

Minutes of Forum general meeting 2nd February 2019 - at Bruce Castle Museum

Present: Friends Groups/community representatives from: **Alexandra Park** (Robyn Thomas), **Antwerp Arms Association** (Martin Laheen), **Avenue Gardens** (Susan Delgado), **Chestnuts Park** (Ceri Williams), **Bruce Castle Park** (Klaus Kuerner and Martin Laheen), **Coldfall Wood and Muswell Hill Playing Fields** (Ann Brookhouse), **Down Lane Park** (Martin Ball), **Downhills Park** (Clare Perry), **Finsbury Park** (Clive Carter), **Parkside Malvern green spaces and Haringey Rivers Forum** (John Miles), **Hartington Park and Carbuncle Passage** (Chloe Tait), **Lordship Rec** (Joan Curtis and Dave Morris), **Meadow Orchard** (Pamela Harling), **Parkland Walk** (Cathy Meeus), **Priory Park** (Chris Chadwick), **Queens Wood** (David Warren and Alison Watson), **Railway Fields** (Liz Ixer), **White Hart Lane** (Anne Scott and Hesketh Benoit), **Wolves Lane** (Phil Chinn) **And for Part Two:** Haringey Council (Simon Farrow, Lew Smith) **Apologies:** Paddock (Quentin Given), Priory Common (Joyce Rosser), Priory Park (Alice Tringham), Springfield Community Nature Park (NAME?), The Conservation Volunteers (Clif Osbourne), Priory Park (Alice Tringham)

Part one

1 Dave Morris circulated and drew attention to - November minutes, the Forum's statement of intent and objectives, members questionnaire results from 2017, the 2010/2011 campaign flyer and a new campaign proposal.

2 An agenda for Parts One and Two was drawn up and agreed.

3 It was affirmed that the Forum has written objectives but not a full constitution. We are well organised and effective, and have recognition and good partnership arrangements with the Council. We agreed to elect a chair as a collectively agreed point of contract. Noted that Dave had carried out this role, with Joan Curtis as secretary. Dave and Joan offered to continue in this capacity and were elected by a show of hands.

4 Minutes of 3rd November 2019 were accepted with the following amendments:

Phil Chinn (Wolves Lane) said the reference to restoring the gate should be taken out. David Warren (Parkland Walk) questioned either the minute or the record of Simon Farrow's response. Clare asked for the first sentence of point 12 (Ray Swain) to be amended to say 'he was an active member of the Friends of Downhills Park'. Part two: 14 suggest referring to Stonebridge Brook Project under Chestnuts Park. Noted that not all names are accurate in the Civic Centre meeting report.

5 David Warren asked for the revised minutes to be circulated. There were several complaints that documents could not be accessed via the links on our long-established yahoogroups email list. Word attachments might be preferred. And some people invited to join the list couldn't to work out how to get on it. It was agreed to set up a new and easier to use list – Dave M offered to do.

Matters arising

6 Cathy Meeus reminded the meeting she had drafted a list of ideas about waste collection and asked for comment. It had been circulated on our list. Reminder she can be contacted via cathy@meeus.co.uk or through the Parkland Walk website.

7 Klaus wanted LBH policy on major events to be on the agenda. Agreed.

8 John Miles reported an investigation of Stonebridge Brook in (under) Chestnuts Park.

Campaigning for resources

9 Standards in parks have dropped. The impact of the 2010/2011 cuts is now being felt and communication with over-stretched officers is deteriorating. Dave proposed the Forum start a new campaign for more resources and ran

through the sources of evidence (Green Flag reports, Forum survey results, Lew Taylor's evidence to the Scrutiny committee.)

10 Dave pointed to the recent Haringey Labour Party manifesto (commitment to achieving more Green Flags and increasing investment) said the Forum has an excellent relationship with Parks, whose Strategic Review is planned to start. There is a new council regime. Attendance at the Forum itself is growing. The key demand is to implement all the recommendations from the Scrutiny Review.

