walls. We also started a regular programme of checking for and removing litter, and of sweeping the paths. This has made a real difference to the look of the site.

At the end of March we had said farewell to Carol Jones, whose post had disappeared in a reorganisation: we welcomed Sam Moon as the new Community Enabling Officer to East Norwich and gave him a tour of the site. In connection with the City Council's infrastructure feasibility study we had appointed a Vision Sub-Committee, and its ideas were discussed with the City Council in late June. As noted above, the Council's insistence that the Friends would have to lead any future funding bids proved a stumbling block, as we considered that we did not have the resources to undertake the management of any project (or the reserves to cover any spending over budget).

## July to September

The Common Lot's performance of their play took place in July, with around 600 people attending two performances, the latter of which was followed by what we believe was the first lighting of the beacon since its inauguration in 1988. Practical work was undertaken to prepare the space under the walnut tree for their set, and to make the walls alongside the paths suitable for people to sit on. When we cleared the slope below the viewpoint in January we had discovered, along with many ancient cans and bottles, the outer cover of what had been a panorama display at the viewpoint. We restored this, repainted the frame and commissioned one of our members, Norman



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Lister, to prepare a new panorama. This was duly installed in time for a busy programme of events on Heritage Open Days (HODS) in early September, where we led several walks, with St Matthew's Church acting as the base for people to assemble, and be refreshed. The monthly tours also continued. Other practical work included the acquisition and installation of a Friends' notice board on the wall outside the entrance.



## October to December

October saw our final public tour, attended by around 60 people, and, with the HODS events, making a total of around 700 people who had come on our tours. Further practical work was agreed with Paul Holley, the City Council's Natural Areas Officer, who has been very supportive: we were sorry to say farewell to him when he retired at the end of the year. Work undertaken included the erection of six birdboxes kindly donated by members, painting of the railings along the lower path, clearance of the vegetation on the chapel wall, a substantial programme of leaf sweeping and a resumption of tree felling to improve the view, remove trees growing out of, or threatening walls, and complete the reduction in height of the trees in the orchard area, now largely wild plums but with interesting prospects for rejuvenation. The end of the year sadly saw two graffiti attacks: we had started the year by removing some inherited graffiti.



## Finance

Annual accounts will be available at the AGM : our principal income sources have been the City Council grant (£500), donations (£500), subscriptions (£375) and plant sales (£160). Expenditure has been on insurance (£115), website (£160 for 2 years), the noticeboard and panorama (£310) and other materials for practical work (£300).



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## Membership

At the end of 2016 we had 112 members, whose support is much appreciated.

## Volunteers

We have achieved a great deal in our first year, thanks to the efforts of our volunteers, who have between them recorded 1139 volunteer hours on activities related to the Friends. Members of committees and other principal volunteers have been : Alan Brownlee, Becky Steed, Bridgid Everitt, Cavan Stewart, Chris Pink, David Howarth, David Van Edwards, Douglas Cross, Fran Dawson, Helen King, Irene Macdonald, Jane Chapman, John Trevelyan, Lesley Brownlee, Liz Layton, Mary Ash, Mike Button, Neil Winder, Norman Lister, Peter Jennings, Robert Rickard, Stefanie Partington, Steve Davis, Sue Lister, Vanessa Trevelyan



The Friends of Kett's Heights want to restore Kett's Heights to its former glory so that it is:

- A welcoming space for the local community and visitors to Norwich
- An attractive space with a wide diversity of plants and wildlife
- An event space with activities to suit a wide audience
- An educational space where its long and diverse history can be investigated and interpreted