

Previous Events at Victoria Park

March 2016

Fancy dress costumes and puffed out faces once again graced the park as the Steve Prescott 10k runners passed through the park. The runners were greeted at St Marks Gate Lodge by the sound of Parr Brass band and of course the cheering spectators.



Easter Sunday once again brought scavengers into the park hunting down answers to the questions set by the St Helens Council Ranger Service, despite changeable and very ominous weather conditions, local families turned up to the Gate Lodge to take part in the Scavenger hunt. Each participant was rewarded with a Crème egg if they got all of the answer correct. The Friends of Victoria Park were also on hand to offer support and to hand out the odd poncho or two to help the participants brave the hailstones and thunder and lighting.

February 2016

In spite of the cold and inhospitable weather throughout February, the park has as ever been a hive of activity. The Community Garden group continue to meet and make preparations for the coming months whilst the Friends group are busy planning the coming years events and activities with the Rangers and Age UK. We hope to see you supporting your local park at our events throughout the year.

For more information about the events in the parks across the borough please see any of the following for updates.

What's on guide at www.whatsoninthelens.com

Friends of Victoria Park Facebook feed (FOVP)

Poster boxes in the parks and open spaces

Or why not call in and speak to one of our Rangers at Victoria Park Gate Lodge, Taylor Park Centre, Sankey Valley Visitor Centre or Mesnes Park pavilion?

January 2016

2016 began with the Christmas tree recycling points being set up by the Ranger Service. Once again each of the areas set out around the borough were used, and as such we have managed to recycle the trees into mulch which will be used in the parks and open spaces.

Rivington Primary school made use of the Ranger service throughout January by taking part in some Historical tours of the park. Half of the school class were taken on a tour around the park by Barry and Tracey from the Ranger Service, meanwhile the other half of the class were given the chance to tour the Mansions House itself. The tour of the Mansion house was kindly given by Fiona Ryan who is a member of the Age UK staff. The children learned all about the historic importance of the park and the Mansion House and will be returning in the future to do more activities with the Rangers.

For more information about the types of activities that the Ranger Service provide to schools please contact the Ranger service on either 01744 678073 or by emailing any of the contacts below:

victoriapark@sthelens.gov.uk

taylorpark@sthelens.gov.uk

sankeyvallyerrangers@sthelens.gov.uk

mesnesparkrangers@sthelens.gov.uk

December 2015

The end to another busy year has arrived and even in December the park continues to be a venue for many events and activities, Park run has continued to attract good numbers of runners into the park on a Saturday morning whilst the Gate Lodge has been occupied by the "little Athletes" group. Yoga sessions continued in the Lodge and the Friends of Victoria Park held their annual Christmas Carol Concert in the park.

As we say farewell to 2015 I would like to say a big thank you to the Friends of Victoria Park for all of their hard work and efforts throughout the year, and I would also like to praise the work of the Community Garden Group, Ranger Service and of course the Councils own Grounds Maintenance crews that keep the park in tip top condition throughout the year.

November 2015

Along with the ever popular Park Run and Yoga sessions being held in the park, November witnessed some new artwork being created on the skate ramps by Jack Knowles from Limitless Urban Art and some hardy volunteers. Consultation started in October over what designs should be used, then Jack took the ideas away and began to create some new designs that can now be viewed on three of the apparatus in the skate park area. Weather has put the projects on hold, although Jack will be returning to complete the rest of the artwork over the coming months.



Local school children from Parish Primary school once again braved the elements to tend to their Community garden plot, planting some lovely Primroses into the bed to provide colour through winter.

For more information on this or any of the other projects taking place in the park or if you would like to become a member of the Community garden group, please contact the Rangers Service on 01744 678073.

October 2015

The month of October proved to be a busy time in Victoria Park with the Gate Lodge providing the venue for both some creative writing sessions and a series of consultation evenings on the subject of some new graffiti artwork being created on the existing skate ramps.

Sue Gerrard led the creative writing sessions which were well attended and had been organised by the Friends of Victoria Park.

Meanwhile Jack Knowles from Limitless Urban Art along with a little help from the Ranger service canvassed opinions from across the borough about what new artwork could be created on the skate ramps. Jack will be running a series of events in November that will include a community clean-up day, followed by a weekend of spray painting the skate ramps with the ideas collected from this month's consultation evenings.

September 2015

September provided to be a busy month in the park. Yoga sessions continued to take place in the Gate Lodge, while the ever popular Park run remains a well-attended event on Saturday mornings. The bandstand area was utilised by St Helens concert band that once again delighted onlookers with their performance.

The Ranger service held their annual bat and moth night in the park with participants being treated to up close views of our resident bat species in flight and a number of brightly coloured moth species which had been displayed in the Gate Lodge.

