

## Minutes of Forum General Meeting 7th April 2018 at Bruce Castle Museum

**Present - Reps from the following 15 Friends Groups:** Dave Morris, Chair (**Lordship Rec and Tottenham Cemetery**), Pamela Harling (**Hornsey Church Tower and Meadow Orchard**), John Miles (**Parkside Malvern Residents Association**), Alison Watson, minute-taker (**Queen's Wood**), Clif Osborne and Mat Prendergast (**The Conservation Volunteers**), Joan Curtis (**Lordship Rec**), Mandy Hawting and Phil Chin (**Wolves Lane**), Joyce Rosser, minute-taker (**Priory Common**), Anna Muller and Adolfo Alvarez (**Bruce Castle Park**), Ceri Williams (**Chestnuts Park**), Martin Ball (**Down Lane Park and Finsbury Park**), Barbara Baughan (**Finsbury Park**), Susan Beckett (**3 Aves RA / Nightingale Gdns**), Quentin Given (**The Paddock and Bruce Grove Cloud Garden**) **From 11am:** Sahina (**LBH Parks Operations**) and Simon Farrow (**LBH Head of Client Services**). **Apologies:** Deborah (**Markfield Park and Vartry Communities RA**), Clare (**Downhills Park**)

**2. Minutes of last meeting (3<sup>rd</sup> February 2018)** These were agreed.

**3. Scrutiny Review Report on Parks** The Committee's report (which had been circulated) was detailed and comprehensive. It sets out how to support parks making the case for more funding and dedicated staffing in some parks. It stresses the importance of protecting green spaces. It recommends that all 50 Haringey parks and green spaces should have Fields in Trust protection. The report will go to full Council or Cabinet after the local elections.

**4. Local elections** The Forum wrote to all political parties asking them for strong statement of support on parks (this was sent with the Scrutiny report).

**5. Walks/Love Parks** Joan Curtis reported that she has succeeded in getting £3000 funding from Smarter Travel. She plans to produce two walks booklets – a Walk in the Park and Tottenham Parks' Cafe Trail. She said she is trying to include as many parks as possible. She asked Friends groups to send her any maps of their parks. The booklets will be launched in Love Parks week (13<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> July). There is also a London National Park City week 20<sup>th</sup>- 29<sup>th</sup> July. Joan said she is also trying to organise a bus tour of Haringey parks – help would be appreciated.

**6. Rivers Forum** John Miles reported on the initial meeting held in February with 30 different groups represented in order to promote Haringey's watercourses. He described the Haringey Heartlands planning committee meeting at which they challenged St William (the developer) to de-culvert the Moselle. This was supported by some councillors on the planning committee. Public opinion is quoted as a problem (eg do people want a smelly river). John asked Friends groups for their views on this. Friends of Queens Wood said that they intend to de-culvert the Moselle in their park. Quentin Given also reported on recent serious oil spillage in Pymmes Brook which affected wild life, rowers, etc. 5000 people signed a petition about this.

Joyce Rosser said that there are only a few copies left of the River Moselle walks booklet (most recent edition published in 2016 by Haringey Friends of Parks Forum and Haringey Federation of Residents Association). She referred to the river's environmental importance eg Heartlands campaign, misconnections, rain gardens, etc. It would cost about £650 to reprint. HFRA has agreed to pay 50%. The meeting agreed to fund the other 50%. She mentioned that there are plans for a further rain garden on the south side of White Hart Lane (easternmost end) along the route of the Moselle.

**7. Plastic bottles/refill campaign/water fountains** Joyce Rosser referred to the campaign against plastic bottles being organised by national, London and local organisations. The GLA has a "refill" campaign with shops agreeing to refill plastic bottles. She asked if Friends groups knew if their parks cafes offered water and refills and also whether there were any proposed water fountains in parks (new or old). There was mention of the Thames Water Community Fund which gives grants.

**8. Data protection** Information has been circulated to all Friends groups. Best practice is to ensure a notice at the bottom of emails offering people the chance to unsubscribe.

**9. National and London news** Dave reported that the first meeting of the national Parks Action Group working group had been held in Lordship Rec with reps from 9 national greenspace organisations and 9 Government depts. The aim is to call for and help coordinate effective action to reverse the underfunding crisis affecting parks countrywide. Dave, on behalf of the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces will be coordinating the Empowering Communities work stream.

**10. Metropolitan Open Land** Ceri Williams described the proposed controversial Metropolitan Open Land greenspace swap at Woodside School (astro turf v. grassed area). Council proposes to spend £3million on new centralised youth zone (which will have serious impact on other youth services across the borough). Friends of Chestnuts Park is opposing this. After discussion, the Forum said that the replacement should be additional open space of equal or better environmental value as the area lost so therefore opposed the proposed swap. It has to go the Mayor of London.

