

Haringey Friends of Parks Forum – General Meeting 7 Feb 2026

Present: Friends Groups reps: Quentin Given (The Paddock) – chaired, Deborah Cawkwell (Manchester Gdns, Paignton Pk) – minuted, Carol Gibbons (Manchester Gdns, Paignton Pk), Jane Hutchinson (Alexandra Pk), Patricia Moody (Alexandra Pk), Cathy Meeus (Parkland Walk), Robert Howe (Brunswick Pk), Chris Chadwick (Priory Pk), Anna Pole (TCV), Laurie White (Russell Pk – FROGS), Pamela Harling (Tottenham Cemetery), Joan Curtis (Lordship Rec), Frances Sanders (Hornsey Church Tower), Thunder Raven-Stoker (Queen's Wood), Vicci Midwinter (Coldfall Wood & Muswell Playing Fields), Ricardo Johnson (Ducketts Common, and also WHL Rec) **From 11am: Council reps:** Simon Farrow (Head of Parks and Climate Action, Haringey Council) **FGs Apologies:** Dave Morris (Lordship Rec), Clare Parry (Downhills Pk), Ceri Williams (Chesnuds Pk), Chris Arnold (Stationers Park), **LBH Apologies:** Emma Betts (Parks Inclusion Officer), Glynis Kirkwood-Warren (Parks Zonal Manager)

- **Minutes of last meeting:** Nov 2025 minutes agreed as accurate & intros

KEY FORUM ISSUES

- **Welcoming any new local groups:** no new groups reported
- **Haringey Local Plan:** Consultation closed in January. Members of the Our Tottenham network helped publicise, organised 2 meetings for community groups, and set up an online page for info: <https://ourtottenham.org.uk/haringey-draft-local-plan-2025/> Next stage: 2nd draft plan – Spring/Summer & then a public enquiry later in the year with adoption some time in 2027. Cathy raised the point that it was difficult to write on behalf of a group. Pamela tried to respond for the Green Party. Problems via the Commonplace format. Quentin asked if we would like to have a meeting with officers on it to discuss green spaces. Carol wanted to comment on increased pressure on green spaces, eg, local building in N15 on Frederic Messer Estate. Doesn't feel that they looking at it in the round. We need the big picture to be represented. Need to protect the Filter beds, Wood Green reservoir from possible house building. These sites need to be clearly marked for nature. The meeting agreed we should ask for a meeting on the Local Plan.
- **Commercial events:** Lordship Rec is facing a threat of being exploited as a cash cow - has got an application for big commercial music event lasting 7 days including put up & take down (fencing off the main field). Expecting 5k people paying to get in, plus a stage and heavy vehicles. Totally inappropriate. Friends fighting it, but don't seem to be able to get a meeting with the Council or the organisers. Council refusing to involve the Friends (even though they co-manage the Rec) or even share information. The Friends plan a community picnic on the same day - July 25th, first day of school holidays - for their 25th anniversary. They are planning a major campaign, pulling all the stops out.
- **April 18th, Day of Local Action for Nature:** Call to join in the national day of local actions/activities promoting nature and parks in the build up to the elections. Supported by the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces (NFPGS) and other national bodies. Its the date of our next Forum. Press Release/statement could be drafted. Joan has suggested a protest with Friends. We could do something in the afternoon or in Bruce Castle Park.
- **Forum Case Study for NFPGS report:** Dave has done a Case Study about our Forum to add to the major Report he is doing for the NFPGS. 938 friends groups responded to the detailed survey of Friends Groups before xmas.
- **Conservation:** No update for us from Annabel F, LBH conservation officer. Particularly important for the nature reserves, Local Plan issues, update on SINC's etc.
- **Haringey 'Year of Culture / Rebel Borough' 2027:** opportunities for involvement. Joan asked for ideas of how the Forum might contribute. A walk? Laurie suggested open dialog with re-generation and place-making team. Greening up Wood Green tube station, including old ticket office indoor garden? Haringey Community Action Network, to which the Forum is affiliated, is encouraging and promoting

independent 'Rebel Borough' activities.

- **Safer Parks for Girls & Women:** next meeting Wed 18 Feb 2026 12-1pm

PART 2 - Council officer joined the meeting at 11am -----

- **Simon Farrow – Head of Parks & Climate Action:** NB job title change, had spent a lot of time on leisure services. 120 staff were transferred last year from Fusion back to the Council. Much more time to focus on rest of parks portfolio, and liaising with Annabel, Glynis, Sarah Jones, grounds managers etc.

BRIEF REPORTS FROM LOCAL GROUPS

Queens Wood: Held recently a couple of walks and a hedgerow survey – no hedgehogs, so have area with some dead hedging. Hedgehog friendly reserve area near pond. Nothing from Annabel F for 2 & a half months. Need a management plan. Bin by frog pond, sealed off a week or so ago & in the interim a mountain of dog poo bags have accumulated. Next steps for Community Interest Levy consultation – applications for grants closed on 18 Jan. New website built by Thunder.

