

# Haringey Friends of Parks Forum

## Next meeting for all Haringey's Friends Groups

**Saturday February 8th (note date change)**

**10am, Bruce Castle Museum, Lordship Lane N17**

## Minutes of meeting, November 2nd 2013 at Bruce Castle Museum

**Present:** Mary Hogan (F of Railway Fields + TCV), Gordon Hutchinson (F of Alexandra Park), Mal Hawley (F of Downhills Pk), David Warren (F of Parkland Walk), Ceri Williams (F of Chestnuts Pk), Joan Curtis (F of Lordship Rec and Tower Gardens), Lucy Roots (F of Queens Wood), Dave Morris (F of Lordship Rec), Martin Ball (F of Down Lane Pk), Ulla Leffman (Ducketts Common) - and Council attendee: Simon Farrow **Apologies:** Michael Johns (F of Queens Wood), Cliff Osborne (TCV), Rod Wells (F of Downhills Park), J Floyd (F of Russell Park), Judith Hannah (F of Tottenham Green), Ann (Friends of White Hart Lane Rec)

Minutes - by Joan

**1. Minutes of previous meeting:** Accepted.

**2. Matters arising from last meeting:** We were sent and circulated a report from Council on TCV and Groundwork. Questions arising from report were agreed to be raised later on in the meeting (see item below):

1. Who do they report to in council and who is responsible for them
2. Where are volunteers sourced (we hoped not via workfare)
3. If the friends supply the volunteers how are they counted in outcomes.
4. How reliable are they – are they monitored
5. Which sites can they work on
6. What is the budget
7. Has the function of Groundworks changed
8. Are they linking in with and building existing Friends Groups
9. Are TCV training courses still free to Friends Groups

**3. Growing in Haringey:** We reaffirmed our support for this network promoting food growing throughout the borough. Lucy (or Joyce if Lucy can't make it) to go to meetings on behalf of the Forum. Growing in Haringey is asking key networks like ours to help with an audit of community food growing in Haringey, based on pilot areas (ie 2 or 3 parks, 2 or 3 neighbourhoods, 2 or 3 allotment sites etc). It was felt there may be a lot of wastage of locally grown food. There needs to be more contact with people with fruit trees etc. More seed swaps and seed banks (next seed swap Feb 16). Local friends groups could help volunteer to do an audit of food growing in their park and area - please contact Dave (Lordship Rec) for any questions about what your group could do..

**4. London in Bloom:** Queens Wood Organic Garden won runner up award. Railway Fields won conservation category. Lordship Rec won Gold award for large parks and Alexandra Park won Silver. Haringey Council has come out well.

**5. Radical History of NE London - parks booklet;** As discussed before there is a booklet being produced with a range of articles covering the history of community action in establishing, protecting and improving Haringey's green spaces. A number of Friends groups have contributed some historical details from their parks.

**6. Current Council Consultations:** The Forum had circulated details to all groups of the Council's proposed Open Spaces and Biodiversity Assessment, and the proposed Haringey Tree Strategy. Martin Ball suggested it was important that groups take part in all consultations in order to improve and extend green spaces and community management of those spaces. The consultation information should be sent out to individuals and not just groups

**7. Our Tottenham:** This is a network of many groups in Tottenham formed in April after concerns over regeneration issues throughout the area affecting existing neighbourhoods, sites and green spaces. They are speaking up for development that local people genuinely want, and are organising a conference encouraging groups throughout Tottenham to develop their own community plans for sites, facilities, parks and neighbourhoods - and Tottenham as a whole. Forum agreed to be involved/affiliate, but only contribute to matters relating to and promoting Green Space. The Friends Groups stand as a positive example of bottom-up community-led regeneration.

**8. Tottenham's Future Survey:** The Council is consulting over its plans for the future - it was suggested that local groups should get involved in responding with their own aims and ideas for improving all Tottenham's green spaces.

