

Haringey Friends of Parks Forum

Report of Meeting, Bruce Castle Museum, Saturday 1 September 2018, 10am – 1pm

Attendees: Friends Group/Community representatives from: Alexandra Park, Bruce Castle Park, Chestnuts Park, Crouch End Open Space, Downhills Park, Down Lane Park (and Café Connect), Ducketts Common, Finsbury Park, Living Under One Sun, Lordship Rec, Meadow Orchard Project, The Paddock, Parkland Walk, Parkside Malvern Residents Association, Priory Common, Queens Wood, Railway Fields, Tottenham Cemetery, Tower Gardens Park, White Hart Lane Rec. **And:** Haringey Council representatives (Ed Santry, Cllr Hearn, Tim Pyall and Sahina Choudhury), The Conservation Volunteers **Apologies:** Wolves Lane

1. **Minutes of the meeting of 2 June 2018:** subject to the addition of the report from White Hart Lane Rec the minutes of the meeting of the Haringey Friends of Parks Forum held on Saturday 2 June 2018 were agreed as a true record. There were no matters arising that would not be addressed during the course of the meeting.

2. **Haringey Parks Scrutiny Review and Strategy meeting:** Dave outlined the backdrop to the scrutiny review noting that the Cabinet had discussed the 16 recommendations. Unfortunately, not all had been accepted, most notably Cabinet had rejected the recommendation to earmark some of the public health budget for parks. Fortunately however, it was agreed that all Haringey's parks and green spaces should go into the Fields in Trust scheme although Cabinet didn't consider they have sufficient legal resource to address this immediately and so will prioritise the 10 parks and green spaces that currently have no form of protection at all. Fields in Trust are willing to work to ensure all of Haringey's green spaces are protected over the longer term. The cabinet agreed to refer the other Recommendations for further discussion as part of the new 10yr Parks Strategy process.

Action: *it was agreed that Dave would circulate a copy of the council list of the 58 parks and green spaces. All Parks Forum members were requested to report any errors in the form to Simon Farrow.*

Dave noted that 8 or 9 groups from the Haringey Parks Forum had attended a special meeting with 7 Council officers about the 10-year parks strategy in July. Notes of the meeting had yet to be shared. Overall it had been a cooperative and positive meeting although Klaus noted the Council's refusal to address comments/concerns raised about continued commercial events being held in Haringey parks.

3. **Haringey Parks Walking booklets:** Joan noted that 10,000 copies of each of the A Walk in the Park and Café Trail booklets had been printed and that she is looking into the option of developing audio versions. Distribution was discussed through libraries and Joyce agreed to ensure all councillors received a copy of A Walk in the Park. Joyce also noted that she would like to re-launch the Moselle walking guide next Spring as this would join together both waterways and open spaces. There was a vote of thanks to Joan for her work in developing both booklets.

4. **Ward budgets:** Joyce raised the topic of ward budgets noting that each year this amounts to circa £190k over the 19 wards but that there is little council officer monitoring of grants allocated. She suggested that Park Forum Members follow up with their Ward Councillors. Joan highlighted recent challenges she had experienced in the application process. Concerns were raised that the process was neither transparent nor properly administered it was suggested that this is brought back for further discussion at the next meeting.

5. **Bruce Castle Park:** Klaus informed Parks Forum Members of plans underway with Spurs and NFL to hold two major commercial events which would take over 100% of park including the castle for its exhibition space and host events for 30k people. A licensing application had been submitted but since retracted and plans are on hold because of delays to the stadium build. Haringey Friends of Parks Forum agreed to support Bruce Castle in their efforts to limit the potential future impact of these events to the park.

6. **London & National update** – Dave flagged three specific areas for information:

1. **Lordship Rec** have received a £145k lottery **grant** to appoint two consultants who will promote community empowerment & co-management nationally based on the successful model used in Lordship Rec.

2. **Parks Charter** successfully launched at Parliament in June by Dave (on behalf of 12 national organisations) with three children from The Willow & The Brook School in Tottenham. Any group can sign up to the charter, as indeed HFoPF has done.
3. **Parks Action Group** – this group was set up a year ago & provides a forum for liaison between green space organisations & government departments. The aim is to respond to the underfunding crisis in UK Parks. A proposed action plan is currently with the government. The Haringey Forum will be kept updated.

7. **Minutes of the Parks Forum meetings** – a proposal was put forward suggesting that minute taking at the Parks Forum meeting rotates between members. Pam agreed to take minutes at the November meeting and John at the first meeting in 2019.

8. **Park Reports** – Council reps were welcomed to the meeting and park reports were shared. It was noted that there had generally been an inadequate level of rubbish collection in the majority of the parks during the summer months. Comments relating to rubbish collection are therefore not included in the individual reports that follow.

