



westpark
Friends Group



westpark
Levy Trust



news

Your 2023 Newsletter from Westpark Levy Trust



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Read all about our amazing community!

Contacts and Useful Numbers

Pippa Smaling, Park Ranger

pippa.smaling@darlington.gov.uk 01325 406 719

Rob George, Park Coordinator

robert.george@westparklevytrust.org.uk 07500 090 384

Westpark Levy Trust

Website: www.friendsofwestpark.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/Westparklevytrust

Email: info@westparkdarlington.org.uk

Kingston Property Services

Telephone: 0330 123 1133 (Mon-Fri: 9.00am-1.00pm)

Email: mail@kingstonpropertyservices.co.uk

Website: www.kingstonpropertyservices.co.uk

Issues within the Park

Darlington Borough Council

Customer Service: 01325 405 111

Email: countryside@darlington.gov.uk

Darlington Neighbourhood Policing Team

PCSO 8617 Chloe Allison: Telephone 101 Extension 744232

Email: chloe.allison@durham.police.uk

PS 1340 Karl Lowe: Telephone 101 Extension 742277

Email: karl.lowe@durham.police.uk




westpark
Friends Group

Join us for a special consultation event
4.00pm - 6.30 pm on 9th February
at West Park Academy

FRIENDS OF WESTPARK MEETING DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Thursday 9th February 4.00pm – 6.30pm • Thursday 11th May 5.30pm – 7.30pm
Thursday 7th September 5.30pm – 7.30pm • Thursday 23rd November 5.30pm – 7.30pm

A warm Westpark welcome to 2023 for all our readers and a special welcome to everyone who has joined our community in the last year - including those who have moved into the new homes in the latest phase of the Garden Village. And welcome to our new format newsletter from the Friends of Westpark and the Westpark Levy Trust.

Each year we produce this newsletter which records and celebrates what we've been doing in the past year and looks forward to our future plans. In this issue, we've also included details of where you can find a range of useful information and helpful sites to get the most out of living in our community. We've also included some useful phone numbers together with the dates of our Friends of Westpark meetings and information about the Westpark Levy Trust (Please consider volunteering as a Trustee - see page 6)

Throughout the newsletter, we've included some photographs from Peter Giroux, a Darlington resident who has kindly given us permission to include some of his terrific pictures taken throughout this last year.

As we look forward to the next year we'd like to ask for your help. In the centre pages we've included a pull-out questionnaire (we've got an online version too, just scan the QR Code on page 9). We'd like to hear your views about the kind of activities, events and developments you'd like to see here at Westpark. We've also got a drop-in event at West Park Academy on 9th February where you can talk to Trustees, developers and others about how you would like things to develop.

We can't promise to be able to grant everyone's three wishes during the remainder of this panto season but we'll certainly try to deliver the most popular.

We hope you enjoy the newsletter and despite the challenging times we are living we wish all of you a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous 2023!

Westpark Levy Trustees

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Board's Eye View

Run the Green Flag up the Flagpole!

Ahoy there, Maties!

So, OK, 2022 was another strange year. We were no sooner coming out of Covid lockdowns than we found that Russia's war in Ukraine, UK political turmoil, materials shortages and rising costs all conspired to make it another challenging 12 months. Despite all of this, it has been a good year for Westpark. After delays due to covid and later by a shortage of materials, we are pleased to report that the long-awaited improvements to the play area in the park have now been completed. The sand pit has been enhanced with a new pirate ship; there are new swings and other features including the re-opening of the pass under the bridge have now been completed.

Congratulations to Pippa and the Darlington Borough Council team together with our volunteers and friends who have, once again, achieved the prestigious Green Flag Award for Westpark in 2022. Standards for the award are high, there are only about 2000 in the whole of the country and South Park is the only other in Darlington. The judges were impressed with the condition, standards, management plan, commitment and community support for our park. So, well done us!



Take Notice!

Also this year saw the installation of the noticeboards, designed by Stephen Pardue, around the park.

