

Minutes of Forum General Meeting 3rd February 2018 at Bruce Castle Museum

Present: Dave Morris, Chair (**Lordship Rec** and **Tottenham Cemetery**), Pamela Harling (**Hornsey Church Tower** and **Meadow Orchard**), Mary Hogan (**Railway Fields Nature Reserve**), John Miles (**Parkside Malvern Residents Association**), Lucy Roots (**Queen's Wood**), Robyn Thomas (**Alexandra Park**), Clif Osborne (**TCV**), Joan Curtis (**Lordship Rec**), Mandy Hawting and Phil Chin (**Wolves Lane**), Joyce Rosser (**Priory Common**), David Warren (**Parkland Walk**), Hazel Stoks (**Green Bounds Green**), Klaus Kuerner (**Bruce Castle Park**), Clare Parry (**Downhills Park**), Ann (**Coldfall Wood and Muswell Hill Playing Fields**), Glenys Law (**Crouch End Open Space**), Ceri Williams (**Chestnuts Park**), Martin Ball (**Down Lane Park** and **Finsbury Park**). **From 11am:** Lew Taylor (**LBH Head of Parks Operations**) and Simon Farrow (**LBH Head of Client Services**).
Apologies: Ann Scott (**White Hart Lane Rec**), Peter (**Brunswick Open Space**)

2. Minutes of last meeting (4th November 2017) Agreed with two amendments: The rivers forum meeting on 7th Feb is a community initiative not being organised by Love the Lea (although they will be present). The Wolves Lane lease has not yet been signed.

3. Haringey Parks Forum Questionnaire results. Dave Morris reported that 18 groups had responded – thanks to everyone who did this. Maintenance and infrastructure repairs have deteriorated compared to 5 years ago. Also, staff changes have made communicating with the Council more difficult. The general picture is of poor to middling support from the Council, despite the heroic efforts of an understaffed service. Friends groups are carrying out some tasks, but don't really have sufficient knowledge or tools to do much more. This carried a lot of weight with the Council's Scrutiny Review panel – see below, and there was backing for calls from the Forum for adequate staff and maintenance for parks.

4. Council review of parks. The Forum's call for a formal Review of Parks Service funding was accepted by the Council over a year ago and has now finally taken place. Cllr Tim Gallagher chaired the review, and Dave has contributed heavily at all stages and sessions on behalf of the Forum. It has been a highly useful exercise in highlighting lack of resources in the current Council provision and the options for accessing more funding in the future. The Parks Service is aware of the effects of severe cuts to staff (Homes for Haringey work being prioritised so they can honour their contract). The service is now dependant on the money generated by commercial events (mainly Finsbury Park – which is the subject of legal challenge by the Friends). The relationship with all the groups and the forum is appreciated. It has been proposed that all Council green spaces will be covenanted with Fields in Trust, to assure their long term protection.

5. Council elections in May. All local political parties have been written to support the Forum's calls for action, asking them to add parks to their local manifestos/flyers

6. Love Parks Week: 13-20 July 2018. As usual we agreed to support. Joan has made a Forum application for a grant to Smarter Travel for a walks leaflet focussed on parks. Also in the pipeline is a bus trip around Haringey parks and a parks and cafe trail leaflet, if funding is available.

7. Data Protection changes to the law that community groups should be aware of. In May a new European Directive will come into force, focussed on protecting personal data privacy. The UK Act has not yet been finalised and may provide exemption for community groups similar to the current rules. So don't panic! To keep up to date you can subscribe to the Information Commissioner's Office monthly newsletter.

8. Insurance. Public access to open spaces is the responsibility of the landowner. Friends groups should have insurance for group activities. For young people an Informed Consent Form from parents is required unless the parent is present/responsible. Clif Osborne said that TCV could supply these.

9. Haringey Rivers Forum. John Miles gave notice of the first meeting of this forum, to be held in the Big Green Bookshop on Wednesday 7th Feb. Thames 21 and Love the Lea are invited. It will be about all Haringey's rivers. He outlined the proposal for deculverting the Moselle in the Haringey Heartlands development. We agreed our support. There are concerns about sewage misconnections and flood control/climate change. Ceri Williams reminded the meeting about serious repair issues for the culverted Stonebridge Brook, which runs through Chestnuts Park.

10. Haringey Development Vehicle. At the moment no parks are threatened by this public/private plan to manage Council assets. A special meeting of the Council has been called for Wednesday 7th Feb. There will be a protest demonstration from Duckett's Common. [Stop Press: the Council suspended the decision.]