11 Clare asked about the participation strategy from Andrea Keeble. Agreed the campaign focus has to be on the condition of the parks. Anne suggested there was a policy conflict within the Council failing to keep the parks in a condition to attract people who wanted to use them.

12 Green Flag reports. Klaus said it had taken a while to get access to their report. Some of it was useful but other bits over the top - ridiculous to complain about moss on paths on November. We would lose respect if we overplayed such issues - the Council had also said some points weren't significant. The truth is somewhere in the middle.

Clive said the second Finsbury Park inspection showed things still don't meet the standard even after the Council had carried out works. Chris said in the Priory Park report there was stuff they'd agree with but also things out of context, misinformation. Joan - there's a lot of stuff in Lordship rec the Friends discuss with the parks service report already. Klaus: it's the major problems that matter.

13 Dave asked are we broadly in agreement with the proposals? Can also seek backing from other organisations. Clare: larger societal/wellbeing issues we ought to make. Anne pressure from new residents with all the development. Joan said that point 13 of the Scrutiny recommendations refers to the significant contribution to long-term health.

14 Cathy: encourage responses across the Council which needs linked-up strategies. Eg. Rough-sleeping. Include newer organisations like ParkRun and TidyUp Tottenham who have identified a window of activity at the end of April.

15 Klaus: we should be approaching schools to communicate about issues like litter and health benefits. Getting into schools is difficult. Range of demands on their time.

16 **It was agreed to set up a Forum campaign group with a separate meeting open to all Friends Groups.** Saturday 23rd February was proposed if a room can be booked at the Museum. To get a debate will need 2000 signatures on a petition on the Council website. Paper signatures valid if local residents.

Ten-year strategy

17 Phil asked why the Strategy workshops aren't happening yet. We don't see we have leverage with the Council. Dave said officers had been taken up with the Green Flag issues.

18 Klaus: no engagement with Bruce Castle Park friends so we're not making any progress. The positive relationship with Parks doesn't fit. Still the threat of the NFL event – the bond with Tailgate appears set too low (Haringey should be recovering £180,000 not £100,000 as the Leader of the council says in his endorsement).

19 Anne stressed the limitations of external funding. Hesketh asked where, with events like Finsbury Park and Bruce Castle Park does the money go? Dave summed up: we have a two-pronged strategy – the joint effort for a written 10yr strategy and the campaign for greater resources. This was supported. Phil saw no evidence to suggest improvements would be put into effect. It was time to go to the press and the media.

20 London and National update Dave drew attention to a Friends' film festival event put on by London Friends of Green Spaces Network and Campaign to Protect Rural England (London). He also referred to recent 'Save Our Parks' national coverage by the Mail on Sunday applauding the work of Friends Groups. Pam reported from a recent

National Park City event at City Hall, and there is to be a LNPC festival between July 20th and 27th for which green space groups can apply for funding.

21 Joyce Rosser had emailed about the Great British Spring Clean which will take place between 23rd March and 22nd April.

22 What is the current status of ward budgets?

Part two

23 **Coldfall Wood** Quiet winter. Encouraging visits from Ed Santry who is taking things on and has intentions of his own. Spring walks planned. Goodgym doing well litter-picking. Issues with poisoning of dogs and foxes: have been discussed with Friends of the allotments. Nearby Friends of Cherry Tree wood re-establishing itself in opposition to Barnet's proposal to leave parks unlocked - petition –Keep-Barnet-parks-locked-overnight.

24 **Bruce Castle Park** Park is relatively quiet in winter. Group is bigger – 20 doing the monthly litter-pick. Midsummer Night's Dream coming on July 21st. Green flag report: on one side agree with LBH not everything in it was relevant and on other side wish someone would have come forward to talk to us. Concerned about the plans for massive commercial NFL Tailgate event. The Park is not suitable. Why does the Council think 30,000 visitors is sustainable? And the income proposed is too low. Why is this?