## **9. Local Reports**

**Down Lane Park:** Problems with anti-social behaviour over the summer – drugs, burning motor bikes etc. Police/social behaviour team and local residents worked well together to deal with this with a good result. The Friends and Council are working towards a large new sports zone with 3 new tennis courts. Friends want the old depot to be developed into a community resource managed by local people for outreach/café etc. Plan water feature to relate to underground River Moselle, with willow sculpture. Organising a Tidy Tottenham day on 16th November – clean-up day with refreshments. Their Clean-Up kit is available to other groups. Planning volunteer days with local businesses. Next Friends meeting 20th November re future of park. Working with Council towards Green Flag standard. Summer Festival – shortlisted for best national 'Have a Field Day' event. Would like to support other Friends Groups. **Council response:** *Good working relationship with Friends and Council. Like the idea of a buddying up scheme for local parks Friends Groups to share good practice and support one another.*

**Alexandra Park:** Now have 150 members and have been going for 6 years. Organised Bat, Tree and Bird Walks. This year was the first time the fireworks were to be privately organised and that the park would be totally closed to non-paying public. Friends in two minds about this and will monitor

damage etc. Sports Club has done drainage works and the previously controversial elements seem to have gone away - but much better communications have resulted from the discussions.

**Railway Fields:** Organised a Dawn Chorus Walk, Nature Discovery Walk and monthly conservation mornings. Trying to get more adults involved in conservation at this lovely nature reserve. Monitoring new plants on cleared spaces. 'No Alcohol' signs have been put up. TCV now based in the building.

**Lordship Rec:** The planned regeneration now completed except for 'snagging', but further improvements being sought. Number of the park's User Groups is growing, as are their activities. New groups include Lordship Sports and Arts Consortium organising holiday youth programmes, and Women's Association organising indoor events in the new Hub building. Lordship Rec Users Forum continues to coordinate. Friends have had a membership drive this year and now have over 600 members on mailing list. Friends currently managing Community Room in the new building, and have now started a separate Co-operative to take over the lease of the whole building so that it will be run by park users. The lease is under discussion with the Council. A group of Friends were trained in water quality testing so that they could monitor the pollution levels in the Moselle.

**Ducketts Common:** Tree was blown down in storm. Should state of large trees be monitored? Is there a management plan for trees? Dispersal Order in relation to Alcohol has been introduced. The hedge needs better maintenance regime - are there any resources. What are the plans for the empty Café concrete base? **Council response:** *Trees inspected regularly with any health and safety issues picked up and dealt with. Drug dealing – Police are active on this problem also working with playgroup. Café hard standing – a trial café was set up but was put off by local anti social elements – negotiations are ongoing. Notice board replacement keys to be provided.*

**Queens Wood:** Going for 24 years, 202 households on membership list. Council have mended pond gate. TCV working in the wood. Fungi and bat walks organised by Friends. Storm damage has affected about 10 trees. Funding from Re-Leaf – project planned for Jan 9th. 'Habitats and Horses' for a month, 2 or 3 weeks of clearing. Charcoal making with coppiced wood. Coppicing being done by Capel Manor. Funding for Pollen Survey – core sample going back 2000 years being done by archaeologist. Enforcement ongoing against adjacent Build Base company who are spilling rubbish into the wood. Concern about the future of Ian Holt's job as the Council's Nature Conservation Officer, as rumours of cuts abound and strong support for his job to continue. Still awaiting 'No Cycling' signs, and broken finger post still needs replacing as it is on Capital Ring. Groundworks have been supposed to be sourcing grants for earthworks for past 2 years – they may have a problem working on behalf of Friends as they are not the owners of the land. **Council response:** *Groundwork have put in 2 unsuccessful bids and are having a problem with part of project being on land leased to Café.*

**Chestnuts Park:** The key priority outstanding from the agreed Master Plan is the demolition of pavilion. Friends have agreed to find match funding for any council funding. Main aim is to raise £100,000 for new facilities and making good after demolition. Consulting people on what they want in the park. Organising 'Big Draw' event for imagining the park in the future. Organising exhibition of History of the Park and of friends activities. Film of event to be shown on November 30th. Have

produced post cards with space on the back to write events to be left in Café and banners with space for events at bottom. Groundworks working in the park but not much success at attracting new volunteers despite being very positive and friendly. Groundworks apprentice scheme based in Chestnuts. New pedestrian entrance now has increased safety features but needs barriers to stop cars. Management of padlocking gates to the community centre is poor so gates are not locked and too many cars enter to access the community centre. Black Boy Lane pedestrian crossing still needs implementing. **Council response:** *Demolition funding has been applied for in the Capital Programme of Council. Car barrier for new entrance to be followed up.*