11. London Friends of Greenspaces Network: Successful coordination meetings continue regularly at City Hall. Getting more influential at London level. It would be great if more Haringey groups could attend.

12. National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces: The NFPGS are the voice of the Friends Groups movement. Are a key player in the new Parks Action Group govt/sector liaison group which trying to address the underfunding crisis affecting UK parks. The NFPGS (Dave is the Chair) recently hosted a very successful PAG meeting at Lordship Rec, and will be coordinated an Empowering Communities working group. Also the NFPGS are preparing to launch a national Charter for Parks calling for adequate resources and protection for parks. The Forum approved its support.

13. The Palm House at Wolves Lane: Phil Chinn outlined the severe damage to plants in the Palm House because there has been no heating this winter (the Council had the gas cut off before handing over the lease to the new management). See full report below.

14. Promoting Community Empowerment and Co-Management of Parks. Friends of Lordship Rec are applying for funding to promote co-management ideas across London and the UK. 13 other sites have agreed to initially take part. Others welcome.

15. New groups: **a.** Friends of The Green Bounds Green, and **b.** Friends of Brunswick Open Space, both up and running; **c.** Westbury Ave Nature Reserve very active; **d.** Friends of Hartington Park mooted. **e.** Friends of the Paddock – relaunched!

16. Park Reports

Crouch End Open Space: Have developed a new Management Plan with the support of London Wildlife Trust. Did a survey with local volunteers and experts prior to developing Plan. Received a small grant for signage which is near completion. CREOS is on Education land so they do not appear on Haringey Parks Website. Concern about regular rough sleepers using woods as a toilet and leaving debris and also about the number of dogs (up to 6) that are walked by professional walkers. **Wolves Lane:** Concerned over lack of heating in the Centre and unclear why the Gas supply was cut off and when it will be reconnected. This, and broken glazing in the hothouses, have had an effect on tropical and desert plants in the palm house etc. The 25% of the site held back by the Council as possible depot space has been left untouched and needs maintenance. The part run by the Consortium is covered by 6 monthly reviews but not sure if the other section is covered by this. The working relationship between the Friends and the Consortium still need strengthening and working communication channels need to be developed. The Forum agreed that the Council and Consortium need to see the Friends as a partner in the Wolves Lane Project and that they should be consulted/involved in all developments.

Parkland Walk: Getting on well with wildlife trail at the Highgate end of Walk with tree surgeons on site. TCV ran a successful tree felling course. Litter pick planned for Keep Britain Tidy event. A survey of users was done in November (2-3000 people visited daily) and another similar survey will be done in Summer to see how that compares. Friends did a walkabout with David Theakston (LBH green space infrastructure) to organise priorities and research fundraising opportunities. There has been extensive puddling and flooding in certain areas of the Walk, some rain-related and some due to leaks. David Theakston to work with Thames Water to fix leaks.

Ongoing legal issues re the building works planned by owner of a house at the Highgate end of the Walk. A memorial tree is to be planted near Blythewood Road section in memory of Michael Radford who was chair of the first group to campaign to keep Parkland Walk as public open space back in 1970s when there was a threat to build on some of it. He was active in the group for 40 years and will be remembered and respected for all his great work. **The Green Bounds Green:** New group which has involved lots of young families and others in the Bounds Green area - around 150 signed up members and 200+ on facebook. Ran first event including Christmas Carols and mince pies on the green. Local concern about anti-social behaviour in the area - working well with Parks and Antisocial Behaviour Team to find solutions. Obtained funding to restore parts of the area as rose gardens. Have put up a notice board and are planning an easter egg hunt. Bushes have been cleared and plans to plant prickly plants to put off antisocial behaviour. Planning Royal Wedding Party in May. **Bruce**

Castle Park: Have done bulb planting and monthly litter picking (followed by cake!). The park is in reasonably good condition but there are still problems with a perimeter fence. 2 of the Trees planted with Mayor of London funding are in need of inspection as they seem in poor condition. Building a good relationship with the local community-run pub, Antwerp Arms, which is developing into a community hub. Stakeholders meeting planned to discuss proposed extension out into the park of the renovation work planned to be done on the Bruce Castle Museum. Involved in the planning of the 2018 Tottenham Flower and Produce Show.

Down Lane Park: Former bowling pavilion has been taken over by HAIL and LUOS to run as café and community resource. It is used by local children's football teams and offers good facilities for them that were lacking before. Local police have made tackling antisocial behaviour in the park a priority. Still involved in planning issues with tower blocks planned overshadowing the park. Still awaiting news of promised MUGA.

Brunswick Park A new plan has been developed to improve facilities. Money is available. A new group has been formed..

