

# Haringey Friends of Parks Forum

[www.haringeyfriendsofparks.org.uk](http://www.haringeyfriendsofparks.org.uk)

**Next meeting: Saturday 6 September at 10.00 at Bruce Castle Museum, N17.**

## **Minutes of general meeting – 7 June 2014**

**Present:** Dave Morris (Friends of Lordship Rec.) – *Chaired* ; Joan Curtis (Lordship Rec), David Warren (Parkland Walk); Ceri Williams (Chestnuts Park); Matt Cuthbert (Ducketts Common); Catherine Appleby (Coldfall Woods); Clif Osborne (TCV); Joyce Rosser (Priory Common); Chris Setz (Haringey Tree Wardens); Helen Steel (Lordship Rec); Mal Hawley (Downhills Park); Richard Vials (Edible Landscape London and Finsbury Park); Michael Johns (Queen's Wood) – *note-taker*. **Items 6-12.** Paul Ely (London Borough of Haringey) **Apologies:** Gordon Hutchinson (Alexandra Palace);

**Minutes of last meeting** – agreed.

### **1. Matters Arising** – none

### **2. London and National Friends Forums**

There were now Forums in around half London Boroughs and the London network was working well. It was sponsoring a picnic outside Parliament on 3 August 12noon-3pm in Love Parks Week. The National Federation would launch a national petition for statutory recognition of Council's responsibility for Green Spaces (which would strengthen the case for adequate funding) at that picnic. It was hoped that the necessary 100,000 signatures could be raised which were needed to mandate a debate in the House of Commons. **The Forum hoped that Friends Groups would urge as many people as possible to sign.** The proposal had been made to make London a national park to recognise and support its green spaces and create links between them. Some Forum members had concerns that local planners were ignoring the guidance on the population densities of new developments; it would be helpful if this could be enforced and a similar obligation for a minimum amount of green space introduced. It was agreed that there should be a discussion on planning issues at the next meeting. **Friends Groups were encouraged to hold as many events as possible during Love Parks Week (26 July-3 August) and to publicise them.**

### **3. Guides to walks**

Following the success of our booklet on the Moselle Walk, a leaflet on a walk from Alexandra Palace to Bruce Castle had been produced jointly by the Forum and the Haringey Federation of Residents Associations (supported by a small parks grant towards printing costs) and copies were available for Friends Groups. A launch walk would be held on 15 June. It was hoped in due course to produce further walk guides, possibly one from Palace Gates to Seven Sisters tracing the old railway line; one from Downhills Park through the Home zones; and a revival of the Council's Haringey Trail. Some

members thought it would be a good idea to include social events in the walk to bring people together.

#### **4. Planning obligations**

Dave Morris had submitted a Freedom of Information request to ask the council how much money had been raised under s106 'planning gain' agreements with developers and how much had gone to benefit parks. He now had the information and would circulate it to Forum members. It showed that quite a lot of the money agreed had never been collected and, of the amounts collected, most went to statutory services, primarily education and traffic management. The Forum agreed that since these were protected by legislation, a larger proportion should go to parks and green spaces which were exposed to much more swingeing expenditure cuts. There was some interest in how to get hold of information on planning; every Haringey resident could apply to get a weekly update on all planning applications and every year the Council produced a report on the previous year's developments..

#### **5. Tree Wardens**

The Haringey Tree Wardens were trying to encourage people to take a greater interest in trees in streets and parks. They held walks in the streets and had produced a handout to help people to identify all the trees they saw. They would like to work with Friends Groups on any projects which encouraged trees. One idea was a tree trail in every park. They had access to some funds to help with this.

#### **6. Local Reports from the Friends, plus Council response**

***Chestnuts Park.*** The derelict pavilion was about to be demolished; the Friends wanted discussions with the Council to ensure that the land after demolition was compatible with their long term aspirations for the park. There was considerable concern about the caf as the lease was coming up for renewal and it was only economic to run the caf if the council recognised a significant circular contribution from the provision of services such as toilets by the caf to park users at large. This had been agreed the last time the lease had been renegotiated but Simon Farrow had said that the council had no documentary evidence of this and the lawyers had given an ultimatum to the caf managers to sign the lease on new much tougher terms by the end of the week. The Friends had found the supporting evidence that the contribution had been offset against some of the rent before. *Paul Ely said that they were trying to regularise circular funding onto a consistent basis in all parks but he accepted there needed to be an extension of the negotiating period and promised to extend the deadline at least to the end of June.* The flagpole bed had been planted using money from the council. There had been a Friends event celebrating the new pedestrian crossing at the entrance. The new entrance alleyway from Cornwall Rd (funded with s106 money) was now complete and was already the most frequently used entrance. There was uncertainty what was happening about Groundwork: the Friends had been told they were responsible for gardening using trainees, but they were not visible and it was understood there were no trainees. *Paul did not know the position but would try to find out. He would feed back to colleagues concerns about failures to keep the Friends Group apprised of developments.*

**Railway Fields.** Sessions were being held to teach children about the arts in support of the environment. With better management of the park, biodiversity had improved.

**Coldfall Woods.** Ten walks with markers had been created. There was a concern that Japanese knotweed was spreading out of the neighbouring cemetery. *Paul promised to flag this up with operations.* Haringey Friends Groups and the Council had won a joint award for managing woodlands including Coldfall Woods, Queen's Wood, Lordship Rec and Parkland Walk.

