

## Friends of Parks Forum meeting - 7 November 2020

**Attendance:** Dave Morris – Lordship Rec; Cathy Meeus – Parkland Walk; Clare – Donwhills Park; John Miles – Parkside Malvern RA + Rivers Forum; Martin Ball – Down Lane Park; Robyn – Alexandra Park; Ceri Williams – Chestnuts Park; Dave Warren – Queens Wood + Parkland Walk; Klaus - Bruce Castle Park; Leyla Laksari – Tottenham Connect/LUOS; Quentin Given – The Paddock +Cloud garden; Mina – New Road Park; Vicci – Coldfall Wood + M Hill Playing Fields; Glenys Law – Crouch End CREOS; Pamela Harling – Meadow Orchard. **And:** Mat Pendergast – TCV; **Second session:** Paul Ely – LBH project manager, Parks & Open Spaces strategy; Simon Farrow - head of Parks and Leisure; Lewis Taylor - head of Parks. **Apologies:** Joyce Rosser - Hornsey Rd raingarden + Priory; Joan Curtis – Lordship Rec; Ann - Meadow Orchard; Annabel Foskett – LBH Nature Conservation officer; Phil Chinn – Stationers Park.

### 1. Minutes of last meeting

Agreed, except for figure on Queens Wood petition should be 9,000+ not '900+' and Leyla had raised issue of robberies in Down Lane Park, this had not been noted. Have latest minutes been uploaded on website? Dave to check with Deborah.

### 2. Campaign sub-group

A report had been circulated. Klaus said the group had been pretty successful over last 3 years, the big issue of continuing Govt cuts to Council funding exacerbated by Covid. There is lobbying at national level. We understand initial budget will be at Full Council 16 November (Simon later said draft report would be going to Cabinet in December).

### 3. Admin issues

Agreed that Dave should set up a wider Forum mailing list for announcements. We would need guidelines for what should be included.

### 4. New groups

- Friends of Bruce Grove Cloud Garden
- Friends of Stanley Park off West Green Road;
- Friends of New Road Park

Also noted

- Council is proposing Albert Road Rec changing its name to Oliver Tambo Park;
- there was effort to set up Friends of Crescent Gardens;
- Friends of Stamford Road Park, N15 had fizzled out but there was separate initiative to start a gardeners group there.

Leyla suggested we highlight that any struggling groups should be able to ask others for help. Agreed. People urged to use our list to seek advice etc.

### 5. Networking

Dave reported that there's lots happening at London and national levels. London Friends of Green Spaces Network continuing to hold successful zoom meetings and produce 'Our Patch' monthly e-bulletin. All groups urged to 'sign up' to the online portal GoParks map/directory. The [www.parkscommunity.org.uk](http://www.parkscommunity.org.uk) website now includes lots of content on community empowerment in parks – is being transferred from Friends of Lordship Rec to NFPGS responsibility.

## 6. Rivers Forum

Still keeping a watchful eye on waterways issues in Haringey. John reported that guidance on managing SUDS was needed, currently there was confusion in Haringey between Parks and Highways over maintaining the sites, with unrealistic expectations of volunteers.

## 7. Other issues to raise

- Who will own and maintain green open spaces being created in new developments
- Report to us by new LBH nature conservation officer said little about liaison with Friends groups, engagement needs to be highlighted in this work.
- Relationship with Parks department – is not just about overcoming staffing and funding challenges, but also about quality of communications

## 8. Group reports

- Alexandra Park: visitor numbers had doubled, waste arisings up from 13 to 21 tonnes, group had organised litter picking with >100 people, very successful. Also organised a few walks and nature conservation sessions with <= 6 people. New book History of Alexandra Park just published £10.95.
- Parkland Walk: Individuals had done litter picking, the site is pretty clean. Also conservation jobs, using own tools. Slow Council response to encroachment issues. New infrastructure is due.
- Queens Wood: Illegal bike ramp and swings had been found. TCV carried out work on paths and pond. Ecological survey re the stream had been done without involving the Friends. John M noted lack of comms between council departments on this project.
- Paddock: highways works completed, with new swales planted at front and new fence. Portacabin due any time. TCV have contract for a year, will have 2 staff with presence 5 days a week. New bins (and reduced usage) have reduced littering.
- Cloud Garden: Friends group handed in 950-name petition to Cllr Ejiofor who is leader and ward cllr, he said council would resist development and would strive to bring site into community use, with purchase a possible option.