The park was once again alive with the sound of musical tones when the Friends of Victoria Park took centre stage with their fantastic Big Busk Event, Local bands were invited to play their songs to a packed park full of expectant visitors.



August 2015

The month of August witnessed the second annual Craft fair taking place in the park. Once again the public of St Helens turned out to support the event in good numbers. Visitors to the park were treated to a plethora of old style crafts and some fine displays from Cheshire falconry in the main display ring.



Once again the bandstand played host to a number of brass bands, each of which delighted the visiting onlookers with their musical tones and style. Each of the bands has been provided using funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and St Helens Council.

July 2015

July witnessed the third annual Family Fun day taking place in the park and despite changeable weather on the day, the public of St Helens turned out in good numbers to enjoy the free activities that were provided using funding from the St Helens Ranger Service and the Heritage Lottery fund.



Each of the wildflower areas sown earlier in the year by St Helens Council Grounds Maintenance staff have now come out in full bloom and are looking spectacular. The pale blue of the Cornflowers mixed with the white Ox eye daisies interspersed with the red Poppies and yellow Buttercups all provide some much needed colour and a variety of height along the borders of the pathways. If you look closely you will see that the flowers are also alive with the passing insect lives that have taken advantage of the new flowers.

June 2015

Victoria Park played host to a number of activities and events throughout the month of June, not least the VE Celebration Day party held by a combination of the local Brownie groups that are based in St Helens. The groups took over the park for the day taking part in old style activities and finally an outdoor picnic which took place in the refurbished gardens in front of the Orangery. The children were treated to a variety of foods all served up by their leaders who were each dressed in full old style costume.

The new Bandstand was put to good use in June by St Helens Concert band who entertained the viewing public with their musical talents. The band even managed to bring some sunny weather with them which allowed the viewing public to roll out their blankets sit back and relax while taking in the sounds of the band and of course the beautiful views of the park around them.

May 2015

The month of May has witnessed the park in full swing with the Friends of Victoria Park, Age UK and the Community Garden groups all holding events and activities in the park. Age UK held its successful annual Beer festival, closely followed by a Classic Car show. Meanwhile the Friends of Victoria Park and the Community Garden group busied themselves weeding and planting up the flowers beds with some of the plant stock that had been grown in the refurbished Orangery. The end of May witnessed the first visit to the park by the Green Flag Judges. St Helens Council has submitted the park for consideration for the prestigious Green Flag Award and we hope that our application will be successful.

For more information on what it takes for a park to be granted Green Flag status please visit www.greenflagaward.org.uk or contact the Ranger Service on 01744 678073

April 2015

The Rangers held a highly successful east egg hunt in the park with 150 people attending, all of which received a small Easter egg as a prize for completing the scavenger hunt. April also witnessed the preparation and sewing of the wildflower areas that will soon grace the park with a vibrant display of colours, fragrances and insect life. For more information on these or any of the other projects that are taking place in the park, please contact the ranger service on 01744 678073.

March 2015

The month of March witnessed the highly successful Ste Prescott foundation passing through the park, with the participants greeted by the sounds of brass band music coming from outside the refurbished Gate Lodge. Work also continued on the Community garden with the group meeting again to discuss what needed to be done in the garden are, and to monitor the success of the new seeding's and to plant some more.

February 2015

The community Garden group held their first meeting of the year in the newly refurbished Orangery, After the meeting was concluded the group then spent some time sewing some seeds that will hopefully be ready for planting in the Community garden later this year. If you are interested in joining the group or taking ownership of one of the community garden flower beds, please contact the Ranger Service on 01744 678073.



January 2015

The start of 2015 witnessed the annual Christmas tree recycling event taking place in the park. Once again the Ranger services set up the recycling point and then collected the many trees that were disposed of by the local community. The trees were then taken to Sherdley park for them to be recycled with the resulting chippings being spread across the flower beds in the Boroughs parks and open spaces.

December 2014

December brings a close to 2014, to the Victoria Park Officer role and the main aspects of the restoration, including the tiger that is nearly finished. I hope that the parks restoration will bring much enjoyment and pleasure to everyone who uses the park now and in the future, it has been a privilege to have been instrumental in the parks development from its fruition to its now completion.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year Jill Barlow, Victoria Park Officer.



November 2014

14th November brings the Joseph Carney Memorial Trust to the Gate Lodge. Every Friday at 10am there will be advice and support for Men over 50 who have or are facing losing their jobs. Practical skills such as CV writing and writing application forms to signposting are available.