**Lordship Rec.** The co-operative set up by the Friends to run the new Hub building was close to signing the lease and hoped to be in operation in July. They were fundraising for Â£40k for fixtures/fittings/staffing etc. . Haringey Council and Thames Water were still working on the plumbing misconnections throughout the borough which were causing pollution in the river Moselle and were issuing a leaflet to all households, and also to building supplier outlets. *Paul would check the distribution because not all areas seemed to have received one.* Distance markers had recently been put along walking and cycle tracks in Lordship Rec to encourage exercise. Snagging of the regeneration works was nearly complete and a list of potential further improvements was being prepared. New user organisations were being developed: a cycling organisation was taking a lease on a building; there was a very successful women's group, and Tottenham Clouds had been set up with the Cloud Appreciation Society. An event was being held on 26 July to mark the WW2 wartime tragedy when there had been a direct hit on a shelter, and the Friends had commissioned a memorial to the 43 residents who had been killed in the incident. On 20 September there would be a dog show, folk festival and flower and produce show.

**Ducketts Common.** The police were talking about introducing cameras to combat the drugs problem. The new basketball courts were very popular but there was an issue about the absence of toilets. *Paul said the Council would talk to the Friends Group. It was very difficult to set up new toilets where none existed.* There had been some tree reduction to allow more light into the park and there were ideas how to use one of the fallen trees. *Paul agreed to take this back to his colleagues.* There was a need to test whether the boggy area was polluted or natural rainwater.

**Downhills Park.** There would be an Art in the Park day on 20 July. Events were being held in the caf including a recent session on the history of the park. An additional litter bin was needed near the new statues by the Philip Lane entrance. *Paul would pass this on.* The Friends thought it would be a nice idea to have an event of remembrance at the War memorial with the Council perhaps supplying a wreath. There had been a savage dog attack the previous week where a man had been hospitalised and his dog seriously injured. [See pt 8 below].

**Parkland Walk.** There would be nature and heritage trails as part of the Crouch End Festival. Enforcement against encroachment had been held up by yet another change of Council lawyer but was proceeding. Litter picking had degenerated because the buggy broke down but a new one had now been procured. There was still a need to replace one of the Information Boards despite repeated promises. *Paul agreed to chase this up.* The drain from the caf at Crouch End Hill was damaged and was polluting the park; *Paul would make sure that this was being dealt with.*

**Queen's Wood.** The Friends had been measuring pollution at the source of the Moselle; none had been found. There would be a Family Fun Day on 2 August. Dead hedging had been put round the newly coppiced area to protect new growth; someone was deliberately opening up access despite notices.

**Edible Landscape London/Finsbury Park.** There had been considerable damage after the Arctic Monkeys concert and the Friends remained very unhappy at the scale of the programme of commercial concerts. There were proposals to put up a new block of flats near the bowling alley with new car access to the park. There were very strong objections and no decision had been taken as yet. The lease of the Edible Landscape site was going to fall into Haringey Borough at the end of July and they were waiting to hear what the future was. The Forum expressed its support for a valuable project which provided training and materials to others and hoped it would continue. *Paul promised to bring this to Simon Farrow's attention.*

**Alexandra Park.** There had been bird, bat, tree, fungi and history walks and two free brass band concerts in the Grove. Volunteers were clearing brambles in a meadow area favoured by butterflies.

**Priory Common.** They had held a successful big lunch picnic. A planter in the road had been filled with soil and nothing else done, but it had become a flourishing wild flower garden.

## 7. TCV

TCV was hoping to run more training courses and was interested in suggestions. It would run more courses on First Aid and on risk assessment. They were thinking of running a course on leading walks. They were continuing their regular conservation activities and had produced conservation action plans for the Green Flag parks which were included in the management plans on the Council website. They wanted to do more 'health checks' for Friends Groups in which they could advise on how to strengthen the group and its activities.

## 8. Dog control orders

It was about a year since dog control orders had been introduced and **it was agreed that the Council should produce an evaluation report on how they were working, including any statistics on changes in the incidence of dog attacks.**

## 9. Bye laws

Paul Ely promised to find out the state of play on the council's review of byelaws.

## 10. Changes in Council organisation

Cllr Bevan had been replaced by Cllr Stuart McNamara as Cabinet Member for the Environment. **It was agreed that Cllr McNamara should be invited to the next Forum meeting.** The review of the organisational structure was still subject to internal consultation until 15 June. Paul agreed to let the Forum have a note of the new structure as soon as it had been agreed. In the meantime he would

send a note of who was responsible for what under the current structure. He himself was going to leave and Simon Farrow would take over responsibility for parks as a whole, but with more support in such areas as events. There was concern in the Forum that further cuts in management of Parks would be detrimental to their welfare and **Dave Morris agreed to draft a message from the Forum to the Council calling for no more cuts and reversal of cuts already made.** There was particular concern that an increased focus on events to raise funds would put excessive pressure on green spaces and reduce access to ordinary members of the public. Friends of Finsbury Park were particularly concerned about closure and damage and the Forum supported their objections. Paul Ely stressed that the post would look after all events in Parks, including assisting community events as well as managing commercial events. He said that the financial surplus from commercial events was reinvested in parks, particularly but not exclusively the park where the event had taken place. The Forum said they believed that more of the funds from s106 agreements should be invested in parks (see 4 above) and Dave promised to send Paul a copy of the response to his Freedom of Information request.

#### **11. Any other business**

*Groundwork:* Paul Ely said a review meeting had been held with Groundwork in May where they had been asked to supply further information. This should be available very shortly and he would forward it to the Forum.

#### **12. Date of next meeting**

**Saturday 6 September at 10.00 at Bruce Castle.**