

Haringey Friends of Parks Forum meeting 3rd September 2016

Parks represented: Queens Wood and Parkland Walk (David Warren); Railway Friends (Lizzy Nazer); Alexandra Park (Robyn Thomas); Downhills Park (Clare Parry); Edible Landscapes London (Gemma Harris); Wolves Lane (Phil Chin and Mandy Hawting); Woodside Park (Mandy Hawting); Priory Common (Joyce Rosser); Lordship Rec (Dave Morris, Joan Curtis and Ricardo Johnson); Tottenham Cemetery (Dave Morris); Bruce Castle Park (Anna Mullen and Rodolfo Alvarez); Chestnuts Park (Ceri Williams); Coldfall Woods and Muswell Hill Playing Fields (Catherine Appleby); Down Lane Park (Martin Ball). Plus Cliff Osborne TCV.

Apologies: Shepherds Hill Gardens; Ducketts Common Meadow; Markfield Park; Meadow Orchard; Tottenham Green.

Part One

1. Minutes of last meeting agreed.
2. Cups – agreed to collect cups for meetings and return to kitchen

3. **Scrutiny Review into Safety in Parks**

Report is now on council website (see overview and scrutiny committee). Evidence from council, police, parks, etc. plus 58 responses from online survey. Conclusion that crime not rising (only 2.26% of all reported crime). Not seen as a problem. People don't feel unsafe. Some concerns in Finsbury Park. Some recommendations made. Some parks to be left unlocked at night for trial periods (would save £45k pa). Need for updating bye laws but this is a long and complex process. Proposal to remove dog waste bins (suggested that waste bins should have signs saying that they can take general waste and dog waste because all incinerated). Proposal to encourage friends of parks groups.

4. **Scrutiny Review Meeting**

In June Dave and Joyce had attended a "Scrutiny Cafe" event in June to identify future programmes for scrutiny committees. Dave lobbied successfully to get the future of parks included.

5. **Parliamentary Scrutiny Process**

A national scrutiny review into parks is being carried out (evidence to be submitted by end of September). Cllr Peray Ahmet had circulated this. Dave reported that the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces (of which we are a member) has produced draft 8-page response (tabled at meeting) arguing that parks should have statutory status and be properly funded. At present UK Local Authority parks cost £1 billion a year, but need around £2-3billion. Document was discussed. Suggested that sections on funding might be strengthened. Ceri wanted criticism of commercial hire of open spaces (events) and proposals to of local trusts to take over parks. Broad agreement that HFPP should support NFPGS statement, and do our own additional one. Ceri agreed to draft cover letter. It was noted that Haringey council officers have been told to work towards zero-cost parks service (based on present government policies).

6. **Council responses**

Gemma asked whether council had responded to action items listed in the last minutes.

Part Two – No council officers attended (and no apologies received)

7. **Walks booklets**

As part of the “Haringey Year of Walking” there are two new free publications – Haringey Walking Weekend 2016 (1st -2nd October) and Walking Haringey. These have been produced by Joan Curtis working with Joyce and Chris (Residents Federation), supported by council officers. The first needs to be distributed this month. The second publication includes the three HFPP walks as well as the Parkland Walk and New River Walk. Joyce agreed to look into the possibility of “£1 where sold” stickers for Walking Haringey to enable Friends and other community groups to make some income. The meeting thanked Joan for all her work.

