



## FRIENDS OF BUTTS CLOSE

AN OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER

March 2021

### *Where did Spring go?*



Here it was, in case you missed it, captured by Simon Maddison in February before it disappeared again. Breathing in that warm air was so precious, after the lockdown greys. It now seems to be coming back, tentatively. It's still cold but, despite Spring's reticence, the snowdrops have been followed by the crocuses.

They are spread between the pond and the main path, a scattering of amethysts. They have a history.



In 2010 Tilehouse Rotary Club organised a mass planting of crocus corms on Butts Close to highlight their global mission to eradicate polio. 3,010 corms were planted in a single day by 636 people, earning a Guinness World Record. Crocuses were chosen for their colour because in mass programmes the fingers of vaccinated children were marked with a purplish ink.



Some of the crocuses spelt out R-O-T-A-R-Y.  
After ten years they have migrated illegibly but beautifully.  
Here they were a couple of weeks ago.

### ***Not the March Litter-Pick...***

In normal times the Big Hitchin Clean-up happens twice yearly, organised by Hitchin Forum. The Butts Close Team carried out the October Litter-Pick in that gap between lockdowns, albeit socially distanced. The Close needs a going-over again.

But that is not possible at the moment. So Hitchin Forum are organising a 'Not the Big Hitchin Clean-Up', by suggesting a creative approach to outdoor exercise. Below is the email from Bill Sellicks and Brian Sykes with the details. Of course some of you may already have received this.

Contact Friends of Butts Close at [buttsclose@gmail.com](mailto:buttsclose@gmail.com) and Hitchin Forum through [www.hitchinforum.org.uk](http://www.hitchinforum.org.uk)

*As you will know, we took the decision to run a scaled-down version of our normal spring event due to continuing uncertainty over the corona virus restrictions likely to be in place in March. After the email we sent out on January 27<sup>th</sup>, we have received a flurry of emails from those keen to take part – there's no doubt that a lot of people want to see the town tidied-up!*

*Nothing in the government's Corona Virus Guidelines of February 22<sup>nd</sup> has indicated we can change our approach. I am sure that you will be as disappointed as we are, since the event is normally such an enjoyable social activity as well as one which makes a difference to our environment.*

*In line with national guidance, North Hertfordshire District Council is unable to support community litter picking activities at the moment, and has requested that we do not identify a specific date to avoid overcrowding so that social distancing can be preserved.*

***We therefore invite you (individually or in a household group) during the third and fourth week in March, to collect litter in your own bag during your daily exercise and dispose of it in your own bins. You can do this more than once if you like, as long as you can get what you collect in your bin.***

*That seems pretty simple, but actually it isn't entirely straightforward – sorry! Please make sure that you have read the instructions below. If anything is unclear, please get back to us.*

### **Safety**

*Participation is entirely at your own risk – we cannot provide public liability insurance for this activity.*

*Please wear gloves and use a litter picker if you have one (we cannot provide these this time due to Covid restrictions).*

*Only remove the gloves when you have finished, and wash your hands or use hand sanitiser after you have placed the bag in your bin.*

*Please do not collect broken glass or other dangerous items.*

*Avoid attempting to retrieve litter from dangerous places – near steep banks, watercourses, or by busy roads etc.*

*Maintain social distance - avoid collecting litter from narrow paths where there is not enough room for others to pass safely*

### **Children**

*If children are involved they should be supervised by a responsible adult at all times.*

### **What can I collect?**

*Please use a bag that is strong enough to allow you to carry what you collect home without breaking.*

*Only collect what you know will fit into your purple bin – NHDC will not accept extra bags of general waste.*

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*If you collect items such as cans, plastic or bottles which can be recycled, only separate them to place in your grey bin if they are clean, or you are prepared to clean them yourself. Dirty items added to grey bins can mean that loads are contaminated, so these should be disposed of in your general waste (purple) bin.*

*Please do not leave bags by public waste bins as we have done in the past – take them home – if bags of items are found NHDC will consider those to be fly tipped.*

### **Fly tipped items**

*Do not attempt to collect, or even touch fly tipped items, but please do report these to North Hertfordshire District Council if they are on public land. Full details (including a form which enables you to report a fly tip) can be found by following this link <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/transport-and-streets/street-cleaning/fly-tipping> - you will need to provide full details of the location, and a photograph often helps.*

### **Pictures**

*Even though the Spring Clean is not what it normally is, we should all get a feeling that we've made a difference and it would be great to get some pictures to show what you've done. We'd like to be able to display some of them on Hitchin Forum's website, and to include some in the Comet. If you're happy for us to use them in that way, please mail them to [hflitterpick@gmail.com](mailto:hflitterpick@gmail.com) along with a few details – where you picked, anything unusual you found or perhaps a nature note – did you find an interesting plant growing nearby, for instance.*

*Let's hope we can return to a more normal event in the autumn.*

*Good luck, enjoy making a difference, and above all stay safe!*

**Bill Sellicks and Brian Sykes**

**Hitchin Forum**

**[hflitterpick@gmail.com](mailto:hflitterpick@gmail.com)**

**26 February 2021**

Tony Riley, for Friends of Butts Close

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