Made from weathered corten steel, to match other installations in the park, each of the 5 noticeboards, built in the shape of a curled beech leaf, contains a laser-cut pattern of a tree. This allows air to pass through the design without creating too much stress during heavy winds. Also each features a unique enamelled panel celebrating an element of our local heritage, linked to the themes of our street names. Temporary inserts have been produced to line the inside of the noticeboard area, while we await production of the final artwork

inserts designed following workshops with children at West Park Academy and residents as part of our Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

We also benefitted from Levy Trust funds which was spent on purchasing additional wildflower seed and spring bulbs over and above the allocation from Darlington Borough Council.

Despite periods of drought in the summer, and late germination for some of the seeds, the various seed mixes have provided great displays of colour and scent for people and a super source of food for the insects, pollinators and birds within the park.



How we went Platinum



This Jubilee Art in the Park programme culminated on Sunday 5th June with our Platinum Jubilee Picnic in the Park, where over 300 people, despite the well-dodgy weather, attended to celebrate the late Queen's royal achievements.

Tees' poet Ann Cuthbert was there to read poems written by local children, residents and herself. You can read one of the children's poems on our back page and you can read one of Ann's poems "Your Westpark" on page 18. Other attractions included free face painting and Jamie Stewart, The Bubble Whisperer, together with the chance to spend some time in quiet reflection walking the Rekalibrator, a mindfulness rope labyrinth, assembled by David Spence and his colleagues.

The event included delicious food paid for by Discover Brightwater and supplied by our very own Cactus Cafe from the village green.



Adrian Moule - Artist



Special thanks go to Discover Brightwater and Cactus Cafe for the delicious food we enjoyed over the weekend.

Hidden Gem Westpark

A poem by Mavis Rivers-Horton

There's trees and there's bushes to suit every season.

The cowslips and dandelions were all in profusion,
on banks of green grass that gave the illusion
of fairytales living amongst forest or wood.

The beauty of curving paths, a surprise round every corner.

Then at the top of each earthly mound,
an historical message can be found,

celebrating Pease and Railway, others too,
and the progress made from them to you.

Stone tables and seats can be found here,
my spot beside the fish pond, a picnic I'll have soon,
a table just for four please, some sunny afternoon.

I hope to see a dragonfly, birds or some fishes.

I'll look around this Hidden Gem so I can make some wishes.

It was great to see so many local street parties over the Jubilee Weekend. The Trust was successful in bidding for a grant from the Arts Council's Let's Create Jubilee Fund, which paid for various activities including poetry workshops for local children and residents, led by Teesside poet, Ann Cuthbert and print-making activities with artist Adrian Moule.



Platinum Jubilee 2022





WE NEED YOU!

Once again, please consider becoming a Trustee, as we are aiming to recruit new trustees to gain a better representation of the population of our community and further broaden our skillsets. Without your voice, your insights and your knowledge we'll keep on doing what we know – so please come and help us widen our horizons.

To find out more or to register your interest email info@westparklevytrust.org.uk

Events

We are looking to fund some events in the park over the next couple of years leading up to a major event in 2025 as part of the celebrations for the 200th Anniversary of the creation of Stockton and Darlington Railway. 2025 also marks 20 years since the park was

opened in 2005. They could be sports or arts or music or just a family fun day; but we're looking to work with people to make them happen. So, if you'd like to organise an event or have an idea then please get in touch with the Trustees and we'll see if we can help.



YOUR CHANCE TO... WIN £100

Help to shape the future Westpark for a chance to win one of 5 prizes (£100 for the winner and £50 each for 4 runners up) to be spent at Westpark Village Centre businesses.

Questionnaire

Complete our questionnaire online by using the QR code displayed here or complete this pull-out paper version and either drop it into Bussey & Armstrong's Sales Centre at 90 Collingsway, or bring it with you to our drop-in consultation on 9th February at West Park Academy from 4.00pm - 6.30pm (refreshments provided).



