

Friends of Pickhurst Park and Green (FoPP)

Whilst the fear of the Pandemic still haunts us all, a larger more long-lasting virus has spread, and continues to spread, across the world. Each year it attacks more folk, both young and old, affecting not the lungs, but the brain. It breeds a feeling of invincibility, a lack of basic life skills, anger with anything that does not please and robs the victims of their ability to communicate with their fellow men, nature or indeed to think for themselves. I refer of course to the dreaded Cofonavirus.

Examples are drivers using one hand to drive while looking down at the phone, youngsters on e-scooters or bikes riding with a phone in one hand or worse still, no hands, mothers with phones ignoring their young children, dog owners not watching their dogs, old folk stopping suddenly in mid-stride to punch the phone advising someone of where they are. The brain is no longer used to store knowledge; it can all be found on the phone, whether real or invented. Serious cases involve folk who use the phone for basic tasks such as drawing the curtains, switching on lights or obtaining food, with communication reduced to short bursts, bullying with anonymity and all with little regard for the natural world.

Visit the parks and you will see an increasing number of such cases with the worst not even aware of the parks' existence or indeed caring. Did they see the lovely autumn colours, smell the cooler air of autumn and watch the squirrels and other animals preparing for winter? Fallen leaves and the wonderful carpet of colours go unnoticed; that brief moment before the wind blows them away to hide under trees and hedges as nature's fuel for next year's growth. Will they be out walking in the winter, seeing the frost and possibly snow or looking at pictures of mountains on the phone? Did you see the lovely pink wild cyclamen flowers in Pickhurst Park this autumn?



I spoke with a youngster last week and he told me all about Facebook and I had problems understanding why Facebook exists. I decided to try and make friends without actually using Facebook, but applying the same principles.

So now every day I walk down the street I tell passers-by what I have eaten, how I feel at the moment, what I have done the night before and what I will do later and with whom. I give them pictures of my family, my pet fish and of myself gardening, taking things apart in the garage, watering the lawn, standing in front of landmarks, bussing around the town, having lunch and doing what anybody and everybody does all day. I also listen to their conversations, give them the 'thumbs up' and tell them I 'like' them and it works just like Facebook. I already have four people following me: two police officers, a private investigator and a psychiatrist.

So put your phone in your pocket (switched off) and visit your parks, talk to your children, look after your dogs, enjoy and appreciate nature in all its glory and most of all, keep your sense of humour.

Debbie Palmer, FoPP