Chestnuts park: holding a monthly garden session on the last Saturday of the month. Ongoing work with TCV to develop the community orchard, community beds and native species hedge planting around the park. AGM scheduled for November. Longstanding issue with culvert problem and related drainage which is worsening, meadow area requires more maintenance, long delays between agreement on and implementation of actions.

Wolves Lane: this is open on Tuesdays and is a hive of activity with volunteers. Parks department have been supportive to a crowdfunding bid for solar panels. The following note was provided by Phil Chin by email with his apologies for the meeting: *'the summer has been consumed by watering at the Centre most days and continuing the fight against mare's tail, bind weed and brambles in the process of resurrecting the community garden. We have begun replanting it and are bringing on plans and seedlings from planting in the early Autumn and next Spring. Reconfirmed with Simon before he went on leave that the Centre does have MOL status'. Hope that Simon has extracted information from the Organic Lea Consortium on their strategy for the centre'*.

Meadow Orchard Project Ticking over.

Ducketts Common: main focus is on young people & basketball which is going from strength to strength and is attracting young people from across London. Successful ball tournament held in late August. Some anti-social behaviour (ASB) during summer holidays. Twilight basketball, 8 – 10pm, up and running. Insufficient lighting and leaf blowing on courts.

White Hart Lane Rec: successful outdoor sports event held on 8 July. Family Fun Day also held and both highlight the importance of the park in the community and its value to families. Hazards are being shared with Council but slow response at present. Lack of consultation from the Labour Party in relation to their event held in the park. Travellers are currently in the park.

Finsbury Park: important licence review meeting coming up in relation to the issue of large scale commercial events taking place in the park. Excellent coverage of the case in local and national media and support from a variety of areas. Friends of the park are seeing an increase in membership. Safety in the park is a serious issue and has prompted discussion about lighting and access to the park. Endymion Road entrance gates in need of repair.

Down Lane Park: taking an active role in the regeneration debate with a particular focus on the quality of air and green/public spaces. Generally untidy state of play equipment. Failure to deliver promised improvements and work on MUGA remains outstanding. Lack of consultation in relation to both new signage boards and their location highlighted. **Café Connect:** several projects running and have renovated the disused bowling green area to develop a beautiful outdoor & indoor space with a café, food growing and a stage. This has been achieved through crowdfunding. Two big festivals hosted. Three week programme for young people (0-16 years) & families held & registered 89 new residents. Hosted lunch for the inaugural 'café walk'. Trying hard to develop positive conversations in the community.

Stamford Road Park: ran a clean up event and running a community food growing project.

Tottenham Hale: Community allotment at the marshes has been neglected due to lack of funding for gardeners, working to save this piece of land. Big honey harvest this year.

Railway Fields: open every last Saturday of the month & open weekdays as is TCV base. Successful summer event held & more events scheduled in run up to Christmas.

Queens Wood: successful bat walk held with two new species identified and also a fun day working with Forest Schools & nursery that meets in the woods. Funghi walk scheduled. Plans to open up the Moselle further & work underway to locate culverts and drainage. Problem with Rough Sleepers at separate sites in the wood & clearing related rubbish; reported to the Council. Indicated that noticeboard repairs will be carried out.

Parkside Malvern Residents Association: community gardening project operates 6 – 12 microsites, these are not owned by parks & are high intensity. Building good conversations with Ed Santry. Active residents association within the Wood Green regeneration zone currently working with St. William (management of former gasworks) on the importance of biodiversity and on a project to deculvert the Moselle.

The Paddock: Council acted speedily in relation to a recent travellers encampment. There is a problem with rough sleepers coming back onto the site. Pond has suffered from both travellers & the hot weather. Problem with Japanese knotweed on the site & following this up with Ed Santry.

Alexandra Park: It has been a good year for the Friends group with usual walks and a very successful family bug hunt. Two festivals taking place in the park, one commercial & one a community festival. Build-up period for the commercial festival was quite long & Friends are working to see if this can be reduced. Community Festival was well run and didn't damage the park and as it was open to all & not fenced the build up period was shorter.

Downhills Park: Art in the Park held on 22 July with an excellent attendance. The water level in the pond remains problematic and this area of the park needs attention. Council consultation carried out in relation to a proposal for an outdoor gym. The community centre & creche at the Keston Road development is nearing completion, discussions underway with Pocket Living regarding access paths. There had been some discussions about the football pitch but no further information received.

Tower Gardens Park: New group meets every last Saturday of the month and carries out a litter pick. Planning to do some planting. There are issues with rough sleepers, drugs, litter and playground equipment that is unsafe.