Priory Park: Friends' gardening group – hard-working, every week. 4 Duke of Edinburgh students. Tend to get people coming back. Nice age range. Big thing for the Friends is the pending centenary/anniversary of the park. 3 April (park opened 1926). 16 April will unveil plaques. Article going in Hornsey Historical Society bulletin. Working on commemorative stones/boulders since August. Arduous task. Started off not being v ambitious, then had to flatten entrance stone, so had to buy magic chisels – removing every bit of concrete. Detailed photos. 5 quotes from contractors. £3K + £5K spent & understood council would move to final location. If tractors can't do it, need something else. Still work to do around the historic fountain. Need commitment from Simon F for centenary. There will be the Crouch End festival. Planning to build a stage around the fountain with a series of events.

Coldfall Wood: renewing website. Walks programme ready for spring. Guides lined up. Wildflower meadow – local kids planting. Lovely posts, but need roping to stop people walking through. Currently plastic orange stuff. Will talk to TCV. Re-furbished playground equipment – awaiting news. Not heard from Annabel F re new management plan.

TCV: 40 years Railways Fields since became a nature reserve.

Brunswick Park: Small number of volunteers. Tidy & mend fencing. Rarely does anybody come from council. Maintenance issues: boundary fence - Ongoing, try to make repairs. Do a lot of stuff, that feel the council should be doing. Thanks for the swing repair & surfacing done. Need advice re wildflower meadow trial. Ongoing lack of communication from Council officers. Community has planted trees. Recently, another tree was suddenly put in by Council without telling the group. Anti-social behaviour in the park. Lovely chess table, but used as a BBQ table. Contact with police – good relationship with them.

Church Tower: What's happening about the maintenance/management agreement urgently needed between the parish & council? Veolia contract only covers v small amount of area. Lot of work for volunteers. Graffiti issues. Joshua Toulmin Smith – new tombstone. Monthly garden sessions. Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure levy fund: 18 Jan deadline – only notified day before by libdems. At last min, made a bid for raised terrace – v important part of the gardens.

Parkland Walk: The Friends thank TCV for working well in partnership. Happy with wildlife trail at Highgate end. Friends' litter picks continue. Walk re slow worms. Will work with Annabel if we can. Stakeholder meetings – year after year, same problems & year after year not dealt with: signage, increasing usage of electric bikes at unsafe speeds, encroachment (sept 2025 – currently developing a plan). Feel parks is trying to put a huge distance – used to have regular meetings. Extension of back gardens into the nature reserve. A business building a rubbish area on the Walk. Issues consistently not being dealt with. Planning application ongoing – need to ensure no encroachment whatsoever. One section of the Walk has been closed as dangerous in Islington. Need notices at beginning & end of walk. Could Haringey Council raise this with Islington Council?? Need sign at Oxford Rd & Holmesdale Road - "this section is open but you won't be able to do the whole thing". Main issue needing effective and urgent health & safety action is the north viaduct

due to dangerous stone-throwing onto the Walk. Talks: parks, police, CCTV, ensuring no loose stones, one resident looking to take legal action. Could cost council a lot of money. Local Plan: horrified to see proposal to open up bat tunnels & create cycleway – how did this ever get into the local plan?? Conflicts with every agreed priority for the Walk.

Alexandra Park: 20th anniversary of the friends' group. Plan series of events throughout the summer. 400 members. Great attendance at recent walks, and conservation sessions, In March will be scraping the meadow ahead of seeding. Wetlands area - £250K – match funding. Financial contribution from Friends, parks and Ally Pally. Also, found out about neighbourhood CIL fund very late. But official website is clunky, not user friendly.

Lordship Rec: Perimeter hedges not cut for many years and are turning into trees – Council say they are purchasing new equipment. Friends helped promote consultation over the planned £250k revamp of their playground, and are meeting up with the Council officer in charge to ensure it all goes smoothly. The Friends will create and manage a new dry garden. Friends of Harmony Gardens concerned over recent consultation over options for the adjacent Broadwater Centre, and potential threats to the community gardens which they manage. Council/Friends working on an 'Expression of Interest' to lottery for major funding – awaiting on a draft from Parks Projects team. The Friends are strongly opposing any major commercial takeover of the park this summer, which would not only damage the park but also the co-management relationship they have patiently built up with the Parks Service over the last 25 years. It would therefore sabotage the planned Lottery bid. Instead, the Friends plan a Community Picnic to celebrate their 25th anniversary. There are 2 park runs every week – up to 250 people on Saturdays + young people on Sunday. Lordship Rec paths are in a bad state – a park runner who's an expert on hard landscaping is conducting a detailed survey of all the paths to feed into any Lottery bid. Issues with anti-social behavior at the front entrance will be the key subject at a coming Neighbourhood Safety Panel with the police. The annual Tottenham Flower and Produce Festival on Sept 12th in the Rec (coordinated by the Friends) is being organised by open monthly meetings – all welcome to help.

