

Haringey Friends of Parks Forum – General Meeting 18 April 2026

Present: Friends Groups reps: Dave Morris (Lordship Rec) – chaired; Deborah Cawkwell (Manchester Gdns, Paignton Pk) – minuted, Quentin Given (The Paddock), Joyce Rosser (Priory Common), Klaus Kuerner (Bruce Castle Pk), Chris Chadwick (Priory Pk), Robert Howe (Brunswick Park), Chloe Chandler (Hartington Pk), Filiz Erol (Fairland Pk), Frances Saunders (Hornsey Church Tower), Joan Curtis (Lordship Rec), Susan Beckett (Nightingale Gdns), Thunder Raven-Stoker (Queens Wood), Laurie White (Noel Pk FROGS), Carol Gibbons (Manchester Gdns, Paignton Pk), Robyn Thomas (Alexandra Pk), Peter Gray (Nightingale Gdns), Kate Swade (Tower Gdns Pk), Robert Thairu (Go Green Collective), Anna Pole (TCV). **From 11am: Council reps:** Chris Cavalier (As observer). **FGs Apologies:** Ceri Williams (Chestnuts Pk), John Miles (Haringey Water Squad), Clare Parry (Downhills Pk), Cathy Meeus (Parkland Walk), Vicci Midwinter (Coldfall Woods & Muswell Hill Playing Fields), and CREOS. **LBH Apologies:** other LBH officers sent apologies due to purdah.

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING: Feb 2026 minutes agreed as accurate.

WRITTEN REPORTS: Hornsey Church Tower, Chestnuts, Coldfall Wood, Lordship Rec, Muswell Hill Playing Fields ..

BRIEF REPORTS FROM LOCAL GROUPS

QUEEN'S WOOD: blind ramblers walk, not hedgehogs – building good space, they are across the road in Highgate Wood. An area dead-hedged close to lower pond & enclosed - one of few areas that gets grass. Keep pressing council for coppicing. 2025 botanical survey online. Number of species about the same. But incidence lower for a number of them. Dawn chorus walks. Membership pretty good. Info stall in wood to attract extras. 170 families. Volunteers: 7-15 on a reg basis. A few young people – not in families – students. Issues continue to be forest schools – commercial enterprises. Supposed to be licenced but not.

FROGS Noel Park Estate: Spring clean up. Sunday morning gardening club. Young children. Water is an issue. Festival 12 July. Need a stage – any contacts? Downside: next year's budget is not good, dire. Easter Egg hunt.

PAIGNTON PK: Playground refurb paused. Old trees removed. 10 new trees. New watering plan. Issue also for Tiny Forest. Communication is poor with council: various flowering trees cut back really hard, branches dumped in park. Then fly-tipping added to the pile.

MANCHESTER GDNS: Good pruning job. ASB – big problem. No response re locking gates to break habits. Really small group. to grow numbers. Reasonable litter pick. Twice strimmed – killed vibe. Lack of bulbs this year was missed. Need Weed killer - advice re the council stopping doing it.

ALEXANDRA PK: Good spring activities: walks, trees, flowers. Today fungi. Need to get money. Tomorrow a 'birdathon' fund raiser to pay for a bird-watching platform. Going to try crowd-funding. Consulted with Palace – they will do admin. Need several thousand pounds. About 390 reg households as friends – all varieties. Preparing for friends 20th anniversary, 28 June. Stalls & lots of nice things for kids.

NIGHTINGALE GARDENS: Mini tulip festival: mixture of sources. Photo op. Also problem with lack of water. Borders in summer struggle. New volunteer – 6 now - Tues pm & Sunday. Successful bird boxes - both used. Planning another 2. Still litter picking. Great TCV day – 12-13 people. Deadhedged. Woodchip path – fantastic (woodchip from TCV). Diggly Dell – rough sleepers problem. Controlling footfall with paths & dead hedging. Lights out for nearly 3 months. UK power issue. Deadline tomorrow for fixing it. Disgraceful. Thoroughfare, but pitch black, need a torch. Trimming trees around lights to give a bit more light.