1	What should the purposes of the community facility be? Number 1 being most important, number the boxes from 1 to 7 below in order of importance to you.			
	A space for organised groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adult learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
	A space for social events	<input type="checkbox"/>	A hub to build a sense of community	<input type="checkbox"/>
	A meeting place / space	<input type="checkbox"/>	A space for children and young people	<input type="checkbox"/>
	A space for the arts and creativity	<input type="checkbox"/>		

2	What should the purposes of the community facility be?	Not Very Important	Not Important	Not Sure	Important	Very Important	N/A
	A space for social events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	A meeting place / space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	A space for organised groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	A hub to build a sense of community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	A space for children and young people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Life long / Adult learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	A space for the arts and creativity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Continued overleaf...

3	Please rank the possible activities or events which could take place in a facility? Number the boxes from 1 to 10 below in order of importance to you.			
	Faith groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	Play and youth activities & uniformed youth groups	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Mutual support groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning and development classes and courses	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Physical health activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Creative activities & literature and film groups	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Supper club, Community pantry	<input type="checkbox"/>	Early years & parenting sessions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Performing arts, choir and music space	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community tools & equipment library / Makers space	<input type="checkbox"/>	

4	Please rank the possible activities or events which could take place in a facility?	Not Very Important	Not Important	Not Sure	Important	Very Important	N/A	
		Play and youth activities & uniformed youth groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Faith Groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Mutual support groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Early years & parenting sessions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Learning and development classes and courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Performing arts, choir and music space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Supper club, Community pantry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Physical health activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Community tools & equipment library	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Makers Space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5	How would you like to see yourself being involved in this project.			
	Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/>	Management committee member (if built)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Group organiser or leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	Project member (Project planning and design)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fundraiser	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community user / participant	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	

6	What would you name the community facility and the reason?
---	---

7	Would you be supportive of a community facility within Westpark Village?
---	---

8	Please tell us more the reason you scored the previous question
---	--

The Strategic Green Spaces

9	What do you think improves these shared spaces?			
	CCTV, safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	Location interpretation / signage	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Art	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refreshment kiosk / toilet facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Safe dog / pet areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	Space for physical activity such as the Bike Track	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nature trails	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quiet reflective spaces	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Wild flowers, bulbs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Seating areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Litter reduction	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community orchard / foraging opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	

10	Please tell us how the strategic Green Space and its amenities makes you feel?
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Funding and delivering events and activities

11	What events or regular activities would you like to see developed and supported ?			
	Nature and wildlife sessions	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sports events (park run, cycling, orienteering)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Music events	<input type="checkbox"/>	Seasonal events	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Volunteering sessions	<input type="checkbox"/>	Family fun days	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Arts events and festivals	<input type="checkbox"/>		

12	Please let us know about events and activities you think could be supported by the Westpark Levy and the Westpark Levy Trust.
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About You

13	Your Name:			
14	I am:			
	A local resident / levy payer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vistor to Westpark	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Westpark levy paying business	<input type="checkbox"/>	Organisation interested in Westpark	<input type="checkbox"/>
	A local resident / non levy payer (other areas of Faverdale, Branksome other areas of Darlington)			<input type="checkbox"/>
15	Prize Draw			
	Each completed questionnaire will be entered in to our prize draw (4 prizes of a £25 voucher) to be spent at a Westpark levy paying business. By completing your email address below you agree to us contact you should you win only. email address.			
16	Keeping in touch?		YES	NO
	Can we use your email address to keep you informed about wats going on with the Westpark Levy Trust and events and activities being organised?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	Age In Years			
	Under 18	<input type="checkbox"/>	18-29	<input type="checkbox"/>
			30-45	<input type="checkbox"/>
			46-60	<input type="checkbox"/>
			over 60	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	Gender			
	Non-binary	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	Accessibility - Do you have a condition which inhibits your use of the park?			
	None / not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical disability / condition	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Mental health condition	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for answering our questions.

We will be combining all of the responses and comments and these will be used by the Trustees to plan future activities. The output will also be available to view at our special Open Day on February 9th at West Park Academy.

Planned Works & Maintenance

In the coming months, Levy funds will be used as part of the ongoing maintenance of the park.

Work will include the replacement of fences and fence posts, where required, though some replacement posts won't be needed in areas where vegetation and shrubs have filled the spaces and now create a natural barrier. Repair and maintenance work is also scheduled to restore paths in the park which have been affected by heavy rains. Various drainage projects to protect the paths and prevent some of the larger (dog-friendly?...) puddles from forming are also due to take place in the coming year.