25 **Finsbury Park** Big park touching on three boroughs. Two of a vast range of issues. A flooded area appears to have been fixed after ten years of complaints following an incident where a woman fell off her bike into the pool. There was a trial of electronic litter-bins but the two or three installed have now all been removed. Why is this?

26 **Meadow Orchard** Land owned by health trust. Still keeping opening hours. Rendering the straw-bale house.

27 **Lordship Rec** Friends Annual report had been circulated. All is ticking over with lots of activities and projects. The Hub cooperative there has nearly signed new Lease.

28 **White Hart Lane** Communication with Glynis (now working for Council) who produced a report with priorities from a survey. Not dynamic enough so Anne asked for a second meeting to follow up. Felt there was a conflict between safety and preferences: shouldn't have to make that choice. Concerns being dismissed and ignored? In her feedback Glynis said she had raised the profile. But will safety issues be addressed first? This is key regarding access for minority groups Council says it wants to be park users. And still not received money due over an event. Confusing letter from LBH events officer not clarifying the problem.

29 **Wolves Lane** Still no permanently operating heating system. Visits by people with learning disabilities have been cancelled for last three weeks because there is nowhere to keep warm. One long-term supporter has withdrawn. Difficult to know what future approach to take? No longer appropriate for teenage group to attend from school. Recently lost a very committed chef who was trying to work on site. His advisers, the Princes Trust, offered to refit the kitchen but Consortium running the site wouldn't commit. One of the former classrooms now unusable. Its damp, the electrics are shot – things are going backwards. Great deal of effort from volunteers and council officers but without receiving any plan from the Consortium over 2 years. No positive future in sight at mo....

30 **Downhills** Busy quarter with bulb planting and trees. First meeting of the year held. Wind in the Willows event coming at some point. Is there progress on the developer's proposed access paths? Ed and TCV looking at conservation issues in the park. Still problem of waste in park.

31 **Woodside**: playground is padlocked. **Markfield**: water running everywhere. **Paignton**: condition of benches, graffiti. The plight of many parks around the borough.

32 **Down Lane Park** There has been no apology for the continuing delay in installing the MUGA. Lights are on in the car-park all day but not on the tennis-courts where they are needed. Broken outdoor gym equipment where repairs are outstanding. Cafe Connect going very well.

33 Railway Fields TCV have dealt with a tree which had come down in a nearby garden. The resulting cleared space has had winter birds congregating. New paths in the old coal yard. Three upcoming events: dawn chorus in May; pond-dipping in the summer; the lantern parade in winter. There are Saturday and Sunday openings in the last week of each month, regular conservation work in the second and fourth weeks of the month. Successful talk by David Bevan in Stroud Green Library about nature on the site and how it evolved.

34 Avenue Gardens N22 Crosses the boundary between Alexandra and Bounds Green and have been trying to engage Council. Entirely unsafe space. Litter bins too few and wrong type. No investment. Shingle inappropriately replacing tarmac at one point. Not designated a park but a green space with huge potential. Feel they are a poor relation. Have set up a Twitter account but need help to form a friends' group.

35 Alexandra Park Increased membership. Bee conservation work. Ed Santry coming to the AGM. Goodgym doing regular litter-picking. Walks – fungi, bats. 300 households to the summer social. Relationship with the Palace Trust: intending to charge for car-parking, and for professional dog-walkers. Asking the Friends for donations!

36 Parkland Walk Massive repair works to be done on all the bridges – vegetation has been cleared to permit this. Christmas tree dumping a problem and local garden waste. Electronic waste bins have been oddly sited at the Northwood Road entrance where Highways put in a bin which has now gone but attracted dumping – how do the policies fit together? Problem with householders installing gates to enter the Walk from back-gardens. Damage to the ecology. Is this a problem elsewhere? User survey carried out by Friends members. Joggers before 11am, leisure-walkers later. Very high footfall. Recommend others do this. [Circulate results].

