



## *Newsletter, Spring 2021*



### **Jonathan Dodson: 10.12.1960 – 5.2.2021**

Our February has been dominated by the loss of Jon Dodson – Ice-cream Jon – to Covid-19. Jon grew up on Weldon Road just across from the park. He has been our ice-cream man for ten years or more. He said it was his dream job – he would be here whenever he could – Summer days especially but winter too if there seemed chance of a crowd. Children and mums made a beeline for him after school. Queues grew long on sunny days – especially when we had an event such as Big Lunch – all part of the occasion.

He gave high quality ices. He had stories and jokes – a friendly, welcoming face and reassurance that what's right will be OK. His presence radiated fun – but no messing about. Lately he had extended the menu to include coffee and hot chocolate.

We knew that he had been ill two years ago but he had seemed fine lately. It was a dreadful shock to hear that he had been taken to hospital and died all too quickly of this dreadful disease. He has been a joyful, reassuring presence on the park for many years. It is a park he loved and talked about even whilst in hospital in those last days. He will be remembered with lasting affection.



There was an immediate and sustained expression of disbelief and sadness. There are many messages and photographs on Facebook. Floral tributes were placed on the park on the park, and the flowers from the funeral were brought to join them.

His wonderful family arranged for the funeral cortege to come quietly past the park at 2pm February 26<sup>th</sup> for the funeral at Northwich. Many people came to stand distanced along the road near the park to pay their respects as it passed. A warm and grateful tribute from the people who loved him. The memory lives on. He will never be forgotten. We are grateful to have known such a man and counted him our friend.

The family are fundraising to buy a memorial of some kind in John Leigh Park.

Here is the link: <https://uk.gofundme.com/f/ice-cream-jons-memorial>



## Donations and Memorials

We are receiving a moving number of approaches from families wishing to contribute to the life of the park in memory of a loved one who has died and for whom the park has been a special place. Consideration of particular items in memory of an individual rests with Trafford MBC/Amey who have views on the balance of trees, benches etc. There is great need for finance which can be used flexibly for planting, events and other developments within the park. We would like to establish a general fund, donations to which will be acknowledged in a register to record the names of those being remembered. This would be displayed on the park.


## Difficult Times Ahead

We have become aware that as part of their response to cope with a massive financial problem which arises from the combined effects of austerity measures and the costs associated with the Covid-19 Pandemic, Trafford MBC is considering further reductions in its commitment to parks and green spaces. Information on this is buried in the 280 page document at ([Public Pack](#))[Agenda Document for Executive, 17/02/2021 18:00 \(trafford.gov.uk\)](#) (pages 247 and beyond). Paragraph 6.9.2 reads: 'to transfer responsibility of management and maintenance of parks to Friends groups with their agreement'. We have had no approach about this but see it as a dangerous and unreasonable suggestion, an insult to the staff and volunteers who have kept the parks good through the pandemic and a threat to the future. We and other Friends Groups will need support in negotiating what will be done.

D Jolley

Devonshire Road Church  
Devonshire Road Broadheath  
0161 929 9364

## HAPPY EASTER

"CHRIST DIED...   
was BURIED...  
and ROSE again"

**Sunday Morning Service**  
**11 am - 12 noon**

*Re-opening March 28th*



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More info can be found online at [happykidsaltrincham.co.uk](http://happykidsaltrincham.co.uk)

## Easter, Hope, and Marie Curie Cancer Care

Each Easter since 2015 we have hosted an Easter Bonnet Parade in association with Altrincham Church of England School and their PTA. This has been a joyful occasion involving the whole school, including all teachers and the headteacher. We have marched around the park. We have learned a bit about plants and trees. We have banged a big old drum. Marvellous ladies wearing tall yellow hats have been with us. These are the Marie Curie 'brownies'. The parade is to celebrate the joy of spring – especially the spring bulbs with daffodils the most flamboyant in their showy yellow dress. The school marchers have been sponsored and donations made to the Marie Curie Foundation in support of care for people with cancer. An area of land near the top of the park is designated: 'The Field of Hope'. About 25 years ago one of the mums at the school sadly died from cancer. As a tribute to her and to help others with the same condition thousands of daffodils were planted in the park and produced a spectacular show. By 2014 many of those daffodils had faded - we planted more – natural English Daffodils - in less profusion - but they are beginning to get a grip and we hope to see the display grow more year by year. This year we cannot march – but the daffodils and other bulbs will be putting on a show and we encourage people to donate in thanks to Marie Curie.

