

Haringey Friends of Parks Forum

General Meeting, 8th May 2021 (online)

Present:

Dave Morris (Lordship Rec & Tottenham Cemetery) (*Chaired*);
Joyce Rosser (Priory Common) (*Took Notes*);
Cathy Meeus (Parkland Walk);
Joan Curtis (Lordship Rec);
Joanna (Weir Hall Road Community Open Space);
Ceri Williams (Chestnuts Park);
Charmaine Smith (Russell Park);
Clare Perry (Downhills Park);
David Warren (Queens Wood);
Gordon Hutchinson (Alexandra Park);
Ivana Curcic (St Ann's Green Spaces)
John Miles (Haringey Rivers Forum & Parkside Malvern);
Klaus Kerner (Bruce Castle Park);
Mary Hogan (Railway Fields);
Mina (New Road Park);
Phil Chinn (Wolves Lane);
Quentin Given (The Paddock & Bruce Grove Cloud Garden);
Rachella Sinclair (Russell Park);
Tom Graham (Finsbury Park);
Vicci Midwinter (Coldfall Woods);
Martin Ball (Down Lane Park);

Part 2 only: Lewis Taylor and Glynis Warren-Kirkwood (LBH Parks Service).

Apologies: Chloe and Vincent (Hartington Park); Elaine and Matt (TCV); Pamela Harling (Meadow Orchard), Paul Ely (Parks Service)

2. Minutes of last meeting, March 2021 These with various additions had been circulated. Agreed, subject to corrections re Wolves Lane (see local reports below).

3. Open Space Strategy update Update had been sent round by Paul Ely. There had been a Forum meeting with council officers in February and another meeting with council about working together (communications). Paul's notes circulated included a draft Memorandum of Understanding for Forum and Council. People not sure that a formal agreement is needed, but agree that there needs to be a system to ensure good communications and partnership-working with Friends Groups and the Forum. Paul and Council officers are still working on strategy document drafts, informed by the joint meetings with the Forum in 2019. There will be further rounds of discussions with the Forum plus new bits. Then formal consultation September to November. There will be a Cabinet meeting next year to agree it.

4. Voluntary Sector Forum Ceri said she did presentation about the Friends of Parks Forum to a well-attended VSC meeting and encouraged people to join their local Friends Groups..

5. Pressing Issues for the Forum

a) New Road Park: New and active group. Have developed a vision for improvement. Have just discovered that Homes for Haringey have identified the site as a potential housing development! They are campaigning against this, contacted MP, etc. The Forum agreed to back their campaign.

b) Finsbury Park pub: The Friends of Finsbury Park thanked everyone for supporting their successful campaign against having a pub. In the park.

c) Parkland Walk trees: Controversy over recent tree cutting in the nature reserve. Cathy Meeus said that real problem is the way council gets in teams of tree surgeons to do work. The work had stopped after protests. Raised issues such as management of such work; the need for assertive input of conservation officer; how the Council should work in partnership with the Friends Group, and the independent campaigning activity. The Forum agreed to back the Friends position.

d) Queens Wood Moselle stream restoration: David said that the recent controversial scheme came from Highways not Parks. Purpose to bring water to the surface and slow down and relieve flooding further down the Moselle - but needs to be re-thought and re-designed as likely damage to ancient woods. Public consultation finished but don't know results. Forum agreed to back the Friends position.

e) London Update

GoParks, London-wide promotion of public greenspace, is urging all Friends groups to register on the GoParks map, and add their own info to the page about their park. Also offering to help Councils promote their parks. Haringey already preparing their own borough-wide People Need Parks programme of events – the Council is in touch with GoParks.

f) National Update – New All-Party Parliamentary Group for Parks set up. Have scheduled a meeting to consider calling for the parliamentary Inquiry from 5 years ago to be reconvened due to the Government's failure to address the massive underfunding crisis faced by parks services. Dave, as chair of the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces, has been asked to address the APPG on this matter.

g) Other issues:

- Ceri talked about a problem party event in Chestnuts Park which had moved there due to the refurbishment of the Finsbury Park tennis courts.
- Haringey Climate Forum having meeting on Haringey Biodiversity Plan, with a power point presentation about the biodiversity work of the Friends of Lordship Rec.

Part 2 of meeting

Local reports

Note: Lots of local reports in writing were sent to our list before the meeting, including from Alexandra Park, Down Lane Park, Lordship Rec, Hartington Park,

Russell Park, Coldfall Woods and Muswell Hill Playing Fields, Wolves Lane, New Road Park.

Queens Wood – issue re large groups of people visiting woods? Highways-led controversial Flood Relief Scheme – public consultation now ended. Still waiting for report. Council refused to have public meeting. Parks agreed that there must be no damage to the park.

Paddock – Quentin said lots of positive work. Problem of arson. Rough sleeping is an issue.

