

# Minutes of The Haringey Parks Forum

7<sup>th</sup> September 2019 at Bruce Castle Museum

**Attendees: Friends representatives:** Susan Beckett (Nightingale & Avenue Gardens), Gordon Hutchins (Friends of Alexandra Palace), John Miles (Haringey Rivers Forum/Hornsey Park Community Gardening), Joan Curtis (Lordship Rec), Klaus Kuerner (Bruce Castle), Phil Chinn (Wolves Lane), Ann Bronkhorst (Coldfall Woods/Muswell Hill Playing Fields), Clare Parry (Downhills Park), Clive Carter (Finsbury Park), Cllr Eldridge Culverwell (Finsbury Park), Alice Tringham (Priory Park), Anne Scott (Pond Park/White Hart Lane Rec), Cathy Meeus (Parkland Walk), Dave Warren (Queens Wood), Martin Ball (Down Lane Park) – second half of meeting. **Council officers:** Glynis Kirkwood-Warren, Shahina

**Apologies:** Dave Morris (Lordship Rec), Pamela Harling (Meadow Orchard), Ceri Williams (Chestnuts), Alice (TCV), Hesketh Benoir (WHL), Matthew Flemming

**Minutes:** Ann B – there are no plans for development on Coldfall Woods. They are a Field in Trust. Cathy M – missed off attendee list.

**Matters Arising:** Leases e.g. Lodge in Queens Wood and Parkland Walk. Separate item at November meeting . Joan suggested preparing a general letter to be sent around the forum for agreement in Nov.

**Parks Resources Campaign:** Clare summarised the sub-group's activities. Deputation to Cabinet meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> July. Cllr Hearn said "no stone would be left unturned to raise funds for Parks". It was intended to present to the full Council meeting in November post the collection of sufficient signatures via the petition in part to influence the budget discussions. Parks are not a statutory service, but functional parks are necessary to achieve statutory service outcomes. The Council's aim of achieving zero net sum cost of parks will not achieve this.

A one page leaflet was produced for the campaign with particular thanks to Klaus. The Council have not agreed the collection of signatures via Change.org despite this being used by others. The Council are reviewing their policy on this. Dave is trying to expedite with no success to date. We understand that the Council want every entry to be identifiable by physical and email address. We should get as many physical signatures as possible in the next 2 months. AP to find when the deadline is for signatures for the November full Council.

**Parks Strategy:** Extremely frustrating. We met Simon Farrow and his team 364 days after the last meeting. We are back at square one. The meeting only happened because we pushed for it. Despite asking Simon for his presentation material in good time before the meeting, our first sight was when we saw it on screen in the session. As Klaus commented this made discussion of its content near impossible.

Other than produce their set of slides ( which Simon said had been completed on the day of the meeting ) no progress has been made on any of the elements of the framework proposed a year before by the Council eg. None of the workshops on key issues or position papers.

How to proceed – We discussed how to do so eg. By holding an open meeting or , as John suggested, by reviving the previous framework. Simon wanted to put the onus upon us to say how we wanted to interact with them on the strategy.

Financials - We are also disappointed that, despite Cllr Hearn offering to have a meeting with the Friends on Parks financials to help inform our thinking for the strategy, after the elapse of many months this meeting has still not been arranged. To our surprise Simon Farrow said at the strategy session that he would not provide anything other than aggregated information including non-parks areas, such as Homes for Haringey, Dignity and Fusion, until the financials meeting is arranged and even then claims that he cannot disaggregate much of the information.

Phil commented that it was odd that the Council has shown two different net Contributions to parks from the Council in 17/18. Last year they gave the Forum a slide showing a £74K contribution, but in each of the draft plans for individual parks they showed a contribution of over £600K.

### **Park Reports and Council Officer responses**

Once again Simon did not attend the Forum. Glynis and Shahina joined us.

**Queens Wood** – Successful guided walks and Family Fun day in July. Fires and barbecues are a problem. Concern at the loss of Ed Santry which was repeated by others and asked when he would be replaced.

**Parkland Walk** – Took part in the National Parks City Festival in July. A wide range of well attended walks. Only Cllrs Culverwell and Hare attended their spotlight meeting prior to their green flag inspection to be held in first week of October. The draft management plan work performed by the Friends as being done by the Council.

**Nightingale Gardens** – Want more benches and trees and to transform the wooded area into a nature conservation area. Glynis suggested applying for a Community grant from the Lottery.

**Alexandra Park** – Held The Great Fete including children's acts and a history walk. Do monthly conservation work. Bat and funghi walks soon.

**Hornsey Park Community Gardening** – Little involvement with Parks services – Ed did a walk, but did not produce a work list. Discussed SUDs – issue of how to manage swales and to control weed growth in them.

**Rivers Forum** – Meeting to be held in Lordship hub on 16<sup>th</sup> September. Distributed leaflet. Setting up a Moselle Water Quality Testing partnership with UCL. Students will do much of the work, but want to involve Friends groups and others.

**Lordship Rec** – 14<sup>th</sup> September Tottenham Flower and Produce ; 29<sup>th</sup> Tottenham Ploughman's. The work to put right the school misconnections has not removed the pollution problems in the Moselle. The Council have engaged a contractor to work on this and devised a plan for them, but it is upsetting that despite all their work on this the Friends were not consulted.