Repair and maintenance work is scheduled throughout the coming months



This year we are allocating funds to support a number of activities and events.

One of these is to fund a 'feasibility study' to explore the possibility of a community centre. At recent meetings there has been considerable support for this. There is an area of land at the western end of the new phase which has been identified as suitable. It is likely it will share parking space with a

proposed new GP practice surgery which is currently also under consideration. Trustees are keen to discover what people would like from such a community facility. Please complete the questionnaire in the centre pages of the newsletter or scan the QR Code on page 9 to see the online version. We are also holding a drop in event on 9th February where you can chat to Trustees and share your thoughts.

THE LEVY TRUST has been established to support Westpark being a great environment to live in. Each year, alongside this newsletter, residents will receive their annual demand which is linked to the Retail Price Index. You can find out more about the Trust and how our money is spent by visiting our website and reading all of the Trust documents.

<https://friendsofwestpark.com/wplt>

FROM CHEMICALS TO COMMUNITY

CARING • SHARING • DARING

It's taken 20 years but the Westpark Estate is now completed and close to being fully occupied.

Since planning permission was granted in 2002, Bussey and Armstrong have transformed this, once derelict, eyesore of a 'Chemical Works' into a proper community with around 700 new homes, ranging from one / two bed apartments to two, three and four bedroom starter and family homes. Bussey and Armstrong have also partnered with Bernicia and Railway Housing Association (our relationship with which goes back nearly 100 years) to provide affordable housing for shared sale or rent and have over 120 apartments for rent in Catcastle, Chaldron, Elizabeth & Belah Court and at Tillage Green.

You're part of something pretty amazing!

Westpark Village Centre, which includes West Park Academy, The White Heifer That Travelled pub & Kid's 1st Children's Nursery were completed in 2007 with the M&S Foodhall and flagship Aldi stores following in 2017.

Architecturally, the estate reflects the Arts & Crafts style using good quality locally sourced materials put together by our own craftsmen. While we have several long service employees (the record is 70 years) some of our our people have only ever worked for us at Westpark yet still have 20 years service! The Art Strategy which we implemented for Westpark is also nearing completion with the final street signs now being installed. You will find the final street map on our website and copies are available free of charge from our Sales Centre at 90 Collingsway.



THE FUTURE

YIELDING • WIELDING • SHIELDING

Across the road (that is, across Edward Peaseway) at Westpark Garden Village, we have started development of four / five bedroom homes at Juniper Avenue to complement and add variety to those being offered by our partner developers, Gentoo, Thirteen & Cussins Homes.

Green links are being provided both through and around the housing which, as with Westpark, will include artworks, bespoke signage and exercise & play facilities designed to extend and improve the use of the open spaces. The Art Strategy had again been created with Bill Herbert with street names that reflect the theme of Yielding Wielding Shielding. If you live in one of these homes, you

may wonder where the street names were derived from. To help you we have commissioned a new street map which will explain the background of the themes used which are Archaeology & The Teesdale Assemblage, Charles Dickens & the Arts and The Mines and Dams of Upper Teesdale & Weardale.

A link to the map is available on the Westpark Levy Trust website here <https://friendsofwestpark.com/street-names> and at Bussey and Armstrong's website. Paper copies will be available shortly at the Bussey and Armstrong Sales Centre.

So, thanks you to our people and customers for the last 20 years and here's to another 20 !

Hardly a Walk in the Park

At the Friends' of Westpark meeting in March, participants were introduced to Caroline Mackenzie from Cleveland Orienteering Klub (CloK)(sic) who told us that the club (or should that be the Klub?) had received funding from Sports England to create some new orienteering courses throughout the area which would incorporate a new orienteering app.



The offer was open to Westpark and it was decided at the meeting to accept and in June a new series of orienteering points were installed complete with QR codes and a microchip linking to the app. Each of the 20 posts features a 'brass rubbing' metal image funded from our successful bid to the Arts Council. If you're looking for an interesting way to spend

an afternoon and get to know the park better, then why not try our CloK's Westpark challenge! Westpark MapRun Navigation Challenge (visit clock.org.uk for details and downloadable maps)

To discover more about Cleveland Orienteering Klub visit clock.org.uk



NEXT PHASES FOR WESTPARK

A new play park is scheduled to be created on the west side of Edward Pease Way.

