

Haringey Friends of Parks Forum

The umbrella network for the 40+ Friends groups for public green spaces of all kinds throughout Haringey

www.haringeyfriendsofparks.org.uk

Next meeting for all Friends groups

Saturday 7th November, 10am – 1pm

at Bruce Castle Museum

Report of meeting, 5th September 2015, Bruce Castle Museum

Present: Joan Curtis (**Friends of Lordship Rec**), Gordon Hutchinson (**Alexandra Park**), Clare Parry (**Downhills Park**), Alison Watson (**Queens Wood**), David Warren (**Parkland Walk**), Joyce Rosser (**Priory Common**), Phil Chinn (**Wolves Lane**), Dave Morris (**Lordship Rec + Tottenham Cemetery**), Clif Osborne (**TCV/Railway Fields**), Anna Nichols (**TCV**), Jackie Goodwin (**Finsbury Park**), Martin Ball (**Down Lane Park**), Ceri Williams (**Chestnuts Park**). + Simon Farrow attended for the **Council** for the second half of the meeting. **Apologies:** Catherine (**Coldfall Wood**), Petal (**VCKCCR Residents Assn**), Deborah Cawkwell (**Markfield**).

1. Minutes of July 2015 meeting

Agreed.

2. Matters arising

Marathon Haringey parks' manager, Tony Healy, ran the marathon to raise money for the Forum. Unsure about the final amount - £560 raised through Paypal (being kindly stored in Haringey Federation of Residents Associations bank account). Tony says he'll update us at our next meeting..

Walks New walk planned following the route of the former Palace Gates railway across Haringey. Maybe some of marathon money could be used for this. Need to make sure the libraries are making the 2 current walk maps available and find more ways of promoting them. Joan has met with officers from Council departments wanting to work with us on a Haringey Walking Weekend late next year including our 2 existing walks plus others across the borough and in our parks.

3. Planning Policies

Council has drafted a new borough-wide Local Plan, and are now proposing to sell off many housing estates and public land to developers for 'redevelopment'. Parks groups need to be vigilant and lobby hard where there are any plans threatening green spaces or our members' communities. Need to check latest Council proposals regarding redevelopments adjacent to Downhills Park on Keston Road Site, Lordship Rec, Finsbury Park and other spaces. Final version of draft planning document to be presented for approval by Council in mid October. Will be a possible 8 week public consultation around the end of the year with public enquiry in Spring. The Our Tottenham network will call evening seminar on Local Plan and the process on Wed 14 October to inform campaigners on how to professionally deal with planning laws and issues like development of land adjacent or on the perimeter of parks and

threats of loss of green space. Big lobby of the Council on 23 November re local plan and controversial sites. Other groups will be lobbying re Community Centres being lost, and Council estates under threat.

Ermine Road and Plevna Crescent was railway land that has been sold off to developers. Planning permission to build has been turned down twice by the Council. Tottenham Friends of the Earth have been campaigning hard but after appeal Ermine Road was again refused but planning permission was granted for Plevna Crescent for a depot for Crossrail.

4. London and National Parks Networks

London Friends Groups Network meetings continue successfully, held every 2 months. All welcome. Next meeting Oct 12 at City Hall.

Campaign for London to become a *National Park City* gaining pace – could declare it by public acclaim if 2 thirds of London's Councillors were to support it.

Dave Morris is now chair of the *National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces* – the organisation coordinating Friends Forums and Friends Groups across the UK.

5. Sustainable Haringey network

Divesting from fossil fuels Investigation into where Haringey invests their funds in the light of climate change. Some Haringey groups have come together to petition to demand that Haringey divest from any business which is involved in the exploration or production of coal and oil, and immediately freezes any new investment in fossil fuel companies. Agreed that Haringey Friends of Parks Forum support this.

Compost Giveaway Local activists have organised another giveaway on 18 October – Alexandra Park

6. PARK REPORTS

Priory Common: Orchard going well. Sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) are being installed at Rectory Gardens, Priory Common and Park Road (Dale Court).