**Clare Hart**, who is involved with the charity, has sent us this short appeal:

*Marie Curie is a charity that provides essential frontline services; providing care and support to people with terminal illnesses and their families across the UK. We have a variety of services ranging from our nursing service - providing hospice care - and our information and support line supporting people with death, dying and bereavement. Marie Curie's flagship fundraiser the Great Daffodil Appeal - which is reaching its 35th anniversary next month – has, for the first time, had to cancel all of their iconic public collections for the campaign.*

*The last 12 months have been extremely difficult, as all key fundraising events have been cancelled.*

*Due to this, the charity is facing a potential loss of over £3 million. but we are encouraging people to support us by donating online.*

For more information on how to donate please visit:

[www.mariecurie.org.uk/daffodil](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk/daffodil)



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### Hartley Road Gateway

The refurbishment is complete. The effect is quite marvellous. Thank you to all who have made this possible. We are pleased to see a 'No Through Road' sign at the end of the cul-de-sac and bollards before the gateway. Let us hope there will be no more damage from runaway cars or anything else. We are now working to encourage the council to take action to put an end to the mud mire which develops on the grass verges of the cul-de-sac because of the weather and vehicles parked on the verges.



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## Our thanks go to Sandy and Janet Weipers

Sandy was a much loved and respected veterinary surgeon with a practice on Barrington Road. Janet was his veterinary nurse. By 2014 when we re-energised Friends of John Leigh Park to counter the threat of closure of the aviary by the council as a cost-saving exercise, they had retired from practice. In 'retirement' they were still busy and continued to give their talents and time to charitable work with animals. A message from their daughter, who had seen a post from FoJLP on Facebook, led to their coming to say hello – and they have worked generously and caringly with us since. They have taken a regular day in the rota to keep the aviary clean and the birds fed and watered. Sandy has made nesting boxes and other devices and they have provided a veterinary presence and service at no cost week after week. They have been the best of friends and source of inspiration to us. So we are sad that Sandy and Janet will 'retire' from their regular commitment to us and the park at the end of March. We are forever grateful and sure we will remain friends in the 'ever-after'.

Sandy has given us this message: 'In 1972 I was asked if I could be the veterinary surgeon to look after the budgies and all the birds in the aviary who were looked after by Trafford council. I did this until 2004. When I returned from Scotland in 2014 my daughter informed me that the Friends of John Leigh park were looking for people to help to look after the birds and clean, feed and make sure they were in good condition . Janet and I have worked every Tuesday from 2014 till 2021. We have enjoyed those times, and we wish the team – Dave, Alan etc, many more happy times.'



**September 2014.** Sandy and Janet Weipers, standing next to Dave Jolley who is holding the keys for the aviary after Trafford MBC officially handed over the responsibility for the aviary to the Friends of John Leigh Park community group.

## Covid and Lockdown

It is not clear what will be possible. The park has been a godsend to many people – providing space and beauty as an alternative to life indoors. But this is done according to a disciplined code – social distancing and limits on numbers who can gather. We hope and believe that it will become possible for people to play tennis and use the MUGA before too long. We hope and believe it will be possible to bowl within the discipline we established last year, and that Health walks can be started again on Mondays – But for now all that is on hold.

Events such as Big Lunch look likely to be ruled out for this year but it may be possible to organise more modest happenings later in the year.

We are aware that, despite the essential role which parks are playing in maintaining wellbeing during these testing times, the council is looking to make savings from their budget for parks to cope with austerity measures and the costs accrued because of the pandemic. Vigilance and reason will be needed to argue for the preservation of this blessed resource and the teams which keep it looking good.

During the year the park will be assessed again within the Green Flag standards and North West in Bloom's 'In Your Neighbourhood' competition. Let us hope we are well judged.

D Jolley



@JohnLeighPark



/FriendsofJohnLeighPark



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**ALTRINCHAM METHODIST CHURCH**

**SUNDAY WORSHIP**

<https://thesundayservice.gallery.video/altrinchammethodist>

Join us at 10.30am for our on-line service.

**Our Sunday Reflections/Worship at Altrincham Methodist Church are every fortnight at 11.00 am From 28<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

**Strict covid distancing in place. Masks must be worn  
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**Private Prayer**

**Every Wednesday morning,  
any time between 10am – 11am**

**Just pop in**

Or visit our website:

[www.altrincham-methodist.org.uk](http://www.altrincham-methodist.org.uk)





## Altrincham In Bloom Planter

We're very grateful to Alan and Lynne who look after the Friends of John Leigh Park planter, which is outside the entrance to the hospital. They re-stock it seasonally and tend it regularly. It has now had its Spring make over, and is looking splendid.

## PARKFIELD SITE

The future of the derelict Parkfield site to the south of the park has been considered by the council with the presentation of a proposal from a developer.



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Ian Lilley, the inventor of the solar powered Superbin, which houses and powers our defibrillator, has produced a bigger, more powerful version, and installed it on the park.