This will form part of the new landscaping and amenities which are planned to ensure the new phase matches the quality play, art, recreation and environmental benefits which we enjoy throughout the earlier development phases. We are also working with Stephen Pardue, the designer of the notice boards, to provide a series of finger posts and waymarkers around the estate to help with navigation.



The early phases of Westpark can be summarised as a nature reserve surrounded by houses. This latter stage of development will effectively be housing surrounded by a nature reserve. 2023 will see the masterplan begin to take shape. You can find out more from the Bussey and Armstrong website www.busseyarmstrong.co.uk including some fascinating background on the history of the site and information about our street names and the reasons behind them. Also in the new phase there current

discussions about building a local health surgery which would potentially share a carpark with the community facility we discuss elsewhere in the magazine. Please go online or fill in our questionnaire to tell us what you would like to see or use as a new community use building. And if you can join us at **West Park Academy on 9th February from 4.00pm - 6.30pm** for a drop in session to find out more about our plans and share your thoughts.

Visit www.busseyarmstrong.co.uk to find out the fascinating history of the Westpark site and street names.



Ann Cuthbert

...is the Teesside poet who worked with residents and children from West Park Academy as part of the Queen's Jubilee celebrations at Westpark funded by the Arts Council and County Durham Community Foundation. Here is one of the poems Ann herself wrote at the time, "Your Westpark".



Your Westpark

I'm your Westpark – an ark for Nature where blackbirds and woodpeckers nest, where orange tip and brimstone flutter and bees buzz their best in wildflower meadow.

You exercise around my tracks – jog, push prams, ting bike bells, play hidey games. Dogs bark. You say hello, chat to folk you know only by their dogs' names.

When lockdown seized your lives, I threw a lifeline of wide spaces. My heights challenge you to climb, to see across to local places. I reverberate to all points of the Iron Circle compass.

I spark your interest. Not always so open, I keep you in the dark. I store secrets - dare you search my mystic landscape? What's through there? What's round that corner? It's a quest.

On Tillage Green, through archways you flow to school, to work, to shop, go to relax at Cactus Cafe, cool destination where you eat carrot cake, de-stress, feel refreshed.

Look up, look down, look back but Let's look forward – that's the key. Caring, sharing, daring, let's make our mark, Westpark Community.



Family Consultation Open Evening

Join us at the Westpark Family Consultation Open Evening from 4.00pm-6.30pm on 9th February at West Park Academy.

Refreshments and children's activities will be provided. Come along with the family and see the latest plans for the next phases of the development including play area, new nature reserve area and find out what everyone thinks about a new community centre. We will even have some initial artist's impressions of what it could look like based on the answers to our questionnaire you have seen in this newsletter.



Fill in our questionnaire on pages 9-12 and you could win £100

We want to know your thoughts on a Westpark 'community centre'? At this stage we are only seeking ideas to inform a 'feasibility study' which will provide us with some initial plans. If there is enough support in the community to take this

further, we will form a special task and finish group to begin to raise the money and support from a range of sources e.g. National Lottery; Local Authority; Tees Valley Combined Authority; County Durham Community Foundation etc. We will also produce a business case to ensure that as a community we will be able to support the ongoing running of any such facility. But at this stage we are only seeking ideas and a sense of who and how we might use a 'community centre'.

Years 2 & 3 from West Park Academy ask...

Would you dare?

WOULD YOU DARE?



Glide down the slide
on a deckchair?

Dig a hole in the
sand and throw it
everywhere?



**West Park
Academy**



Roll down the
hill with a
polar bear?



Do a
wheelie
in the air?



Sit on the rocks
in a wobbly
chair?



Jump in the snow
with your feet
bare?



Shout through the
arch and give a
scare?



Run round the
field with all your
mates there?



Ride down the hill
with your hands in
the air?



Pick a beetle up at
playtime and give
it some care?