



## FRIENDS OF BUTTS CLOSE

AN OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER

*September 2019*

### *Summer visitors, June 2019*

In our last issue we reported on the 'visit' by a group of travellers. They stayed only a few days, and went on their way to the Horse Fair in Appleby, Cumbria, a fair protected by a Royal Charter granted by James II, and the largest annual gathering of gypsies and travellers in the country.

They got onto Butts Close by squeezing their vehicles through gaps between the bollards. NHDC quickly ensured that any such gaps would be filled by new bollards, just in case the travellers



thought they had a return ticket. That worked, and thanks to Andrew Mills of NHDC for having a small stash of replicas to use at such short notice. Since then most of the wonky old bollards have been replaced, so all we need to do now is watch them weather down...slowly.

### *Summer visitors, June 1904*

We had described the 1904 visit to Butts Close by Buffalo Bill and his Wild West entourage in a previous newsletter<sup>1</sup>. Well, and lo and behold an expanded version appeared in Hertfordshire Life<sup>2</sup> in June of this year. FoBC does get a credit though. I am still amazed at the logistics of that tour across the UK.

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<sup>1</sup> March 2016

<sup>2</sup><http://edition.pagesuite-professional.co.uk/html5/reader/production/default.aspx?pubname=&edid=3019a5ad-3025-411d-a21c-916ffef2707f> – see pages 28 – 32.

## *Parking - again*

Some FoBC members had noticed people apparently measuring up the existing Swim Centre car park, and expressed concerns that this might in some way mean works impinging on the Close. We raised this with NHDC Officers and found that the Council had commissioned a feasibility study on the possible extension of the existing car park northwards, using the green space currently buffering the car park from Fishponds Road. We have now been told that NHDC is not presently considering such an extension.

And further to that, as we have all seen, the Close has not been used this summer for any overflow parking for the swim centre. Parking for one-off events has been allowed in the past (such as for the former Rhythms of the World) but this is solely at the discretion of the NHDC Greenspace Manager. There is no 'right' for parking at all.

## *And more visitors*

**Abbott's Funfair** is coming to Butts Close, booked from 25<sup>th</sup> September to 1<sup>st</sup> October. Abbott's is a Charter Fair (holding the right to an annual fair in Hitchin), and it has been marginally less noisy than Thurston's, although the latter seemed to have toned themselves down a bit this year.

**The Circus** is coming back too, booking the Close from 13<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> October. Their shows will run 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>.

## *Litter-Picking*

The Hitchin Forum Big Autumn pan-Hitchin litter-pick will be held on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> October, which is the same day the circus closes down and moves off site. In the past they have been pretty self-contained on the Close, and they've cleared their own litter well.

We usually meet at 10am by the bench opposite the pond, bags etc provided. We'll keep an eye on the situation and let everyone know if there are any changes.

Tony Riley  
for  
Friends of Butts Close