



FRIENDS OF BUTTS CLOSE

AN OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER

February 2019

Rhythms of the World

You may have seen an article in the Comet on 31 January about Butts Close being used for a revived Rhythms of the World this summer. According to the article, this was suggested by a Police Inspector at a meeting of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the previous Tuesday, following discussions held last year between the Police and the RoTW organisers. I asked Andrew Mills, NHDC, who has responsibility for considering licence applications for using Hitchin's green spaces, if the Council had been approached on the matter, and he advised me that they had not.

I then spoke to Phil Powell, who is RoTW Head of Events. He advised me that but have not been planning a large scale week-end event on a green field site for 2019, here or elsewhere in Hitchin.

They are however planning a world and festival music day at the Town Hall on 29th June. This is a free to attend event and they will be inviting pubs and venues around the town to join in and have a weekend of world and local music. This builds upon last year's revised festival which was put together in 2/3 weeks and had 65 acts playing across 8 venues. They are looking to a major event for a revitalized RoTW in 2020; they have looked at a number of venues in Hitchin, and they would prefer to use Butts Close as it is the closest green space to the Town Centre. They envisage a ticketed event, and would fence off the Close for the two-day duration, should they be granted a licence from the Council.

You will recall that when we asked via the FoBC Newsletter for views on using Butts Close for RoTW, people who fed back gave guarded support for RoTW in general terms but considered that Walsworth Common might be a better venue, not least because there is better separation from residents' nearby homes. Since the article in the Comet appeared a number of people with young families living on Bedford Road have contacted me raising their concerns.

Phil seemed very aware of these issues and he offered to meet with us to see how people's concerns might be mitigated; he recognized that our views would be an important factor in their submission for a licence, for whatever venue, from NHDC.

We are therefore suggesting that the FoBC Steering Group and the RoTW organisers meet at a suitable time and venue later this year to consider the issues. **In view of this we would welcome any and all feedback from members, to guide the Steering Group in this matter.**

Litter Again!

Yes, it's already come around. As in previous years, Hitchin Forum (together with 'Clean-Up Hitchin') have organised the pan-Hitchin Spring Litter-Pick.

This year it will be on Sunday 17th March.

We will meet as usual at 10am by the pond. PLEASE let me know as soon as possible if you are able to go, and if you need a litter-picker, an adult-sized one or a fancy one for children.

Tony Riley
for
FoBC
February 2019