- CREOS: new hoggin path looks good; playing fields much used during lockdown; but some people having bonfires, burning dead hedge materials, logs etc, and leaving mess.
- Highgate Wood: trees safe until 30 November and probably beyond.
- Down Lane: MUGA works have started, opening promised in 2021; problem with lighting. Leyla said Tottenham Connect had run 7 week programme over summer, and during half-term. But this had entailed lots of admin to comply with Covid regs. They have handed out laptops or tablets to 33 households. No response re the attempted murder which happened in front of families.
- LUOS: the allotment site now rebranded as Soulfarm with activity 2 days a week, booking required.
- New Road Park (off Norman Avenue). Group has first official meeting soon, plan to create a nature area. Site run by HfH, difficult to get communication between them and Council.
- Coldfall: Illegal bike ramp removed. Stream dammed by persons unknown, causing problems. Group has been picking litter, but leaving it in the expanding area of Japanese Knotweed. Working with TCV on a wildflower meadow.
- Downhills Park: New bins installed but litter increased. Had meeting with Police re drug dealing in park. Awaiting works along boundary with new development. Café crowdfunded to survive, successfully. Working on wildflower meadow.
- Chestnuts: frustrating that Parks will respond to problems on one-off basis but not put in procedure to prevent recurrence. Parks can't agree who will deal with hedge that's growing into trees. Alley adjacent to over-developed site not being cleaned, Parks and Veolia dispute. Have done litter-picks but need Parks staff to do harder areas eg in hedges. Hoping for funding for SUDS. AGM in December.
- Bruce Castle: usage down so litter reduced. Awaiting meeting with Alex Fraser re recent tree damage. Trying to revive Friends of Tottenham Cemetery.
- Lordship Rec: Friends still busy, doing some safety-conscious volunteering work in the orchard and woodland etc – started new Litterpickers group. Lordship Hub open for takeaways, and sit-down café when allowed to. Some of the other user groups still active, but no events going on. Monthly meetings with Council continue. Parks Community UK project work continues with final seminar for 'pilot sites' being planned, and the project being transferred to integration with NFPGS. Some redevelopment on Broadwater Farm leading to discussions with architects re potential funding for the park and Friends of Harmony Gardens.

## 9. Council Response:

Lew Taylor responded:

- Agree we need agreed approach re managing SUDS
- Will talk to Enforcement team about bonfires in CREOS
- New Road – will talk to HfH about maintenance. Parks already do grass cutting.

- Chestnuts – will talk to Alastair about procedure for dealing with litter in hedges, alley etc.
- Encroachment – will pick up with Property team.

Simon Farrow responded:

- Will circulate rules about volunteering, but basically up to 15 people, distanced, registered, and observing hygiene rules re tools etc are OK [at that time].
- Queens Wood – will raise issue of ecological study
- SHIFT & trees – there is a 4 week stay of action, and no response from insurers’ lawyers yet.
- Will ensure Conservation officer addresses comms with Friends groups
- No plans to take on new open spaces in new developments, except small site at Stanley Road. Dave said we need criteria for new “private public” open spaces – to add to next agenda.
- We know we need to improve comms with Friends
- Paul Ely and Parks team will be commenting on the draft Haringey Local Plan issues paper before it goes to Cabinet
- Lockdown plans: Sports courts will close, goal posts etc removed, all official games off, outdoor gyms closed; cafes open for takeaways, WCs open, playgrounds and skateparks open.

#### 10. The Conservation Volunteers

Mat reported:

- Nationally TCV have contacted DCMS and got assurance that conservation work is permissible
- TCV have free hedge whips for planting
- Paddock – 1 staff member has started, the second due in a week
- Replacement for Alice should start in December

#### 11. Parks & Open spaces strategy

Paul will share issues paper from earlier workshops, and will ask Friends to input on how well performance met 2005 plan targets. Aim is for issues paper to go to Cabinet March 2021. Follow up meeting in next few weeks, will include relationship and role of Friends groups. Other papers on trees etc being written up, deadline end of January. Will set out schedule for Strategy. Simon said all relevant papers will be on a webpage.

#### 12. Budget for 2021/2

Simon said the process is that draft budget will go to December cabinet to be agreed at February meeting.