Manchester Gardens Issues with long-term anti-social behavior and rough sleeping. Gate from 7 Sisters Road needs to be locked at night, plus increase in police patrols. Terrible weather helped keep park clean. Litter pick regularly. Veolia v helpful with us on litter pick days.

Paignton Park: Same issues as in Manchester Gardens. New revamp for playground planned for Paignton. Public engagement great. Big orthodox jewish population being consulted. Friends looking forward to a works start date. Tiny Forest planted last spring. Last year driest, no water source. More trees will be planted (delayed). Need a watering plan. Communications issue: borders planted but unfortunately strimmed to ground level. Paths - weed killer-ed. All around our wildflower bed. Now wet, muddy, slippery.

Ducketts Common: Regular successful basketball events.

White Hart Lane Rec: Working with boys sports club. Aiming for the space to be transformed.

Tottenham Cemetery: Have been calling for an updated management plan, including for nature conservation, for over 3 years. Lots of opportunity to make areas positive for wildlife – but its strimmed to death.

Russell Park/FROGS: Issues with new playground. Dividing fence replaced by FROGS. Signage. Anti-social behaviour. Foldable bollard. Car problems. Lot of trees cut back. 17 new trees from funding. Water points (not enough) vital last summer as hottest & driest on record. Avenues of trees – highways & parks passing responsibility to each other.

The Paddock: Site has been extended. Japanese Knotweed contractors working on it.

COUNCIL RESPONSES TO THE REPORTS AND ISSUES ABOVE

- **Conservation Officer:** Annabel F has only a finite resource. Simon F to take back re securing a meeting with her as we have been asking for for 2-3 years.
- **Neighbourhood Community Interest Levy:** Comes from developers. Allocation is co-ordinated by the planning dept, and via the Commonplace consultation platform. 80% of budget goes on strategic needs.

Parks get some. Then there's a local neighbourhood CIL element. £1.7m collected up to May 2022 when ward boundaries changed. Pot of money which community & council can suggest how to spend. Allocation will be made at work cabinet. Things not funded in this round will be rolled into next round.

- **Pre-election 'purdah' period:** 6 weeks in the run up to the May 7th Council elections. Starts 23 March. Means from service perspective that officers can't be seen to be supporting any Councillors. Council had hoped that there would have been some level of additional funding after the last general election. It was raised that we need reassurance that there will be no reduction of service, and communications – indeed public services desperately need much more funding.
- **Playgrounds start of works:** 8 playgrounds will each be getting a substantial repair/upgrade (due to Section 106 money from development) over the next few months. The first 2 to start will be Paignton Park (23 Feb) and Chestnuts Park (9 March). Other playgrounds may benefit from other funding streams, or possibly from re-purposed equipment from existing sites.
- **ASB in Brunswick Park:** Robert & Simon F to arrange a joint site visit.
- **Watering:** Council has 3 bowsers to cover the borough.
- **Parkland Walk:** Meeting upcoming re viaduct safety works – needs police & parks collaboration. Encroachment – monthly departmental meeting – Simon F will take back.
- **Council Mowing Equipment:** Complete replacement programme for equipment: cut & collect; needed for long grass/meadow management.
- **Government's Pride in Place Funding:** £5 billion over next 10 years. Similar to the previous 'levelling up' fund. Some boroughs got funding: Haringey got £1.5m. Working through a series of ideas. Parks service will get £660k. £100k for tree planting and Bruce Castle oak protection. Plus repairs to paddling pools. Improvements to Ducketts Common Playground. £160k for a Lordship Rec natural play area. Plus money for new skatepark facilities.
- **Wider Council Budget:** Like a lot of councils, Haringey is in dire straits. Not enough savings to get a balanced budget. Had to borrow £11m from Government. Need £27m this year, think next year £50m. Big repayments. Currently any expenditure over £1k is scrutinised. Simon F is sad the Parks Service could provide bulbs for planting last year. Simon himself can't procure over £25k. Vacancies in hygiene team. Until Government give Councils proper amount of money, there will be worsening problems. Robert: we need acknowledgement of the enormous input by Friends Groups. Need to work together.
- **Glyphosphate:** Council has been working to gradually eradicate usage. 60% of spaces not using. Have some alternative tech eg rootwave alternative – which uses electricity. Not great in every location, and alternatives can be much more labour intensive. Pesticide Action Network lobbying for a national ban. Highways use glyphosphate on streets. Where used, is pre-mixed, using minimum - Council not wedded to it.
- **Rough sleeping:** Money from Government for dedicated worker to work with homeless team & ASB. Link to review of bye-laws and current public space protection orders (PSPOs). There are some borough-wide PSPOs. E-bikes are a growing safety issue on Parkland Walk and elsewhere. Reporting is essential.
- **Local Plan:** Commonplace website set up with focus on individuals. People can send emails too. Agreed we need a meeting with Forum reps and someone from planning, plus someone from parks re next draft Plan. Simon F to arrange. Presumably after elections.