37 Queens Wood More bins installed by Highways – dumping from people who park on the road. Rough sleeping: large numbers; the hygiene team failed for a month to pick up mattress and chairs – volunteers had to move to the edge for Veolia to take. But netting still not removed from one tree. Very old trees, some dangerous. The nursery has sometimes to cancel in high winds. Ed Santry due on March 20th as part of his wider brief. David Bevan spring walk coming up. Good events right through the summer.

38 Priory Park 31 people to January's AGM and 4 new committee members. Now two co-chairs, Chris Chadwick concentrating on projects. Friends committed to monthly litter-picks. Plant management group. Promoting Tennis for Free and Junior Park Run. Considering how to spend the environmental impact fee given to group following commercial event. Decaying entrance with a York stone problem.

39 Parkside Malvern Looking for a better response to wildlife and open space issues from the regeneration team regarding the future of Wood Green. St William starting work on the new open space/pocket park on the Heartlands.

40 Hartington Park Relatively new group. New notice board. Drawing up designs for the park – committee member who is an architect – and will consult local people about it. Three events coming up: nature walk; family picnic (Jo Cox); winter wonderland December 7th. Publicity in Tottenham News. Biggest risk is the small number of people involved at present.

41 Chestnuts AGM – in the absence of the six most committed people ten present all of whom asked to say two things about the park. Worked well and with Alistair from LBH in attendance. Coming up: hedge-laying training on Feb 21st. TidyUp Tottenham joint event on March 30th. Still need Parks Service cleaning team to do this day in day out. Successfully opposed a circus event in the park (would have damaged drip-zone under plane trees) and now opposing a marquee event with an evangelical church which it's claimed is about knife-crime. Will monitor whether or not it's a religious revival and investigate whether the bond is large enough to cover the costs of any damage.

Supported by Ed Santry made a bid for the wildflower garden. Turf and wildflower strips. Got £9.2k. Still under the old management plan wanting to make the Chestnuts School park entrance safe. £1000 towards this from the 40/20 fund. Bids made for £8k overall. Drainage system from twenty years ago has failed. Survey recently carried out of the Stonebridge Brook culvert. Disappointingly reports made available to the engineer but not yet to the Friends. As partners Friends still looking to a joint-design workshop.

The Green Flag report / alert picked up to the word the Friends' own unfinished issues from 2017 although mystery shop doesn't strategically prioritise. What would help is the frank acknowledgement from council officers that Chestnuts is going downhill. Better to say if it can't be fixed than claim that it's fine.

Simon Farrow's and Lew Smith's responses

42 White Hart Lane. Hadn't yet seen the report but a copy could be made available. Would not meet Anne about rejected application because it was for things ineligible under the small grants scheme. Would ask Glynis to take up issues there again next week.

43 Bruce Castle. No application yet from NFL re Bruce Castle Park. When there is it will go through the normal process. Policy allows for an event to take over the entire park. Safety advisory group sets the numbers. The figure of £100k for the bond is not correct. It would be £300-400,000 for a whole weekend going back into the Parks budget. Dave explained the Forum supports Friends of Bruce Castle Park in their lobbying against the policy due to the disruption and damage.

44 Trial of solar litter bins in Finsbury Park ended. Not going to be cost effective.

45 Close to sorting out the lease on the hub at Lordship Rec.

46 Wolves Lane. Still working with OrganicLea to sort the heating out. Won't move forward on the lease or plan without that.

47 Downhills. Will stop the unnecessary paths being installed by developer who are confusing planning permission and council's direct responsibility as landowner.

48 Down Lane. Apologies to Martin for not starting the work on the MUGA. Moving forward slower than expected. MB welcomed the apology.

