

Haringey Friends of Parks Forum

The umbrella network for the 40+ Friends groups for public green spaces of all kinds throughout Haringey

www.haringeyfriendsofparks.org.uk

Report of meeting, 7 November 2015

Present: Joyce Rosser (**Friends of Priory Common**), David Warren (**Parkland Walk**), Lucy Roots (**Queen's Wood**), Richard Vials (**Edible Landscapes London/Finsbury Park**), Clive Carter (**Finsbury Park**), Tom Palin (**Finsbury Park**), Mandy Hawting and Phil Chinn (**Wolves Lane Garden Centre**), Dave Morris (**Lordship Rec + Tottenham Cemetery**), Joan Curtis (**Lordship Rec**), Gordon Hutchinson (**Alexandra Park**), Clare Parry (**Downhills Park**), Martin Ball (**Down Lane Park**), Clif Osborne (**TCV/Railway Fields**) + Simon Farrow (**LBH Director Frontline Services**) attended the second half of the meeting.

Apologies: Deborah Cawkwell (**Markfield Park**), Ceri Williams (**Chestnuts Park**), Catherine (**Coldfall Wood**), Judith Hanna (**Tottenham Green**), Alex Peschlow (**Wild Flower project Ducketts Common**) and Tony Healy (**LBH Parks**).

1. Matters arising from last meeting (minutes OKayed):

London Marathon – council has found someone to do the marathon for HFPF next year. Dave and Deborah to liaise.

Sustainable Haringey Compost Giveaway – almost all 28 tonnes taken – next one will be in spring (useful compost fact sheet to be circulated to Forum).

Haringey Divest From Fossil Fuels petition has over 2000 signatures.

2. Planning Issues

Crossrail 2 – this has implications/threats for green spaces such as Downhills Park (works and then ventilation shaft), Finsbury Park, Markfield and elsewhere. Discussion of how to do responses. Deadline in January. Clare will circulate information about forthcoming consultation meetings.

Haringey Local Plan – Dave said that this is going to full council meeting on 23 November then final public consultation. Threat of housebuilding on Lordship Rec has been removed after mass campaign but southern bit of Finsbury Park still included. Lucy raised “Compartment M” (part of Queen’s Wood next to builders yard) which is MOL. Keston Road (next to Downhills) has been sold – council say still consulting on it (no access to site so might provide another bit of park for access). Lucy raised another problem of overlooking eg six storey building next to Queen’s Wood. Dave referred to similar planning threats and campaigns increasing in other boroughs.

Wolves Lane – Friends group not sure what is going on. Have arranged for Catherine West MP to come to next meeting. Made application for registration as Asset of Community Value.

Protection campaigning - Dave referred to new pamphlet from Fields in Trust:

<http://www.fieldsintrust.org/> Map of campaigns to protect London MOL sites under threat, produced by London branch of the Campaign for Protection of Rural England:

<http://www.cprelondon.org.uk/resources/item/2288-protect-london-map> Campaign pages on the following site: www.lpgsf.org.uk/community/get-involved/protecting-your-green-space/

3. Commercial Events

Friends of Finsbury Park very disappointed with recommendations of scrutiny review report (“gulf the size of the grand canyon between the evidence heard and the recommendations proposed”). Council wedded to policy as Councillors have further slashed the already woeful budget for the Parks Service, insisting officers raise £900k pa from commercial events. All pointed out that parks “pay their way” many times over in terms of health, biodiversity, flood control, climate change mitigation, social cohesion etc etc.

4. Council/Friends partnership

Friends of Finsbury Park and Wolves Lane both complained of recent difficulty of contacting parks officers. Agreed there should be clear communications policy.

5. Covenants

This topic was raised by several groups. Need to investigate various types of covenants (eg Fields In Trust protection, historic covenants for some parkland donated to Council, acts of parliament, covenants preventing developer access to the parkland walk etc etc). Clive to send round email and compile info.

6. Walks

Joan reported that she and Joyce had met with council officers from recreation, public health, etc. to plan “walking weekend” 1-2 October 2016. We and the Residents Federation plan a book of walks - application for funding.

7. London Friends Groups Network

Next meeting at City Hall on February 22 (6pm). More Forums being set up in other boroughs.

All groups encouraged during **Mayoral elections next May** to demand action to reverse the green spaces’ growing crisis.

Regarding the campaign to have London declared **a National Park City**, all Friends Groups are being asked to contact local ward Cllrs for support (map of wards so far on London National Park website – 6 in Haringey already).

8. National Federation of Parks & Green Spaces

Dave (NFPGS chair) said they’ll soon launch an online questionnaire for all Friends Groups on how all can work together better to strengthen our movement. Please fill in!

9. PARK REPORTS

Down Lane Park: Good progress on improvements work and new gates. Two battles – one with Harris Federation wanting to use park for school playing grounds and the second with Tottenham Regeneration Team wanting to take bit of the park – Friends lobbied successfully for Fields in Trust covenant. **Simon Farrow replied:** delays over legal issues now resolved.

Lordship Rec: Some major maintenance/snagging work to start in the new year. Friends group and its sub-groups going well, including nature conservation issues and activities. Successfully pushed for action over pollution in Moselle. Other user groups also largely thriving. New outdoor gym to be installed in Jan. Community-run Hub getting busier all the time. Fought off threat of housebuilding on Rec, but still campaigning against threats of demolition on adjacent social housing estates. **Simon Farrow replied:** Replacement train for play area ordered. Water pollution Enforcement Officer now in post.