**Parkland Walk:** Friends started 7 years ago and have 300 members on list. Biggest problem is still encroachment by landowners, and Friends are working with Council. All encroachments have been documented and now being followed up by legal department. Dumping is getting worse. Organising a Big Clean on 16th-17th November, with Friends and Council and Islington and TCV and Veolia. Hoping for 200 volunteers. Railway tunnel at Highgate end – Ian Holt has grant (from TFL) to build walls inside tunnels to create bat habitats as too drafty for them as is now. Still ongoing issues between cyclists and pedestrians sharing path – pedestrian priority signs have gone up. TCV working closely with Friends – clearing of areas of walk. Funds needed for paths at Finsbury Park end of the walk as funds ran out when the rest of the paths were refurbished.

**Downhills Park:** 250 members, going since 1999. Storm brought down one large tree across path. Park staff have been very helpful in trying to get it removed. Working with TCV on wild flower garden to remove invasive species. Park Staff mowed it. TCV raked it up to spread seeds. Café doing well but the 2 managers have left. Café running food and drink events which have been very successful. Pond has been problematic so ongoing discussion with Groundwork for further funding. Noticeboard needs new Perspex as old one is scratched and cant see through it. Green Flag achieved again this year with Friends involved in walkabout. Butterfly and Bird Surveys carried out. **Council response:** *New cut and collect mower ordered but need to leave the cut flowers on the meadow surface for a week and not rake them up in piles.*

**Tottenham Green:** Written report sent in on the very positive growth of this new Friends Group, its AGM, its activities (including BioBlitz and other events), and contribution to new landscaping plans.

**White Hart Lane Rec:** Written report sent in about an event planned and ideas for improvements desperately needed for this neglected space.

**Finsbury Park:** Big concerns over controversial new proposals to extend the number of huge commercial events in the park (some requiring a week to set up and take down), putting whole areas out of bounds to the public at key times.

**10. Green Flags :** Judges visited all the 16 Green Flag parks this year. The judges said that the Council had a good all year round approach to Green Flag parks. However Friends Groups were concerned that resources are inadequate to manage all Haringey's green spaces to this minimum acceptable standard. 4 community groups also got Green Flags Awards for their management of local spaces.

**11. Small Grants:** The Council will look at Friends suggestions about simplifying small grant applications. Friends of Parks should be told how much is left in the pot throughout the year. At present about £5000 left - all groups encouraged to apply for their events and projects.

**12. Noticeboards:** The wording on welcome signs has been refreshed to reflect new dog control orders and new contact numbers/email addresses or new boards have been put up. Council agree that many Perspex screens do need replacing.

**13. Storm damage:** Council priority after gales is road blockages, then street trees, then open spaces.

**14. TCV/Groundwork:** Mary for TCV reported that training courses still free to Friends. Simon said Council policy is that no services should use 'workfare' (dole conscription) in Haringey, and that all volunteering is genuine. Homes for Haringey pay all employees. Apprentices pay is paid for by Council job fund and others. Minimum wage for 6 months then London wage after that. Sarah Jones manages scheme with Groundwork so any problems should be directed to her. Council will take back our 9 questions (see above), and answers will be given at next meeting.

**15. Consultations:** Simon reported that Council are getting feed back. Tree Policy survey. Tree Officer Alex has been to every neighbourhood assembly and has had 68 responses to date and consultation is now closed. Going to Cabinet in February. Period of notification of removal of trees to be changed to 30 days as this was main concern. Live Events in Finsbury Park Consultation over the controversial proposals is open till 10th November. Tottenham Futures survey What is Parks Dept input? Paul Ely chairs one of the groups which influences forward plan for Tottenham. Haringey Open Spaces Strategy will be updated in relation to responses to survey – this will feed into Tottenham Regeneration consultation.

**16. Song:** Mary sang an informative and inspiring song the Friends had written about their Railway Fields, and we joined in the chorus. Much appreciated!

**17. Next meeting of Forum:** Sat February 8th (note date change due to clash) ,at 10am in Bruce Castle Museum.