



FRIENDS OF BUTTS CLOSE

AN OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER

June 2019

Some visitors...



We suspect that by now most of you will know that a group of travellers set themselves up on Butts Close. This was apparently the same group that was evicted by Stevenage Council from the George V Playing Fields on Wednesday 29 May. They had neat and new caravans and mostly smart 2018/19 cars, and they didn't appear to be causing too much

trouble beyond accessing and leaving the Close by driving between the concrete bollards along Bedford Road, bumping up or down the curb. This was an inconvenience to other drivers, and they created some risk on the Close; but beyond a few days we would see an increasing degradation of the quality of the common.

Since however they were not on Butts Close by permission, North Herts District Council took the legal steps necessary to move them on. There were however complications: they had carefully set up on that part of the Close that is owned by the Hitchin Cow Commoners Trust. It is registered common land but it is not owned by the Council.

The travellers of course knew this full well, and we can presume that they are experts in those areas of law that might apply to them and to their chosen way of life. But the Council, the Trust and the Courts moved quickly, and they had gone by 6pm on Friday under the watchful eye of two Police Officers. They left much more mess than they should have but less than they could, and that was very kindly cleared by a crew from the pool. By 7pm the Close was back to its normal self.

The Spring Big Hitchin Clean-up

This took place on Sunday 17 March across Hitchin, and we had a great turn-out for Butts Close. This time we will be able to collect rubbish and recyclables separately. Here are crew and the results:



A muddy patch...



One of the Friends had pointed out that there is a section of grass near the rear service entrance to the swimming pool which is always getting churned up by the wheels of their waste collection truck as it turns to drive back up to Fishponds Road. He suggested that this could be made a small hardstanding area instead of a mud patch. It would be about 8 by 6 metres. The FoBC Steering Group supported this idea. We discussed this with James Bliss, Manager of the Pool/Archers, and he will bring this to his next meeting with NHDC Officers. As this is common land, we wrote to James stating that if this went ahead and an application was made for consent under the Commons Act, we would not oppose it.

...and a messy wall

We also asked James if he would arrange for the graffiti to be removed from that area (Banksy it ain't) and we suggested that the section of their rear wall with old iron railings, rubble and clutter could be neatened up with wattle or trellis. We have asked this before, though...

Tony Riley
for
Friends of Butts Close

Contact Friends of Butts Close at buttsclose@gmail.com and Hitchin Forum through www.hitchinforum.org.uk