Alexandra Park: 50,000 tickets for Fireworks sold. New CEO for Alexandra Palace, and with the park gets £2 million a year from council (but being reduced). Friends have organised walks programme. Are involved in discussions about Park Strategy and chair the Consultative Cttee. 'Red-zoning' implications to be scrutinised. **Simon Farrow replied:** GoApe consultation – revised planning application is in (Friends now happy with it).

Priory Common: Work on Orchard continuing. Will be planting 1000 bulbs received from council. Awaiting start of the sustainable drainage (SUDS) project.

Downhills Park: Concerns about Crossrail proposals. Have organised litter pick and bulb planting. Had meeting with Pauline Sydell (Neighbourhood Watch). Ray Swain doing Remembrance event at adjacent war memorials. Stakeholder meeting with Groundwork in the summer – since then gone quiet. **Simon Farrow replied:** Ian Holt looking at implications of CR2 proposals for nature/parks (will circulate info). Downhills/Groundwork project – work in progress. Keston Road – need metre inside part of park edge for temporary use – Simon to come back on this.

Parkland Walk: Got Green Flag for first time – made speech at recent borough-wide ceremony in Queen's Wood. Campaigned over Francis Place development (house in Highgate) where the only lorry access for building work would have been via Parkland Walk. Application now withdrawn. A protective covenant has been unearthed and the Friends want commitment from council that this will remain in place in perpetuity. Asked who protects these covenants. **Simon Farrow replied:** He will forward to the Friends the Parks' response to the planning application (re. covenant).

Queen's Wood: Got Gold Medal in London in Bloom, cafe garden won first prize in Haringey in Bloom and wood awarded Green Flag for first time. Doing fungi surveys. Regular water testing of Moselle springs (also done downstream by Friends of Lordship Rec and Markfield). Doing "Why cut down trees?" walk. 'Compartment M' area needs to be transferred to parks service to head off any future planning threats. **Simon Farrow replied:** He will take Compartment M issue back to Ian Holt

Finsbury Park: Friends group have set up as limited company. 300 members and growing.

Management committee of ten (Jeremy Corbyn is patron). Still following up issues from controversial and damaging Wireless event. Campaigning against development threat at Rowan's Bowling Alley at South East corner. Feel there's recently been a lack of communication with council officers. Fantastic new ball courts - gained bit of green space. Friends website and social media going from strength to strength. They could publicise other Friends' events. Edible Landscapes are based near the Manor House entrance. 400 days volunteering. Future uncertain. Council reclaimed some of the site. Due to get information soon about their future in the park. **Simon Farrow replied:** Take any communication problems to him. Work will be starting on Wightman Road to replace railway bridge.

Wolves Lane: Group very active since last Forum meeting. Launched petition to save the site. MP to visit next week. Support from local mosques, churches, etc. 500 Facebook followers. Website going well. Frequent meetings. Links with similar projects in adjacent boroughs. Met with three ward councillors. In contact with officers. **Simon Farrow replied:** Council undertaking review of services and future of the site. Other depts. May be withdrawing grants to site. Large report on Adult Services to go to Cabinet next week. Could result in Wolves Lane losing £138K leading to financial crisis there..

Tottenham Cemetery: Regular meetings. Drawn up list of aspirations for improvements..

Paddock: concerns over maintenance and improvements needed **Simon Farrow replied:** Part of the Tottenham Hale Working Group's ongoing brief.

Priory Park: Listed Fountain to be restored. Soil taken to Tate Modern for current exhibition.

Chestnuts Park: Planting orchard trees on 28 Nov. New willow garden to be finished next summer. New Outdoor gym now in. Keen to find out more about Sustainable urban drainage schemes to help with drainage problems in the main field. Aiming to complete planting hawthorn hedge around the margin of the park to create a pollution barrier. Want a drinking fountain.

Ducketts Common: New meadows tremendously well received.

Railway Fields: Various activities – bat walk, winter festival, etc. Improvement works to site. School information project going well. **Simon Farrow replied:** TCV Lease agreed – waiting for lawyers.

Tottenham Green: Vision and plans are being drawn up for Tottenham Green West and East. Campaign to save key open space opposite the Leisure Centre.

Southwood Lane: New Friends Group

Woodside Copse, N10 Friends group fighting to prevent development within a wildlife sanctuary

Bruce Castle Park: Listed wall on 'at risk' register, and also suffered recent damage from a fallen tree. **Simon Farrow reported:** Council are getting quotes to repair that damage..

10. The Conservation Volunteers

Working on sites across borough. Sunday Project. Monthly volunteering bulletin. Training and support for Friends Groups

11. Green Flags

20 sites this year. Extra targets for next year – Tottenham Green and Woodside Park.

12. Capital funding for parks

Simon Farrow reported that 10 Year Capital Strategy being developed. Parks have made bids to the Council's capital fund. Parks Service also seeking capital from developers' contributions (CIL).

13. Funding for Haringey's green spaces

As well as continuing our lobbying for an adequate budget for the parks service, are there ways of generating more funding but not compromising public service principles. Discuss next time.

14. Haringey Park Life

Second Parks Service bulletin now out, produced by Sarah Jones.

15. Next meeting

In new year. Date tbc (Dave to contact Sarah Jones)