**11. New Friends group** Friends of Cloud Garden (behind listed houses in Bruce Grove). Quentin Given said that the council has agreed to support protection and enhancement of this area in principle.

## **12. Local Parks Reports:**

**Queen's Wood:** Ongoing issue with rough sleepers, now 5 tents in the wood. Locations have been reported to Haringey Enforcement Officer but have had no response since. Ongoing programme of activities; Family Fun Day on June 3 to which all families with children up to and including primary age are welcome. TCV continue to help on a regular basis, particularly with the harder physical tasks. *LBH Response: Will ask Enforcement Officer to get back re rough sleepers.*

**Nightingale Gardens :** Hold monthly litter picks. List of outstanding works, replacement benches and litter bins not done for a year. In touch with Tim Pyall. *LBH Response: Explained that Parks have been 40% down in staff, apologies for non communication. Work has gone out to tender but Tim Pyall had not been told.*

**Parkside Malvern:** Manage a number of small green spaces. Lavender Gardens has management issues & problems re lime trees. Bigger issue Wood Green Action Plan - green grid/MOL should be higher up the political agenda. Some progress re lobbying for deculverting the Moselle, taking into account concerns from some residents over need to also address water quality/pollution. Some progress in west, none going east. *LBH response: There is a Management Agreement in place with the Assoc re local spaces - Simon asked for it to be re-sent to him. Wood Green Common, Crescent Gardens, Bounds Green, Nightingale & Woodside have reached Stage 2 of Mayor's Green City Fund for funding which means conversations can now start on how to spend it. Re deculverting: Parks service is in favour of doing this.*

**Railway Fields:** Coming along nicely. Regular school visits.

**Finsbury Park:** Lost appeal against Council re large music events but won major point as Judge commented that all monies raised from these should be spent on Finsbury Park alone. It is hoped there will be fewer events in future. Following a murder in the park police have carried out a security audit with list of action points, some problematic eg closing gates at night but there is an evening green gym. *LBH response: Police have made 15 recommendations, received by Council one week ago - stakeholders will be consulted as part of any decisions re implementation after the elections. Simon Hunt, Chair of Friends of FP met with SF the morning after the appeal hearing on commercial events. 150 yr anniversary coming up, including 10 days of activities starting on 7/8/19 with a Civic ceremony. There will be physical improvements. Council will liaise with stakeholders.*

**Wolves Lane Centre:** Heating still not on and a gas leak found only recently means yet more delay while waiting for the repair. Have had to cancel school visits because of the cold but hope to resume these in the summer term. Palm House lost most of its highly-treasured contents. A report following a visit from an expert to advise on replacement planting has not materialised. More positively volunteers are working on restoring the community garden, commercial black plastic has been removed and the Council has agreed to pay for reglazing the greenhouses - plus £1,340 awarded for new plants. Monthly markets have started there. *LBH response: Difficult period, we all feel let down by heating problems. Capel Manor are coming 9 April to look at Palm House planting and make recommendations. Forum agreed that in any similar contract on any site in the future working in partnership with the Friends Group from the start should be included as a pre-*

*condition - this might have avoided some of the Wolves Lane problems. SF said that as the Friends were bidding to run the site this would have been difficult. The lease still has not been signed.*

**Down Lane:** Encouraging. New community Hub in old bowling pavilion, promoting food growing and cafe. Events under way, a spring welcome event for engagement with local community. Vandalised playground still not repaired after 3 months. Issue of proposed new tower blocks which will cast even more shade. *LBH response: New play equipment has been ordered. SF will find out what has happened. A Feasibility report on an area for multi-use games has been received. Planning permission needed and it can then go ahead.*

**Ducketts Common:** Surface flooding after the rain - the Circus visit has resulted in Pantechnicons parked at the edge on the roots of the plane trees with caravans in the drip zone. Possible threat to MOL-status there, Council asked for support against this. *LBH response: SF will ask Alex Fraser to assess re tree damage. It was raised there is a broader issue re whether or not some sites are suitable for fairs and circuses. Eg Chestnuts and Lordship Rec are not because of the damage done by the heavy vehicles to soft ground and underlying drainage pipes. SF said that if Parks assess a site as unsuitable it would rule out such events.*