Lordship Rec: Countryfile diaries had filmed in the Rec and an enthusiastic 8 min piece had been broadcast on BBC1 on 29 August. A successful youth & sport festival had been organised by the Lordship Sports and Activities Consortium and young people. The Friends' annual flower & produce show is scheduled for 15 September. A promised meeting in relation to the Moselle, missed connections and related problems with sewage was postponed - a proper maintenance plan for river is required. The park is well used & the Hub is packed on a daily basis. New Empowerment project is based at the Hub.

Tottenham Cemetery: has not met for a year but had prepared a list of maintenance items and Dignity have now carried many of the repairs and are currently working on the paths.

Crouch End Open Space: few volunteers involved but TCV helping out significantly. Work underway with London Wildlife Trust to develop a plan to address biodiversity. The space is now marked out with signs although some homeowners still dumping rubbish in the area & there is a problem with Japanese knotweed. Funding received from Tesco to set up a wildflower meadow and a successful summer picnic event held. Problems with rough sleepers have been reported to the council.

Parkland Walk: there is a knock-on effect from the noise at events in Finsbury Park. Some antisocial behaviour in the area around the viaduct. Several of the entrances/exits to the Parkland Walk have been rebuilt and are now in much better condition. Rubbish was particularly problematic because of the collection schedule on a Friday & bins overflowing by the end of the weekend.

Bruce Castle: successful & well attended Friends' festival held on 22 July which has helped to generate more involvement in the monthly litter pick events. Park was well used throughout the summer. Friends are aware that bid has been submitted to the Big Lottery regarding the museum and park but are unclear as to how they might be

involved. Friends are closely monitoring the situation re: large events in the park and how any funds would be reinvested into the park. Rubbish collection over the summer months had been good. The fence has now been fixed after a lengthy delay.

9. Council responses: Sahina acknowledged the situation regarding litter collection noting that seasonal staff were joining soon and that this should improve litter collection. Compactor bins are currently being trialled in Finsbury Park. A different solution might be required regarding the specific issues on the Parkland Walk. It was agreed this would be discussed further at a future meeting.

Responding to other items raised during the park reports Tim noted the following:

- maps of the underground culvert could be provided to Chestnuts.
- The problem with lights on Ducketts Common is with the supplier. They are looking to extend the kiosk to incorporate a toilet, CCTV has been installed which should help with ASB.
- Glynis Kirkwood is leaving Lordship Hub to join the Haringey Parks Projects team on 17 September. She will pick up the issue of drainage with White Hart Lane Rec as part of a new Masterplan being developed for that site.
- Report on situation in Finsbury park recommends actions to lift tree canopies to improve sightlines in the park and lighting from Endymion Road entrance to the bottom end of the Park. Discussion with friends will be scheduled about this. Action re: gate to be escalated.
- A feasibility study has been completed [for Finsbury Park?], management consultants commissioned & surveys currently being undertaken. There should be a consistent point of contact for communications.
- Re: Café Connect – work underway with Steve Hall & team.
- Stamford Road open space will be responsibility of one of the new officers and is owned by Homes for Haringey who are responsible for the Japanese knotweed problem.
- Re: rough sleeping, specific issues will be followed up but more generally a document had been shared outlining the process and who to contact. This would be recirculated.
- Paddock – plans to treat Japanese knotweed once funding is available. Ed Santry is liaising with surrounding boroughs on their approach to this issue more broadly.
- Downhills Park – will follow up with developers & pitch proposals.

Councillor Hearn expressed her appreciation of the energy that Friends groups put into parks. She noted that there was a problem with travellers and that the lack of a liaison officer at present was a further hindrance. She will follow up on this appointment. She refrained from commenting on the Finsbury Park licence issues preferring to let the legal process run its course. She urged people to use the Haringey app to report items that relate to their parks & communities.

10. TCV: Clif noted that he had discussed training options with Ed Santry & they had developed courses which they considered would be helpful but also requested that groups approach them with training requests. A 1-day leadership skills training course is being scheduled. Training around leading guided walks is also planned.

11. AOB

Haringey Rivers Forum have brought together Council, Thames Water & Thames 21 which is a significant achievement. It was noted that the **staff structure for Parks** had been circulated and that people should liaise with the most appropriate person. A note of the **Strategy meeting** with the Council held in July discussing the next 10 year strategy meeting and related ambition will follow. As a follow on from the July discussions Ed Santry noted that he is planning a biodiversity workshop. Dave shared with council representatives the views expressed regarding the lack of transparency & poor management of **Ward budgets** and requested that this is looked into and further information shared with Friends groups.

The next Forum meeting will be held at Bruce Castle Museum on Saturday 3 November 2018.