Hartington Park There is going to be some tree planting. There is hope that a Friends Group could be developed there as it needs some attention and improvement.

Finsbury Park: Much local concern about a recent murder - Met Police are working on a report on the area where it happened to see if any safety improvements could be made. Ongoing discussion and legal action over Wireless commercial event and a change of policy re parks funding in relation to the use of Finsbury Park as a large private event venue.

Meadow Orchard: Saturday volunteer work ongoing and an outdoor classroom for children is held weekly.

Hornsey Church Tower Looking at possibility of installing a playground.

Railway Fields: Ran an evening wildlife lantern walk with willow lanterns made at a preceding workshop and singing. 50-60 people attended, stopping at various animal habitats along the way. People were able to see bats close-up at a bat trapping event. Monthly family wildlife art sessions using materials found on site. It is very much an environmental education site. Engaged in Big Garden Bird Watch. Planning a summer festival. Unfortunately had a break-in and their microscope was stolen - TCV helping to sort the insurance. TCV still trying to finalise a long-term lease for the site.

Parkside Malvern Residents Association: Maintaining various sites in partnership with Council. Operating within the area covered by the Wood Green Action Plan. Contesting some of the proposals. Want more emphasis on biodiversity which is missing from the Action Plan. Area between Heartlands to the railway bridge before Turnpike Lane could be developed as a nature reserve like Railway Fields. Concerns about building over Moselle culvert – proposing the river be opened up at particular points. Would like to know where they can find the work done by Ian Holt (previous conservation officer) on bat protection.

Chestnuts Park: Friends have been going for 18 years and have achieved most of their original vision. The culvert carrying the Stonebridge Brook has been steadily rising up in the park and needs attention. Friends keen to work in partnership with the council in developing new management plan. Ceri has lobbied for a section about parks funding, staffing and maintenance be put in the Labour Party election manifesto. Community gardening sessions organised monthly and TCV have been really helpful. Want to install a drinking fountain. Rubbish collections are erratic. Lobbying for safer public toilets with no potentially problematic communal areas. Supporting a regular rough sleeper to find more long-term appropriate shelter.

Coldfall Wood: Made up of Muswell Hill Playing Fields with small playground and an area of woodland. Want to know the progress on the promised replacement notice board and interested to know when we will be getting a new conservation officer. Their walks programme is ongoing. TCV has helped with regular work in the woods. Metropolitan Police organise dog walks in the woods. Concerned about the ageing oak trees and want to plan a long-term solution. Japanese knotweed is encroaching from adjacent cemetery and also from a utility site. A drain is blocked and this creates a seasonal pond which sometimes comes up over the level of the boardwalk and it needs work to unblock it. Unfortunately, one of the long-term active members of the Friends, Catherine Appleby, died in 2017 and is sorely missed. She was a regular rep at our Forum - we remember and value all her good work.

Queen's Wood: TCV have been really helpful with work on pond, coppicing and paths. The lease on the café, organic garden and play area has been extended for another 20 years and cost is under discussion. 216 households are registered with the Friends. Held a successful Tree Charter Day and an art project will run till March with poetry quotes on woodland notice boards and finger posts. Bird walks planned for the year. Wanting to renovate the old water fountain – only the concrete base remains and not sure if the pipework is safe and in place. Rough sleepers a regular issue – wish to know the results of the rough sleeper survey carried out by the council a few months ago. Finding communication with council quite difficult at present. Moselle Drain clearance used to be done annually but is not being done now. 10 years ago this caused flooding in local houses and this must not happen again. Trees were marked as unsafe but no action taken. Lack of conservation officer has been a problem in the wood and want to know the progress on this matter.

Alexandra Park: 5 winter talks organised which have been very well attended. The Friends are very active and have taken part in a conservation project clearing an area of acid grassland with London Wildlife Trust advisors. Monthly meetings with Park Manager. Zip Wire plans presently on hold. One Day Festival planned by the Alexandra Palace which will have a £40 entry fee and will close an area of the park for a week. The CEO of the Palace is very approachable but their vision for the park is yet to be announced in the Summer.

Downhills Park: Bulb planting activity held. New landscaping is beginning to take shape along the perimeter. Pond still a problem and working with TCV on that. Keeping an eye on the orchard trees pruned by members. Contractors have been in the park are driving over grassed area and across grass corners and causing damage in wet weather. Wanting information about future of depot where the Friends have a storage area. The adjacent development is to start soon and need to know that proper protections are in place re trees etc. Annual Art in the Park event will be on July 22nd.