Downhills Park: The Friends' annual Art in the park event was again a great success with 1000 people attending. Groundwork met with stakeholders to discuss future maintenance and plans for sustainability. Still not getting information about the development of Keston Road adjacent to the park which could affect areas of the park. Couple of mugging incidents and working with police. Concerns about lack of equipment for toddlers in recently refurbished playground. *Simon Farrow replied - Will take the comments about toddlers and new playground back to Martin Hall.*

Chestnuts: Outdoor gym is finished and being well used. 1 month after installation still no bins. Trust for London and Tree Trust have funded orchard, wildlife meadow and willow sculptures with lots of Friends' volunteers involved to sustain them. Continuing with hedging around park. Friends have organised 14 weekend events over last 6 months, and fundraising for improvements. Lack of communication between sections of council making it difficult for Friends to find out information about what is supposed to be carried out in terms of grass

cutting and general maintenance. **Simon Farrow replied** - *Need a regular meeting with parks officers as in other parks.*

Queens Wood: 200 family members. Friends have organised lots of walks and the woods have received a green flag. Monthly working parties with TCV are going well with good liaison with Ian Holt. Coppicing programme is being regularly monitored by David Bevan and now seeds are sprouting in newly opened up light areas. There is a problem with compaction of soil with more people visiting the woods. Looking into solutions found in Highgate Woods – fencing certain tree areas to protect them. Judges came round from London in Bloom. **Simon Farrow replied** - *Several Haringey sites have been put forward for London In Bloom and they are on the Haringey website although the results are not yet known.*

Parkland Walk: Friends sessions with TCV very effective. Ran a guided walk and were awarded green flag. Not much progress on action against encroachment. Need to develop a coherent strategy on Graffiti.

Friends campaigning about planning application from developer at Francis Place, a cottage in Parkland Walk in Highgate. 300 objections on planning website and 1100 signatures on petition. Objecting on grounds that there is no benefit to community or council. Want to confirm if the covenant disallowing vehicles and digging up of land still applies. **Simon Farrow replied** - *The Council needs to make 2 decisions on Planning Permission and Construction Management Plan. At present the covenant prevents works being done and it is deemed of no overall benefit to the Council. Can't conceive of the situation changing.*

Wolves Lane: Very positive – website, wolveslanecentre, is up and running with 400 social media followers. 200 people are now on email list to get updates. Started selling produce at local market and will be present at Jazz event at Woodside Park. 2500 school children came through the centre. Cabinet Member for Education visited. Kelly Lloyd, Council projects officer with the remit planning the future sustainability of the Centre, held a workshop with staff and stakeholders and 17 attended with much enthusiasm. The Friends, Adult Services and others need to put together a plan to work towards a zero subsidy from Council but are concerned about timescale for this.

Finsbury Park: There has been a revival in the friends group and becoming more active. Hugh Hayes led a guided walk re the History of the park. The Friends are very concerned of the impact of the 45,000 people who attended the Wireless Festival. Emergency exits were not safe and were used as entrances due to the large crowds. There was inadequate security to deal with break-ins. A site visit after the event revealed ground-in glass and bottle tops, nitrous oxide metal tubes in play area and needles were found in Finsbury Park plant nursery used by vulnerable adults for training. Management of the whole event was substandard, no proper arrangements for such crowds were made with ensuing traffic chaos. Regarding other matters, a water tap was put in with no drainage. Cyclists come over bridge at high speed past the children's playground which is dangerous and should be protected. **Simon Farrow replied** - *Ongoing scrutiny review of event programme taking evidence from wide variety of people. Will be public meeting 19 October. Not a review of policy just a review of this one event.*

Tottenham Cemetery: 12 members of the Friends had walk about with management (Dignity) – very positive – attempt to identify key issues. Need to clarify responsibilities of Dignity and Council. **Simon Farrow replied** - *Dignity need to clear Moselle channel.*

Railway Fields: Various events organised by Friends – lots of people turned up despite rain. Bat Walk. Volunteers to open up on Sundays and a couple of days in the week. *Simon Farrow replied - Very close to new lease agreement with TCV for 3 more years.*