FAIRLAND PK: Friends group re-launched. Playground very poor. 2 decades old equipment. Doesn't meet modern standards. Friends inactive for 3 years. New group applying for bulbs – Bulbs for London. Almost like an extension of school. Lot to do. Speaking to local councillors. Bid via Community Interest Levy. Simon Farrow liaison. Badges for school kids to wear seem popular. Primary school. Getting kids to write letters in school to councillors. £40K.

HARTINGTON PK & CARBUNCLE PASSAGE: Active 5 years. Restructure & consolidation + Forum attendance. More committee members. Events in park. More roles: fundraising team, secretary, 7/8 on committee. Lot of volunteers when run events. Need some older people, retired with time. CP – concrete corridor. Japanese knotweed. Painted fences in passage. Working with residents to make more inviting, less scary. Will continue. Kew Gardens project. Vertical planters - getting people to adopt. Planting Day coming up. MUGA/Playzone thru HC. Right now space is terrible but well used. Mixed feelings about it. Worries about bookable space. Also concerns re installation date – Summer would be a problem. Was previously due to finish mid July. Pembury Nursery site middle of park – burnt down 3 years ago – electrical fault. Building now razed. Going to become some sort of nursery garden & nearby primary school + Friends hope to use.

HORNSEY TOWER: Report submitted. Big change: nursery closing. Will become a special unit for another school. Friends had an informal relationship to get water & power for events. Want refurb to include tap & socket – secure. Family Joshua Toomin Smith – replacement grave stone. May need to go to church planning. Talk about him next Monday at Historical Society. 2 gardening sessions per month. Just about holding together. Disappointed not to get NCIL grant. £7k for remembrance garden. Increasingly unstable, used for events. Planted 11 trees – all in blossom – 1 tree disappeared. Veolia litter pick at arms length – not doing rest – all left to volunteers. But now looks stunning - 20 years ago, it was scary.

TOWER GARDENS PK: Been busy. Supported by Tower Gardens Residents' Group. Residents lobbying to take over nearby empty community building. Need somewhere to store tools, etc. Talking to council. Over 1 year ago, swings & wooden climbing frame taken away. No consultation. Promised some 2nd hand. Got some NCIL. £80K. Pushing to get some swings for summer. Tree surgeons dumped on top of dead hedging. Circle of trees – needed 2 replaced. New 2 snapped. 27 June – annual community picnic. Borrowing some games for a donation. Trying to branch out – been tulip-ing. Also work with another local small green space. Need more people. Used to be able to use park building for loos, storage. Lack of play equipment affects them too. Building could be used a lot more creatively.

BRUNSWICK PK: Big ASB problem. Was site of demolished railway 7 Sisters to Ally Pally. 10 years ago friends set up. 20 members. 3-4 regs. Planted trees, wild flower area. Nobody has contacted re trail. Friends doing best. Litter picking extensive. Police – good relationship. On Ward Panel. Rough sleepers now managed. £85K NCIL. Walkabout with Simon F. Fence repaired. Talked about more formal entrances. HC difficult communication. Mowing litter. Tesco money, name in railings. BBQ area. Initially wild flowers area was lovely - fenced.. but then no follow-up. What results? (3 new meadows were created across borough. Who is responsible?? TCV planted).

PRIORY PK: Great location. March AGM – well attended. Gardening Group – no membership sec - hard to get people to do the boring jobs, but people like to do the gardening. So admin roles shared within a small group of people. Anniversary: in 1926 became Priory Pk. Fund raising, string quartet 70 people, cash bucket, sum up account, QR codes, payment links, orgs really well, only charges 2.5%. Used for Friends calendar for sale last year. Centenary Celebrations: unveiling of plaques on the stones (Simon F committed to move). Different to talking to a stream of officers. Must await new financial year. Telehandler turned up. Biggest 950KG – entrance stone. Prep areas around fountain. Good deal Travis Green. Cash a/c – reduced to half price. Catherine West MP attended ceremony – 40 people – stones have names & characters. Then to cafe. On 14 June event, partnered with Crouch End festival (experienced hands). 8 schools signed up. Main b'day celebration. 4-5 July classic car rally. 50 cars. 7 Lotus. Hornsey original home of Lotus Cars. Procession from pk to old factory. Paddling pool: nothing until after election.