**Bruce Castle** – Group has existed for 3 years. Theatre in Park v successful 300-350 people. Green flag reconfirmed. Not seen report. National Heritage Lottery Fund involvement – further meeting at end of month.

**Wolves Lane** – Still awaiting report on first 2 years of Consortium at Centre, plus strategy and plans for future. Simon had draft months ago.

**Coldfall Wood** – TCV and Good Gym have been very helpful. Concerned at loss of Ed Santry. Parks Project Manager has got things done eg. Removal of old railings and graffiti. Do have drainage issues.

**Downhills Park** – The Wind in the Willows Theatre and Art in the Park were both successful. Cafe proactive. Free tennis lessons on Saturday mornings. Equipment fixed. Useful input from TCV and Good Gym. Extinction rebellion did not get in touch in advance to say were having an event in the park before publicising it, did subsequently email. Management plan not progressing.

**Down Lane** – Progress has been made with broken gym equipment, if slowly. New bollards now in place.

**Finsbury Park** – Problems with concerts, traffic, drugs and prostitution. Walked park prior to Wireless and talked to security staff, not sufficient. New larger bins now working. Accident on Seven Sisters Rd showed need for helicopter landing space – could accommodate. New children's play area. Social problems at Oxford Road footbridge – should it be closed at night? MacKenzie Gardens rejuvenated. Plans by TfL to take a 5m strip off Eastern edge of the park shelved for a year. Asked for Forum support to oppose this. Would be useful if Forum could write a press release.

**Priory Park** - £3600 raised via crowd funding to replace playground equipment broken for 4 years. Seeking tenders. TCV new to park. Good Gym worked in playground. Only 4 bins in whole park. Need to decide what to do with the ornamental wooded area.

**Pond Park/White Hart Rec** – Have a management plan – work done on community engagement. Have discussed way forward with Chestnuts. Sixth Form College football programme being considered. Drainage report required for pond area. Hope to trial a “floating market”. Need to better understand how can work with Council on pond.

Former “Back to Earth” Garden – A friends group has been re-established. A community garden is being set up working with Homes for Haringey. Raised beds put in.

**Chestnuts** – Ceri sent report – Good relations with Alistair. Rubbish collection poor post green flag effort. TCV need to give more notice of their plans.

## **Council Responses**

**Personnel** – Stephen Crabtree (Zone 2) off work – projects being split between colleagues – Down Lane, Chris Pattison ; Downhills, Glynis. New Zone 1 officer to arrive 9<sup>th</sup> September. Two new tree officers, working to Alex, to arrive in October and November. Roles long vacant. Klaus commented that Simon had said there would be a tree report last year for Bruce Castle. It's still awaited. It was suggested that staffing should be an explicit part of the Strategy discussions. Hoped will find a replacement for Ed Santry in 6 to 8 weeks. Steve Hall retired due to ill health on 20<sup>th</sup> August. Further

restructuring – Client Services and Park Operations are to be brought under the same umbrella. Not clear how Operations will work. Should finally understand by March 2020.

**Bins** – Have been ordered with 8 to 10 week turnaround time for most green spaces. Each will have double capacity, but the total capacity will not increase. Heritage lottery funded parks will keep green sentinel bins with a 6 to 8 week timescale. All others, apart from woodland and nature reserve areas which will have wooden surrounded bins, will have double-sided bins allowing recycling in parks and green spaces, with one side being transparent. They asked Friends groups to check the new bins work. At the recycling centre, the amounts of general and recycling waste can be weighed. There needs to be a further conversation about the number of bins.

**Fires and BBQs** – There are effectively no current parks regulations since the former ones were outdated and the new ones have not been signed off by the Secretary of State.

**SUDS Schemes** – They need to look at best practice. Previous ones have been managed by Friends groups. John suggested a specialist firm.

**Management and Action Plans** – Mgmt plans were rushed out this year for green flag requirements using a lot of generic information N.B. Kathy's issues above. Action plans – again a lack of capacity to work on them. They will try to be more pro-active in the future.

**Paddling Pools** – The contract ended in the Summer. They were cleaned down last Friday. Glynis has taken on a new project to decide what to do in the future and whether to change them out to "splash-play". Discussions will begin in October.

**Strategy Review** – Simon asked Glynis to say that he is happy with the program as set out in his presentation in July. He is following it. This is very disappointing since would have reasonably expected proper consultation as the Council primary partner. The conclusion is obvious.

**River Management Plan** – Chris is happy with the contract and will hand to the contractor. However, it can be changed if necessary. The conversation is not over.

**Needles and Hygiene** – A member of the operational team will be available to deal with issues, involving the police as necessary.

#### **Additional Comments/Items**

Bee-line – Susan described the national project to create corridors for bees. They are creating one down the side of Nightingale Gardens.

10 Year Strategy – Clare, Klaus, Phil and others expressed how disappointing the lack of engagement and progress was.

TfL 5metres – Clive to produce a draft.

Ducketts Common Cafe – Clive informed us that a proposal had been made to expand the current cafe, including a loo.

Encroachment – Cathy reminded the meeting of this issue and the need to protect Parks.