**Virtual Tour of Leesland Park "let's go for a little walk....."**

For anyone not familiar with the park and/or its facilities, please join the The Friends of Leesland Park for a virtual stroll and a look at what is on offer..

We begin our walk 'meeting' at the Daisy Lane entrance - a gate and fence structure immediately behind Whitworth Close and in close proximity to Leesland Federation Schools. From this particular vantage point the park opens out in front of you with the boundaries clearly visible. Stepping through the entrance we find ourselves on a large area of grassland which is widely used by young and old for such pursuits as park football, practising golf swings, flying model aircraft and dog walking. The parkland is also the venue for the now legendary ParkFest, an annual event that has featured the musical delights of the Kelly's Tattoo, The Monkey Butlars and Part Deux to name just three bands. The music supported by a range of activities, charity stalls and workshop sessions. (**Please visit the ParkFest tab for details of the next/latest event**).

Keeping to the left of the parkland we follow the fence line/hedge that provides the border with Whitworth Close. The planting of the hedge which consists of alder, blackthorn and hawthorn was one of our first major projects and was designed to help bring the flourishing bramble under control. A rich crop of blackberries can still be harvested annually for the bramble that remains. Part way along this path we have our first opportunity for rest and a look at what is going on around us by using one of the two picnic benches located in the park (recycled of course).

Reaching the top of the parkland, we cross the tarmac path entering from Lavinia Road and enter the Sensory Garden zone. The first item you will spot is the 2015 introduction of a memorial garden in memory of local florist Heather Ayling (Zodiac Flowers). We then move into the shade of our hornbeam avenue - unfortunately the original concept of this area proved unmanageable for the volunteers but was subsequently rescued by the Community Payback and GBC Green Team. Other than the Heather Ayling garden other items of particular interest in this area of the park include the unique carved wooden 'totem' pole markers, these made from new railway sleepers and depicting our individual senses and overlooking this whole area and acting as our sentinel our very own 'Green Man' - an imaginative piece of recycling a former telegraph pole. Having completed your walk through Hornbeam Avenue, you will come across our sundial feature, to tell the time stand in the middle of the dial (acting as the gnomon) and work out the time from your shadow. Don't forget to add an hour for BST!

From the Sensory Garden viewpoint we have been in a position to observe the 3 formal activity areas on the park, these being the children's play area, sports area and skatepark. Both the skatepark and play area have benefitted from continued development activity, the latter through a grant from Community Spaces (Big Lottery) secured by the Friends of Leesland Park.

Leaving the Sensory Garden behind us and passing behind the skatepark you will see to your left what appears to be a large and unkempt area of the park. This something of a deliberate choice while the options for the light railway were considered. At the beginning of 2012 we began to hold discussions with local organisations who were interested in establishing a forest garden in this general location. The various bushes, brambles and hedge do of course provide rich habitat for the bird population.

With the skatepark on our right we head back up the parkland noting the conservation area to our left and further ahead the Leesland orchard. The conservation area is managed with nature's assistance and is home to numerous flora and fauna. The more observant among you may have spotted the interpretation board sited just outside of the conservation area's boundary. Closer investigation will reveal this is part of the Gosport Heritage trail and provides a potted history of the area you are currently standing on.

In the event you decide to deviate from our walk and enter the conservation area, you will spot the remaining evidence of our once bog garden. Conceived in a spirit of great enthusiasm and involving the use of countless Marks and Spencer plastic bags and a veteran fire-engine the project proved to be wrongly positioned and failed to hold water...Oh well back to the drawing board with that one.

Back on the parkland and with the conservation area now behind us we can see the orchard more clearly, the plot further identified by a suitably inscribed piece of Purbeck stone. Planted in the orchard are a number of English fruit trees among which are apple, cherry, pear, meddler, quince and crab apple. In 2012 volunteers planted a fruit hedge along the boundary between the fruit trees and the parkland evidence of which is now very visible. Plants for the hedge donated as part of a nation-wide programme. Peering through the hedgerow to the rear of the orchard will provide you with a view of the Moreland Road allotments while in the centre of the orchard you will see our English Oak rural bench. Our adventures in timber extraction and onward building can be seen by visiting the Park Bench Blog pages. The bench replaced our much loved 'sound seat' believed to be the only structure in Gosport visible from space! Elsewhere in the orchard you will spot the rather unusual structure consisting of a semicircle of chestnut poles enclosing an interpretation board - this the start to Ruth's Trail.

Leaving the orchard behind and by looking to your left you will see our final interpretation board - this particular board depicting examples of the flora and fauna to be found in the park. The pictures painted by a local resident with the FoLP providing the text.

We are now at the boundary point once again, Daisy Lane lying beyond our fence point, turning right we pick up the bark filled path and make our way back to the entrance and our start point.

That then is the end of our walk, we hope that you enjoyed this virtual introduction and have found the information useful as well as entertaining. We sincerely hope that you are now ready to visit the park for the first time or perhaps to rediscover this little gem at the heart of our community.

A map of the park can be found by clicking on the following link: [Welcome to Leesland Park](http://btckstorage.blob.core.windows.net/site475/Miscellaneous/Leesland%20Park%20DL%20Web.pdf)

And finally if you have any suggestions for revising/updating our site please get in touch by using the form in the **Contact Us** link.