



**THE FRIENDS OF
ROWNTREE PARK**



Make Space for Girls in Rowntree Park Project Team

The [Friends of Rowntree Park](https://rowntreepark.org.uk) are a small charity that help maintain and improve Rowntree Park. As well as caring for the physical space, we also run projects and events.

The Make Space for Girls in Rowntree Park project is led by myself, Abigail Gaines, Charity Manager. The project focuses on trying to reduce the drop off of park use by girls, compared to boys, as they enter their teen years. The project focuses on making the park more 'welcoming' to older girls and we are aiming to do this through:

- (a) Creating an area teen girls have asked for with equipment they want
- (b) More events and activities for teenage girls in the park

To understand the background to the project and what's been done so far, please read this information: <https://rowntreepark.org.uk/make-space-for-girls-older-girls-and-rowntree-park/>

There is a main charity called 'Make Space for Girls' who campaign to raise awareness that parks need to be designed with teen girls in mind. The aim is to get councils, designers, researchers and organisations to take note and try and make the change happen. I work closely with them, but the project at Rowntree Park, and other York parks, is our own - especially the events programme that is unique to us.

I oversee all aspects of the project and welcome volunteers to get involved with whatever aspects of the project interests them, and help take the ideas forward. Below are some suggestions of how you could get involved, and do get in touch if you have additional ideas/suggestions.

The June 2024 programme of events

In 2023 we piloted a month-long programme of free events for 10-18 year olds, and some for women. The events were sports & fitness, arts and crafts, music, theatre, zine creation, conservation, forest crafts and more. Over 250 teens were involved and the programme won a national award for the 'best initiative to increase park use by women and girls'. We are running the programme again in 2024 and seek people to help with one, or more of the following:

- Contacting groups/organisations to run events as part of the programme
- Contacting potential sponsors
- Helping at some events in June
- Taking photos/videos at events in June
- Helping with social media content creation before events and after to showcase what's happened.
- Helping with evaluation and feedback.
- Promotion in York in the weeks leading to the programme - eg: stall in the park, giving out flyers, putting posters up across the city etc.

Project in general:

In addition, we'd like people to get involved with the ongoing project which includes raising awareness of the cause, fundraising for the equipment asked for, further research and engagement, and new ideas moving forward. Examples include:

- Social media content creation for the campaign in general and all we are doing
- Marketing & advertising in general (including press releases)
- Fundraising (particularly for phase 2 of equipment) - finding grants, sponsors, looking at other ways to fundraise.
- Carrying out further research with teen girls and women regarding 'welcoming' parks (more below)
- Artists and/or architects would also be useful additions to the project to help 'create'; designs/illustrations 'bringing to life' the girls' ideas for the physical space.

Equipment/physical space

I have managed to secure 15K for Phase 1 of creating an area for teen girls in the park. Sadly that money doesn't go far and only covers a basket swing and some seating. Phase 2 needs around 35K and includes climbing and seating areas and a shelter.

Phase 1 is due to go in around spring (April). It would be good to have an 'awareness campaign' around this time. Press releases, social media built up, blog etc. Also to host an 'event' for the opening. Could you help plan an opening event/celebration?

Also general observations of the use of this equipment over the coming months and getting feedback would be useful.

Further Research and engagement

From 2021 I carried out online surveys, focus groups and raising awareness through blogs, social media and posters. Further research and engagement would be good and an area volunteers could develop and shape. As it stands the research is more 'citizen science' and the like, then full academic studies (that require ethical clearance etc). If you are wanting to get involved as part of academic research, you are more than welcome but you'd need to follow the guidelines of your institution and it's important that your study fits with what we are trying to do.

Suggestions:

- **Observations of general park use** and park users would be of use. Perhaps picking some days to observe and count park users and areas used generally, and also observations of use of facilities for older children. It may be good to create a small team of volunteers for this. This could be a project a volunteer could lead and organise with my support. In May last year we were one of many parks in the UK involved in ParkWatch that collected observations of use of facilities installed for older teens over a weekend. The final report showed 88% was boys.
- **Engagement** - some suggestions could include:
New online survey - could focus on various aspects or one in particular. Eg - safety, views of current facilities, how to get more girls/women in the park etc
- **'Pop up' drop in/awareness stall** in the park at a weekend or in school holidays in the park for people to share views on space and how they use the park (and/or safety) linked to the project
- Volunteer needed to run a 'Make Space for Girls' stall at Westbank park summer Fair on Saturday 30th June 2024 (just to be able to speak about the project and have leaflets) - awareness event.

- **Focus group** - could establish a new focus group to look at one or more of the following - park use (likes/dislikes), feedback and view on the project so far - are we going the right way, what do they want to see? How can they get involved?
- Getting a group of girls together and interviewing/creating videos to share their views on space/improvements.
- A study of the space in the park and what changes, with little cost, can be made to the space to make it more welcoming to older girls and women (using research and reports available). Create a report for Rowntree Park.
- Collate some of the ongoing research, and projects, from across the country that is emerging into a blog(s) that we can use.
- Writing blogs on any of the above.
- help create a resources bank on 'engagement' - help support the creation of resources on how to engage teen girls and ideas that other organisations/individuals are interested in doing similar in their parks can access.
- Architects/designers/artists - take some of the feedback we have from teen girls about their likes and dislikes and reimagine spaces for teen girls (and women) and create illustrations with ideas to help people visualise 'what could' be. Reimagine parks!

Please note:

I oversee all aspects of the project and welcome volunteers to get involved with whatever aspects of the project interests them, and help take the ideas forward. I do need volunteers to take an element of independence and state what you'd like to do and I will support where I can. I cannot offer structured/supported placements for students', but there is the potential to use volunteer/placement hours on this project if you put together a proposal.

Contact me: Hello@rowntreepark.org.uk

It's also me on all the park social media!