8. LOCAL REPORTS

- a) **Down Lane Park** Not much to report. Couple of camper vans with people staying overnight in park. Ongoing roadworks being monitored.
- b) **Bruce Castle Park** New group set up. In July did survey of park with local councillors – looking at conditions, improvements needed, what user groups think, etc. 80 questionnaires returned. Litter picking event tomorrow. Working with Antwerp Arms and Pavilion cafe. See their website.
- c) **Priory Common** Weekly sessions on the Orchard. Discussions with Love the Lea about raingardens (sustainable urban drainage systems). Also meeting with Joseph Barnett, council officer responsible for enforcement over misconnections. Serious misconnection (school toilets) discovered and being dealt with.
- d) **Woodside Park** Problems around the maintenance of the sensory garden. Young family moving in to Mushroom House so hopefully this will solve the problem of the building. Work on infant playground. Annual Jazz fest planned by the Friends this month.
- e) **Wolves Lane** Phil stressed that they are fighting for their survival. They are making “expression of interest” to take over, with advice from Bridge Renewal Trust, Lordship Rec and Catherine West MP. To be submitted in next two weeks. Applying to take over management with partners. Difficulties in getting information from the council. Will they be “preferred provider”? Forum agreed to support. Got constitution, bank account, etc.
- f) **Queens Wood** – problem of litter bags being opened at night and rubbish scattered. Lots of Friends walks and talks as always.
- g) **Edible Landscapes** Generally fine. Started out as plant nursery doing supplying, now more focus on education. Being asked to move to another site. Discussions with Wolves Lane re. joint work.
- h) **Lordship Rec** Snagging works being completed. Problems with repairs to Hub building. The Hub now breaking even. Raised £12K to be matchfunded by London Mayor, for improvements to roof. 24 hour outdoor gym opened and very popular. Lots of active groups and range of events.
- i) **Chestnuts Park** Ceri reported on wildlife areas and other ongoing projects. TCV brilliant – hedge installed all around park. Joint work with Start (St Ann’s Hospital community development trust) – walk on 1st October (walking weekend). AGM. Serious drainage problems. John Bryden (Love the Lea) says Stonebridge most polluted tributary of the Lea. Leakage. Football not possible on parks surfaces – general issue – drainage and flooding should be discussed at future meeting. Problem with rough sleepers.
- j) **Downhills Park** Bad news – cafe closed for 2/3 months. Now reopened under new management. Will go out for tender. Housing development plans (the adjacent Keston Centre) has led to a local campaign. Good news - another very successful Art in the Park by the Friends, with over 1,000 attending. Changing rooms now managed by Gaelic Football – works OK. No news re. CrossRail2 threat to corner of the park.
- k) **Rockstone on Lordship Rec** Ricardo reported on their activities. V busy. Trying to get permission for a storage container. Doing women’s cycling sessions.

- l) **Alexandra Park** Go Ape tree cables going ahead (commercial proposal, modified to be more acceptable). Junior version to start first. Jury out – not clear how it will work. Generally lots of activities by the Friends – well attended.
- m) **Railway Fields** Recent event went well with 120 people. Slowworm seen. New projecting microscope. Various courses – tree ID, Pond ID, etc. Asked if groups have links with Wetlands (Woodberry Down and Walthamstow) – to be investigated.
- n) **Queens Wood** Recent visit by women and children from refuge. New info board on bats. Local listings being looked at. Lots of activities.
- o) **Parkland Walk** Ash dieback identified – bad news. Two items of good news: council has upheld covenants so developer can't use vehicles on walk; Council has £1.2million for restoration and maintenance work on bridges – work has started.
- p) **Coldfall Woods** Autumn photography work. Walks.
- q) **TCV** All going smoothly. Grants for improvements to Railway Fields. Waiting for final confirmation of 3 years agreement with council.

9. Service Review

New council organisational structure still awaited.

10. Local Plan

Inspector's hearings taking place. "Significant Local Open Land" category to be scrapped. Council said all parks and open spaces to have same designation (apart from London designations like Metropolitan Open Land, Nature Reserves etc) – all rest to be "open space", and all 'protected'. Dave said that in Glasgow all 27 parks have recently received protected 'Fields In Trust' covenant status. Raise this at next meeting. All public green space should be protected. Council want to change borough-wide planning policy to allow possible 'reconfiguration' of existing open spaces. Martin said similar proposal in past for Down Lane, thrown out after local Friends' campaign. Same thing happened for Lordship Rec last year.

11. Next meeting

Possible topics for next meeting – biodiversity action plan / drainage