November brings the winter months with the weather changing and all the leaves falling. Children from Parish Primary school, Community garden volunteers and the VCA volunteers come together to plant 1000 daffodil bulbs at the entrance to City road and near the Skate park, what a great day and the weather was really kind.

Thompson Dagnall a local sculptor is sculpting the felled oak tree left on site into a drumming tiger. The tiger signifies the links to the museum in the house which is remembered by a lot of people as it was the first thing you sore on entering the museum, the drums are a link with the music in the park and the bandstand. Work is still ongoing, come over the bandstand and watch an artist at work and see the drumming tiger develop.

October 2014

Friends of Victoria Park held their first lantern festival event, with great success children made lanterns for the procession and decorated glass jars to illuminate the outside of the Gate lodge. The processions took the outside path to the bandstand where everyone was greeted by folk band, Moss and Jones and also fire dancers, let's hope it can be repeated next year, keep an eye out for local advertising and posters in the park.

We have taken delivery of a new cycle hub in the park at the city road entrance; watch out for events coming soon.

A Community giving back day with the staff from the Halifax, helped plant up the community gardens rockery, thanks to all involved for getting involved and getting their hands dirty.

An old oak tree's branch limb was dangerously damaged in some very high winds next to the bandstand, the tree has had to be felled to prevent it becoming a hazard to the public and the bandstand.

September 2014

A successful Bat Night with the rangers with local residents seeing and hearing our native bats.

Heritage Open Days, parks tours on Thursday 11th, Friday 12th and Sunday 14th, please ring Jill Barlow on 01744 604922 to book on.

The Ranger services are hosting the annual craft fair on the 7th September, free to the public.

August 2014

The official opening of the restoration of the park is on the 19th August 2014 with a family fun day for all the community to enjoy.



July 2014

Friends of Victoria Park host the Big Busk on the 19th July.

The Health Improvement Team host Fresh Start for people who want to loose weight and do some gentle outdoor fitness.

St Helens has its first Park run. Are you looking to keep fit? Park run is a timed 5k event evert Saturday morning at 9am. There are around 100-150 regular runners/ joggers / walkers throughout the park. If you are interest in taking part simply register and print off a bar code and turn up at 9.00am every Saturday morning.

www.parkrun.org.uk



June 2014



Wilf Birch (FOVP), Ed Ansdell, Ken Jones (FOVP) with Jill Barlow (Victoria Park Officer) and St Helens Councils Grounds Maintenance team.

June 18th brought our overseas visitor from Canada, the direct ancestor of John Ansdell, Ed Ansdell, Ed planted a sweet chestnut tree in commemoration of the parks birthday 128 years since the park has been in ownership of the council and also the completion of the £4 million restoration. Ed was also researching his family tree if anybody has information on the Ansdell family please contact us.

Completion is complete with all amenities open.

May 2014

Completion is nigh, you will start to notice the park coming together and the removal of the contractor from site with buildings and fencing coming down.

We have been receiving comments regarding the pond area and problems with the ducks fighting and it's all down to the time of year and end of the breeding season as many females have ducklings or are still on the nests.

Unfortunately the male mallard ducks want to mate with the females that are yet unmated and in the midst of the completion from other males, the female inadvertently gets hurt or even drowned and this is nature unfortunately and will soon subside and calm down.

We understand that this is quite stressful and an anxious time for members of the public to witness.

April 2014

Brings the handover of the Gate Lodge and its first residents since the late 1970's

Jill Barlow, Victoria Park Officer will be based in the lodge during the week and the Ranger staff will be based part time in the lodge weekday and weekends.

The park is coming together with all hands on deck towards the completion date and the handover in May.

First Event – Bird box making with Parish Primary school was held and they will be returning to monitor the boxes in the months ahead.



November 2013

November was national tree planting week. Volunteers from St Helens Soroptimists, St Thomas of Canterbury pupils and young people from MPH training all contributed to planting up tree whips and shrubs. Funding was also sourced from United Utilities programme.





July – September 2013

Worked carries on with the old greenhouse removed and foundations put down. The pond folly and rose garden are in full restoration mode with the mayor opening this part of the scheme on the 23rd September 2013.



June 2013

The month of June also saw two local schools taking part in some educational viewing sessions.

Children from Parish and St Thomas of Canterbury schools visited Victoria Park. Each class was given a tour of the park, during which they were expected to find answers to a series of questions posed to them. The children were also provided with some digital came4ras to record their visit as they progressed around the park. The groups were then handed over to members of the St Helens Ranger service, at which time the children were shown what creatures will eventually make the restored pond their home and then the children were given some binoculars to use in their search for the parks resident bird life.



The Parks officer also led two public viewing sessions during June, both of which were well attended by the local community, many of which were able to provide an insight into park life during their childhood.