49 Dave asked why, as repairs issues constantly coming up, not do walkabouts with Friends groups in the parks. SF With a larger team and project officer allocated for each of the six operational zones the officer will take the lead on such inspections, a bi-monthly walk round with groups. That would include Avenue Gardens. But not the six nature reserves where Ed will lead. Chris Patterson re the Paddock. (Priory – Chris thought he might have had first meeting with their designated officer).

50 Money identified at Woodside but can't deal with the playground there yet.

51 Parkland walk. Regular communication there. Response from property section and an encroachment session coming up. Will be involved with the bridge repairs.

52 At the moment the cleansing team is five people. Very difficult to get round the whole borough. Looking at how to boost that team for the spring and summer and have someone to deal with the unscheduled stuff and more outlying areas.

53 Hartington Stephen Crabtree will be able to look at the nursery proposal.

54 Chestnuts. Will go back and look at the application. There is a sliding scale of bonds but users are still liable for any actual damage. Yet to meet re Green Flag action plan.

55 TCV report. After five years the lease on Railway Fields has been sorted out. Going ahead with building the classroom.

Green Flag issues

56 Dave reported we as the Forum had decided to mount a campaign for more resources for Parks. Where are we now with the Green Flag issues?

57 SF said it had been all-consuming for the last 3 months. Half the parks are mystery-shopped each year. An unprecedented level of inspection by Keep Britain Tidy – judges had said it was all OK as recently as May. Haringey part of the group judging the scheme and remains committed to the scheme. Action plans for all the Red Flag parks but Chestnuts and Paignton not started yet. Meeting again about this next week.

58 Further criticisms raised: much in the reports that Friends groups agree with. MB: expect to see a standard and council has failed. Clive: was SF embarrassed that a second critical inspection of Finsbury Pk had followed the Haringey response to the first. SF: no because terms of reference were different.

59 Dave: we want officers to speak out for more resources. Have to get beyond crisis management. Cathy: council should pursue its own priorities and not be distracted just for the sake of the GF

The strategy workshops

60 Dave asked about progress. SF acknowledged delay and agreed to circulate the plan again indicating the champions within the Parks team. Need for a cross-cutting approach between teams. No silos. What about reporting back to the Forum? Useful to repeat the meeting in July between officers and FG reps.

61 SF: there will be a tight timetable to the workshops once the process is under way. Might need to meet with Forum more than once to follow up the workshops. There will be a cross-departmental approach.

62 Bins and waste management emphasised. Repairs to gates. Joan: what about wellbeing and health? SF: cabinet had approved joint working in principle but not put public health money into the budget.

62 Klaus. The importance of an educational approach. Working with schools to influence attitudes and see the fruits in 10 years' time. Difficult for FGs to engage with schoolchildren direct.

Ward budgets

63 Ward budgets to be discontinued. Friends groups should make applications asap for any unspent funds in this year.

Football facilities plan

64 Dave had met the Football Foundation representative/consultant to discuss what might be available funding for public green spaces. SF: Andrea to be involved. Will follow the borough's plan around this investment. Klaus asked whether it will include ongoing maintenance on top of existing budgets.

Next meeting

65 April 6th 2019 Minute-taker required.

JM: 22/02/2019

Haringey Friends of Parks Forum campaign for proper resources and maintenance of Haringey Parks

Report of Working Group meeting, 23rd Feb 2019 at Bruce Castle Museum.

Present: Klaus (Bruce castle Pk), Joan (Lordship Rec) [took notes], Dave (Lordship Rec), Ceri (Chestnuts Pk), Phil (Wolves Lane)

Campaign summary statement: We re-affirmed the statement agreed by the last Forum meeting - this sets out the evidence of crisis (eg Green Flag standards falling), the reports and policies backing our stance (Scrutiny Cttee recommendations, 2018 election manifesto promises etc), the opportunities to mobilise at this time (eg 10 yr strategy review underway), and the essential value of green spaces to all sections of our communities.