Lordship Rec: Friends volunteers have worked closely with TCV in the woodland doing various necessary jobs. Have planted over 100 of trees and bushes in the open fields in the past year and training has been held. A successful Wassail was held with music and celebration of the orchard area. The Moselle River remains quite polluted despite some work on misconnections along the route. A major source of pollution, a school in the Hornsey area, will be rectified in the school Easter Holidays and the management plan for the river in Lordship Rec can then start to be properly carried out and

organised. The Hub is doing well and the front door and ramp have now been fixed by the Council after 2 years wait. The adventure playground equipment has been condemned and is dangerous. A group has taken on consultation and is researching fund raising for new play facility on this site. The Friends of Lordship organisational method has proved very successful in restoring and managing our park in partnership with the Council and other stakeholders. They are applying for 'replication' funding offered by NESTA and the Lottery to fund replication of successful management methods in other parks across the UK. They are part of the organising group for the 2018 Tottenham Flower and Produce show. **Tottenham Cemetery:** Have developed good email communication with the managers of the cemetery and some repair work is being carried out. **Chapmans Green:** New friends group has developed well over the last 6 months. **Westbury Avenue Nature Reserve:** Work is ongoing on developing a new nature reserve along Westbury Avenue near Turnpike Lane

Council responses:

17. Rough sleeping (CREOS, Queen's Wood etc.) All problems should be reported to the parks dept and they will link up with enforcement team. Will seek out the outcome of the rough sleeper survey and let Friends Groups know.

18. Litter Will be looking at scheduling of litter collections. Piloting a costly litter and rubbish collection project to see what is the best approach. It really comes down to people not dropping litter – education needed. Volunteer parks needed for the pilot project – one approach is removing bins completely.

19. Individual parks **Wolves Lane:** Gas reconnection has been set in motion and the Consortium are awaiting a date. Tropical plant expert to visit the site to look at condition of plants. **Parkland Walk:** Council organised for Veolia to support Friends litter picking activity. Looking at storage space for Friends to use. **Bruce Castle:** Council will look into what is happening with the fence and try to deal with it. Will get Tree Officer Alex to check new trees. **Down Lane:** The new MUGA is part of the April capital programme. **Hartington Park** Council would welcome the development of a Friends Group. **Finsbury Park:** Waiting for the report recommendations from the Met Police over safety after murder in the park. **Railway Fields:** Working on creation of long-term lease. **Wood Green Action Plan:** Parks Dept. very involved in the discussions. 1 hectare of green space planned. As it is a Business Improvement Area money will be paid into a fund and the boundary of the Action Area has been extended so that some of this money can be invested in improvements at Ducketts Common. **Chestnuts:** Engineers have been commissioned to look at the rising culvert, not thought to be a sewer. Will ask about possibility of deculverting. **Coldfall Wood:** will chase up progress of new board. Lew to chase up drain work in Coldfall and **Queen's Wood** and on rough sleeping will liaise with enforcement team. Will pick up knotweed problem. **Downhills:** The sale of the Depot has been postponed indefinitely until the needs of the parks department are determined. Will pick up the problem of contractors driving over grass. The works being done are quite extensive. **Lordship:** The work on the misconnected toilets in the school will definitely be carried out in the Easter Holidays and the management plan of the river will be picked up after completion.

20. TCV report Have been really busy supporting groups across Haringey. Have done a lot of work putting in steps in Tunnel Gardens. Organising a Winter Tree ID workshop on 23rd February. Clif is going to be working part time from now on and job sharing with Matt.

21. Update on Council Staff David Theakston: Park Development Officer (infrastructure). Chris Patterson: Park Projects, replacement for Martin Hall's post. Re-interviewing for Conservation Officer after chosen candidate withdrew. [Stop Press: Ed Santry hired]. Kelly Lloyd, Parks Projects, has left. Advertisements out for Allotment Officer and 2 new Project Officers.

22. Parks and Open Space Strategy and Scrutiny Review Simon Farrow working on drafting a Strategy for next 10yrs. Looking at impacts and benefits of parks and setting priorities. This strategy will be informed the new Borough Plan and by the recent Scrutiny Review that is nearing completion. The review conclusions will go to the Scrutiny Panel in March, and then to new cabinet after the May elections. The review has been very useful and has had lots of input and recommendations. Strategy Documents will be available in the summer and consultation with Friends will start in autumn.

23. Items for next meeting Discussion on Management Plans put over to next meeting. Questionnaire on rough sleeping. Contractor monitoring and sanctions.

24. Dog issues: Parks for London new advice and guidance proposing 4 dogs maximum and professional licensing scheme.

25. Next meeting: April 7th, 10am @ Bruce Castle