



Newsletter December 2020



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Covid Snake becomes Circle of Hope 2020

It started spontaneously as the Valley Gardens Covid Snake. Painted stones appeared in a spiral around one of the trees in early summer (see the July newsletter) and soon there were

dozens of colourful rocks spiralling in the grass. A permanent installation of the "Snake" was created next to the playground as a celebration of the community spirit which has emerged throughout the pandemic.

Commemorating 70 years - memories

As mentioned in the July newsletter, March 2020 was the 70th anniversary of the start of the work to create the Valley Gardens as a public park but because of Covid our plans for celebrating it had to be cancelled. However, next year sees the 70th anniversary of the official opening in May 1951, which coincided with the Festival of Britain that year, so our plans for a commemoration are postponed to 2021 when we hope that the pandemic will be over. In the meantime we have produced a



Memory Tree which has been placed on the large panel of the Pinhole Camera (former aviary). We plan to use the other two panels on the building for history information boards. The Magna Carta collages which have been in place for over 5 years are being re-sited on the toilet block near the Friarwood Lane entrance.

Commemorative benches to be installed

Two inscribed granite benches will soon be installed in the north west area of the Valley Gardens overlooking the "star beds" and stone steps. The old, dilapidated benches have been removed. The inscription records the 70th anniversary of the Valley Gardens and the images reflect the history of the Friarwood Valley and its natural setting. The cost of these

benches was supported by a grant from the Council's Neighbourhood Improvement Fund.



Three old benches were removed so there is space for a new bench. Please get in touch if you would like to sponsor a memorial or family bench.



Space for a new bench. Any takers?

Commemorative Arch

A decorative arch over the main Southgate entrance will enhance this entrance and will also commemorate the 70th anniversary. The Southgate railings are also long overdue for repair. Progress with this project has been held up by the pandemic and we are optimistic that both will be achieved next year. Friarwood Valley Gardens is a Grade 2 listed park so the 1950s style railings will be retained and renovated, and the arch will also reflect that design.



Tree removal

Visitors to the Valley Gardens will have noticed that several trees have had their branches removed and the trees will be completely removed by the Council's tree team in the coming weeks. All the trees are either dead or diseased and will be replaced, although not necessarily with a tree in the same place. We have asked for preservation of part of the old trees for tree sculpture where possible. Donations towards tree replacement and tree carvings will be welcome.



Christmas Trail

Because of the pandemic all events were cancelled in 2020 but we were determined to bring some Christmas spirit to the Valley Gardens and a children's Christmas Trail was arranged for the weekend Friday 18th – Sunday 20th December. Due to Covid-19 we could not organise a specific event, but plenty of families visited during the three days and the children enjoyed it.



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Friarwood Valley Gardens

Christmas Trail

Take a wintery wander around the gardens and see if you can complete the checklist below

- Find the Snowman
- Skip to the North Pole
- Spot the Naughty Elf
- Jump on the stage and sing a carol
- Walk in Santa's footsteps
- Tell Santa Claus your Christmas wish
- Find Rudolf's flashing nose
- Count the candy canes on the tree
- Take a selfie in the Elfie frame
- Dance around the Christmas Tree

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM THE FRIENDS OF THE FRIARWOOD VALLEY GARDENS

 Tag us in all your photos #friarwoodchristmastrail2020 

Volunteer gardening and litter-picking

Lockdown stopped all our activities from March to June and the weeds took over in the Rose Garden. Gardening sessions were restarted in July with social distancing, and we

are gradually making up for the lost months. There is still a lot to do to get the Rose Garden ready for next summer and we are continuing to garden every Saturday 1.30 – 3.30pm (apart from Boxing Day). Litter picking is every first Sunday at 10.30am – Sunday 3rd January will be the first date in 2021. Weather permitting of course. We provide the tools but bring your own gardening gloves.

Do you think there'll be any snow this winter, or will it rain continually?



Thank you to Terese Hulse for permission to use her winter scenes from a few years ago.



**Wishing you a Happy
Christmas and a better
New Year**