Focus of Campaign: Cabinet, Councillors, Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods, MPs and Central Govt, + support from community/park users and local organisations

Immediate minimum demands: Return to pre 2010 levels of staffing and financial resources. (Additional long-term plan to increase). Also implement all the recommendations from the Scrutiny Review.

Other departments to put resources into parks service. No to any reliance on inappropriate commercial events - they should not be allowed, but otherwise any income from these must be additional to guaranteed adequate park service budgets.

Plan of Action (between March-September as Budget setting in November)

- * lobby local councillors and Cabinet. But arrange a separate meeting with lead member, Cllr Kirsten Hearn.
- * Arrange meeting with Stephen McDonnell and Simon Farrow to discuss putting more pressure on councillors for more resources with an honest appraisal of the impossibility of running such a crucial service with low staffing and resources. Particularly need big increase of grounds staffing levels.
- * Have a public campaign to engage residents and broaden campaign.
- * engage in 10 year strategy workshops to influence policy.
- * meet with council workers/unions to discuss needs and what we can do to support them.

Actions

Leaflet - Dave to update our 2011 campaign leaflet, to be circulated to working group for approval.
Petition (online and maybe hard copy) - Dave to draft, with approval from working group.
Questionnaire: one for adults, another a more fun activity-based one for children (Joan to design).
Organise coordinated imaginative Day of Action across Haringey's public green spaces to engage community in campaign and highlight plight of parks. Aim for July 14th (if Forum agrees).
Deputation to Cabinet and Full Council meeting before budget setting meeting. Ceri to advise.
Encourage other Haringey organisations to sign up their support for the Campaign.

We agreed to arrange a meeting between the working group and Cllr Hearn and maybe a senior officer straight away, and then report back to next Forum meeting on April 6th. Next planning meeting can be scheduled after that.

PROPER RESOURCES FOR HARINGEY'S GREEN SPACES!

As underlined by the recent Green Flag judging, and increasing concern among our groups, it has been agreed we need a coordinated campaign of lobbying for adequate resources to ensure all Haringey's green spaces are properly maintained and managed.

This is something we have always called and pressed for, but now have unequivocal evidence, reports, policies and opportunities to back up our position. For example:

EVIDENCE

- Green Flag judging reports [*see some attached material*]
- Forum Survey in Dec 2017 (contrasted with one in 2012) [*attached*]
- Lew Taylor's evidence to the Scrutiny Committee
- Last summer's litter crisis
- A 2017 report for the Mayor of London concluded that for every £1 spent on public green space, £27 of public benefits were obtained

REPORTS AND POLICIES

- Scrutiny Committee 2018 report and excellent Recommendations [*attached*]
- Cabinet approval of some of the Recommendations (eg in perpetuity protection for all sites, increase number of Green Flags) and commitment that most of the rest be included in the coming 10 year Strategy Review
- May 2018 election: winning party's Manifesto Commitment to greater investment and more Green Flags

OPPORTUNITIES

- 10 year Strategic Review of Parks and Open Spaces, being conducted in partnership with the Forum
- Our good relationship with the parks service and its staff and officers
- New Council regime should be open to taking their responsibilities seriously
- A strong Forum involving very many of the local Groups

VALUE

- Our green spaces are essential resources and facilities for all ages and sections of our communities, whether for health and well-being, fitness, social cohesion, the environment, climate mitigation, flood-relief, attractive travel routes etc.
- The Cabinet and all Council departments should recognise this (see eg the recent Corporate Plan policies) and ensure the parks service is fully funded

CAMPAIGNING

The Haringey Friends of Parks Forum has therefore agreed that we launch a campaign of publicity and lobbying similar to the one in 2011. It could focus on calling for the implementation of the full 2018 Recommendations of the Scrutiny Cttee, and the Council's Manifesto commitments within say 12 months.

This could include individual groups lobbying local Councillors, a petition, a deputation to Cabinet and full Council, protests, getting backing of other Haringey community organisations etc.