**Chestnuts:** Friends busy seeking or making further improvements to the park this year. Issue re community centre car-parking, and managing the meadow area. Still waiting for bins. Stonebridge Brook culvert under main field is rising out of ground – could be de-culverted. Opposed Woodside School landswap as similar to proposal for Chesnuts last year which was rejected. *LBH response: Highway Engineers have been in. It seems the river (8m down) has been diverted and although all the drains are broken there does not seem to be a sewage issue. Friends asked to be sent a map of this, SF agreed to give contact details for this. Re Woodside School proposal for land swap, although school has signed the contract to go ahead, Parks service have to agree and will not do so. Land belongs to Council, school has 25 yrs lease. Bins: SF will ask someone to look into.*

**Meadow Orchard:** Ticking over. Need to review access and meadow management.

**Hornsey Church Tower:** Clean up next week and Tower will be open for Open House w/e.

**Bruce Castle Park.** Continuing monthly litter picks and cake. Council very supportive. Number of community events, an Easter egg hunt, May 1 creative activities, environmental re-cycling workshop, picnic in the summer. BUT broken fence still not repaired and no action from Council, plus someone has created their own gate through fence into park. *LBH response: SF will find out situation re fence.*

**Paddock:** Working with TCV to create a wildlife pond, and water level rising. Waiting for new Conservation Officer to advise re carrying out more work. Land owned by Thames Water alongside has had a lot of sediment etc. dumped but hopefully will be taken away. No development re talks on London Wildlife Trust possibly taking it over.

**Bruce Grove Cloud Garden:** Waiting to hear outcome of Tree Preservation orders.

**Lordship Rec:** Parks Clean Team struggling to clear litter at weekends. Also people ask about re-cycling (Council don't do). Many activities and events organised by Friends, Hub and other user groups. Friends conducting tree care projects. Hub thriving but hard to generate enough money to do necessary repairs and improvements there. Friends have been shortlisted for grant to promote community empowerment and co-management around London and UK.

**Tottenham Cemetery:** Slow but sure progress on programme of repairs following Friends' lobbying.

**Downhills Park:** Written report read out. Met with Council re re-starting free tennis lessons. Received invitation to meet with High Road West developer's Engagement Team. How to keep water level in pond up? Art in the Park planned for July 22. *LBH response: SF said it doesn't make sense to have a pond that needs continuous filling up from a stand pipe. Discussion with Friends re this is needed.*

**13. Recycling:** SF said this is a much wider issue as all recycling goes to the N London waste site but they reject loads from parks due to poor quality. Strategy needed including education and options. Council is planning a pilot in two parks taking away all bins.

**14. The Conservation Volunteers** Clif Osborne is now part time, job sharing with Matt who is in charge of volunteers. There are good numbers of volunteers and a very full programme across the Borough for 3 days pw. Matt mentioned Tunnel Gardens replacing steps and said a new management plan is needed. It was agreed that TCV work is enhancing that by the Friends and the Council. A successful Tree Identification workshop had taken place.

**15. LBH and staffing:** David Theakstone is new Parks Development and Infrastructure manager. Chris Pattison is Parks Projects Officer. There is a Major Projects Officer vacant post. Ed Santry is new Nature Conservation Officer starts 16 April. Sahina Choudhury is Interim Parks Area Manager. Top Officer in charge of Parks is Steven McDonnell, Environment and Neighbourhoods. Assist. Director post vacant. SF and Lew report to AD. Chris Poore leading on infrastructure/benches. SF agreed to send an updated structure chart to us (Note: not yet received).

**16. Scrutiny Review and new Open Spaces Strategy:** DM said the Scrutiny report is sensible and authoritative and should guide the Parks department in the future re strategy. He congratulated all involved with the report. SF said the report goes to the Cabinet Member for response, adopt, amend or not adopt (following the Council elections). Simon said he and the Friends Forum need to discuss the key themes of the development of a new Open Spaces Strategy before it starts being drafted. Next meeting.

**17. Parks budget:** Fixed and same for 2018/19 as previous year. Simon said that at the moment he believes the Parks service can absorb the legal decision that all Finsbury Park commercial concert revenues must go to the park.

**18. Park furniture:** A review is taking place and in the future there will generally be standard bins, benches, fingerposts etc with variation depending on the location. Draft review will be shared with Friends Forum. Meanwhile if replacement bins are needed, contact Chris Poore.

**19. Management Plans:** Deferred for a later meeting.

**20. White Hart Lane Rec:** Following years of lobbying by the Friends group backed by the Forum, the Council have obtained money for a Master Plan for improving the site. Fantastic news!

**21. Groundwork:** No longer in contract with the Council, but involved with projects from time to time.

**22. Biodiversity Strategy:** Needs updating and implementation.