Lordship Rec: All going really well in the Rec and park usage is greatly expanded with the establishment of the Hub with its café. The Hub had taken up a lot of Friends' energy over the last few years. The groups facilitated or supported by the Friends over the years have all been active. The Wildlife group and Woodland Group continue to work in both areas of woodland with TCV and the Friends have again gained a green flag. Planning more conservation work on the lake. Organised a Wild in the Rec festival to celebrate all things natural in the rec and are organising (with Back 2 Earth) our annual Tottenham Flower and Produce Show on 19 September. There have been a whole series of other events organised by associated groups, including a Blocorama steel bands event, a Youth Fest and a One World Folk Fest. The Council have got funding for a new Outdoor Gym that should be built by the end of the year. We monitor the water of the Moselle River for levels of pollution and are concerned that the Council do not have anyone in place in their legal dept. to enforce the correct drainage from houses and buildings up stream of the park identified by Thames Water. The Friends with other local organisations have been campaigning strongly with a petition against the inclusion of a large part of Lordship Rec to be used for housing in the Council's draft planning document. They are opposing any possible future plans for the demolition and redevelopment of all the social housing estates adjacent to the park including Broadwater Farm. *Simon Farrow replied - No news yet on new staff re river pollution misconceptions*

Alexandra Park: Friends Group is growing. Summer and Autumn walks and talks in winter. Trust put on Summer Festival to encourage people to use the park and the Friends had a stall. Met with Parks Manager to discuss events being appropriate. Mostly working well together and events not disruptive of other park users. (Silent) Drive-in Cinema . There is a new CEO for the Trust which now has a wholly women management team. Park Manager working with Friends and Stakeholders on a new vision on the direction of the park.

Down Lane Park: Becoming a Fields in Trust site – protected by covenant for all time – at first only a part of the park but making sure it will include the whole park. There have been improvements to fencing, entrances and lamp posts. The Funfair caused some damage to path edges. They had a bad attitude to Friends, let themselves in early, did corporate flyposting. Friends supported 2 smaller and friendlier community events. After much lobbying, the proposed Green Road Link Road will now not go through park – awaiting confirmation in writing. Waiting for further improvements including café and MUGA and need to raise funding for these. *It was suggested that all groups should try to get a covenant for their sites via Fields in Trust.*

Tottenham Green East: Are there going to be any improvements made? *Simon Farrow replied - Will find out*

The Paddock: Are there any plans to make improvements? *Simon Farrow replied - The Paddock is in a bit of a crisis and needs a Friends Group to take it on. Tottenham Regeneration Team Manager to lead on masterplan for the area and some dialogue is presently ongoing with Friends of Down Lane.*

7. Council Updates

There is now a 3 year plan that shows yet another reduction of £1.2m for the parks service over that period - there will be a change in where and how the funding for parks is generated. £900,000 will in future need to be generated by often controversial and inappropriate commercial events and this will be taken out of budget (at present £850,000 additional ringfenced funding is generated by commercial events). ***Our response** - this seems a totally irresponsible strategy.*

Operational management team will be cut from 4 to 3, more money needs to be generated from properties and empty ones leased, new ways of procuring services to be sought, possible use of solar panelling, removal of subsidy for Wolves Lane and possible contracting out of services or looking at management buy-outs/co-ops. The next six months will be spent looking at what options there are. Simon and Sarah Picton are looking at case studies to inform their decisions. Sarah Picton is working on this with Simon and Kelly Lloyd is working with Wolves Lane. Sarah Picton should formally contact the Forum and perhaps there could be a formal invitation to the Forum to have representation on the Council's Environmental (Priority 3) strategy board. Landscape review - Simon's team to work on management approaches that can decrease maintenance costs or increase Friends management role – Groundwork are supporting project with architects. ***Our response** - Friends need to be kept informed of key deadlines for any decisions. We need to consider what we are going to do and not wait for Council decisions. Things are changing quite dramatically behind the scenes. Our role needs to be to scrutinise with a legal eye to make sure that any decisions made now are not irreversible, and to speak up for green spaces at every opportunity.*

8. The Conservation Volunteers

Working with conservation teams going out to work with volunteers across the borough. New Sunday group formed to increase opportunities for weekend volunteering. At Hillcrest/Southwood Lane Highgate are supporting a newly formed community group wanting to put together a conservation action plan for neighbouring woodland. 17 people turned up to help litter pick. Have run various training courses for Haringey volunteers - Tree ID, Flower ID, Pond management etc and are continuing with those. Have organised volunteer events around Railway Fields.

9. Groundwork

The Council have asked Groundwork to attend Forum meetings.