BRUCE CASTLE PK: AGM – June. May - Open House. Ideally one official, but split the load. Not many people that can become active. Monthly litter pick 10-15 people. Continue with theatre once a year (Sat 22 August). Trying to raise money for that. Day-to-day things. V good contact in Ops team. Been trying to focus on the big things: oak restoration, lobbying for playground, 120 signed petition. £300K allocated to refurb playground. Supposed to start last October... MUGA – long delayed. Hope happening this year. 2-tier system issues. Group small since 2015-16 (hard core). Castle, church, Antwerp Arms, cemetery, park have formed Bruce Castle charity/heritage quarter – idea to get access to much more money and profile. Don't know if people would have time to sit on board. New café managers.

PRIORY COMMON/RECTORY GRDS: Orchard – reg group meet every week. Paintings on building. Regular delivery of woodchip. Main activity litter picking. Orchard area looked after.

GO GREEN COLLECTIVE – ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: Involving community. Amplify what we are doing. Improve level of recycling in Chestnuts park. In community what does that mean? 4 litter picks during Great British Spring Clean (based at Chestnuts Pk) - friend of Friends. Would help with getting more local people involved & change mindsets. Grass is cut before litter is picked. Stall at coming Go Green festival.. events all through June.

THE PADDOCK: Finally lease agreed with Thames Water & HC. Whole triangle will be managed by TCV. Work now started - ideally would have started in winter; new paths, wildlife watch. TCV organises a lot, so Friends maintain website/FB, some walks.

LORDSHIP REC: Friends 25th year – started 2001. Core group open meetings monthly with 5 autonomous working groups + also other Lordship Rec user groups. Friends co-manage the park with the council – Friends carry out all the conservation work. Vapes becoming an issue fgor the Litterpicking group – need to be separate vape + laughing gas cannister disposal – explosion worry. Seen off 2 major threats of huge commercial events – were preparing for major public campaign and opposition but then found a technicality leading to cancellation. Still need to remove future threat. Their annual Flower & Produce Festival Sept 12th (21st year?) – by and for the community - funding sought – all about growing, sustainability, food justice.

TCV: Paddock – April – 8 months – Nov if goes to plan – new educ building, bird hide, new planting, keep parts open throughout. V exciting. Will be more accessible. Railway Fields – 40 years nature park – ongoing heritage project – old photos/stories – socials. Usual activities – newsletter (Anna).

KEY FORUM ISSUES

- **Crouch End Open Spaces:** Big issue – challenging an inappropriate development threat.
- **New Friends groups:** A group for Palace Gates Embankment being considered (sent apologies)
- **Haringey Local Plan:** There was consultation before xmas, with residents groups trying to publicise, identify issues, and coordinate efforts. Need to keep our eye on the ball.
 - **Commercial events:** Lordship Rec threat, on top of the years of Finsbury Park controversy - so seems we need to be alert to stop the Council trying to exploit our parks as 'cash cows'.
 - **Staffing & budget:** New financial year - £565k hole due to dependence of Finsbury Park events but one of them got cancelled. Can't recruit for posts at mo, so work pressure when someone leaves. Unsustainable.
 - **Playgrounds upgrade** – 8 being upgraded with development funds – was a plan to move some old equipment. Can be v expensive if metal, not so much if timber. Some other playgrounds also to be repaired/upgraded with localised NCIL funding or Government funding. To discuss next meeting.
 - **Water in spaces** - Communication – ongoing issue.
 - **Glyphosphate** - should be reducing – currently mixed approach. Phasing out in parks. Some old habits die hard.
- **People Need Parks funding:** This year's pot now open for community events/projects. Now open to anybody in borough, not just friends' groups. Max £1000 per park. Has to be outdoor.
- **Recycling of parks' waste:** Not being done by Parks Service – a long term aspiration/commitment but costs money to achieve. Recycling would need to reach full percent quality to be accepted. Need vehicles which support recycling. Litter picking: Many Friends Groups regularly help. No recycling/general split despite different bags & bin separation of waste.
- **Paddling pools:** Money to upgrade 3 pools in borough – Govt Pride in Place funding.
- **HFOPF email info/networking list:** All groups urged to raise any issues, share news etc.