Chestnuts Park – Ceri said that they are running a mental health project. Working well with TCV and doing other events. Problem of night parties, no toilets, broken bottles, etc. Need help from council.

St Ann's Green Spaces - Within the St Ann's Hospital development site. Involved in mental health awareness week, TCV event, tree walk. Newsletter out.

Parkland Walk – Cathy said that they had big litter pick with 60 volunteers. They need agreement on policy (including conservation) of carrying out maintenance work. Problem if not supervised?

Russell Park – See written report. Charmaine said “no dogs allowed” sign needs replacing. Problems with access to kiosk – ground very uneven/trip hazard.

Haringey Rivers Forum – John said that he had written to Sam Balch for update on continuing action to reduce Moselle water pollution. He is waiting for meeting about Crescent Gardens SuDS.

Downhills Park - Clare asked about green flag status and issue with tree whips (????). Have a broken gate. Council not replying to emails. In June they have a litter pick event.

Alexandra Park – See written report. Gordon said activities restarted. Discussing events policy with the Palace – asked to be demarcated to certain areas.

Weir Hall Road – New and active group. Organising MH Awareness event. Woodchip available. Site was disused and disputed on border of Enfield and Haringey. There is also a Weir Hall Action Group (not just park). Linked to the new Selby Village development proposals.

Coldwall Wood – See written report. Council to employ independent engineer re. works to seven trees.

Bruce Castle Park – Planning litter picking in June and July. Sport is back. Still trying to get info from council physical activity officers. Antwerp Arms wanted to have tables in parks and this is going ahead. Friends had concerns. Council should be consulting Friends group.

New Road Park – See written report. Mina said that the potential threat of housing on this site is unacceptable as space is vital for local people. Petition started. We agreed to support. The Council should make it immediately clear that this is a non-starter.

Lordship Rec – See written report. Continuing covid-safe volunteering in ones and twos. Doing Walk on Wild Side around the Rec for mental health week. Planning activities to celebrate their 20th anniversary in June. Trying to stop people putting unlawful gates into the park through border fences and hedges. Hub is planning to re-open café and rooms for hire.

Finsbury Park - Litter picking. Raising funds for new skate park. Park never busier. Withdrawal of new pub proposal welcomed.

Railway Fields – Mary Hogan said this is one of the four Haringey nature reserves. Trees cut down recently. No consultation. (??)

Down Lane Park – See written report. Lights need fixing.

Tottenham Cemetery – Friends group relaunched. Community Day walks planned, and a new website. Meeting with Dignity re maintenance issues.

Wolves Lane – Amendment in writing re 6th March: Only one member of the original Consortium is still actively working on site. The central heating system for the site has now been broken for almost 4 years, despite many promises that it would be prepared. One of the three fish ponds has been empty for almost 2 years. The family who maintain them proposed a simple, cheap solution to the Consortium soon after the problem was found, but the Consortium said that they could not afford it and the situation has worsened as a result. It has been suggested that the pond might be filled in, directly contrary to the basis of the tenancy. Edible London's participation on the site has been very significantly curtailed by the Consortium and most of its work has moved elsewhere. The tenancy at will granted to the Consortium 4 years ago was for approximately two thirds of the site, but their publicity appears to claim that they run the whole site. We would like clarification from Simon as to the current position. Current Report - There has been no progress with the fish pond issue. A range of trees have been felled across the site, most on areas not included in the tenancy at will agreement. No update received from Simon.

Responses from council

Lew agreed Friends Groups should get responses to emails.

Queens Wood - Glynis said Annabel (Conservation Officer) has had three meetings with the Queens Wood Forest school re usage. Annabel working on comprehensive policy; signage; etc. Re. flood scheme – were waiting for GLA elections purdah to end. Now elections finished will chase up.

Unauthorised parties/events: Glynis said that there was a cross departmental group to discuss issues not resolved eg parties late night – group includes enforcement, policy, rough sleeper teams, etc. Chestnut problems haven't yet been brought to this

group. Issues in netball pitch – ditto. Ditto Paddock – attempt to have joined up working about rough sleeping.

Lew said felling of trees in Wolves Lane sounds worrying. He will respond to Phil's report.

Parkland Walk – litter collected by group was all picked up and disposed of by Council.

Conservation issues. A separate Forum meeting with Annabel has been mooted for some time. Lew to progress this and get date set.

Glynis – Russell Park and others “no dogs allowed” issue. Comes up for review every three years. PSOs? Parks don't get consulted on this. She is working with enforcement officers. Lew – will get estimate for repairs to ground in front of kiosk.

Chesnuts - Lew apologised for not replying to tree issue. He was waiting to hear from Alex Fraser. Lost “whips”??

Bruce Castle - Glynis said Antwerp Arms had said that they had circulated info to Friends group. AA customers often sit on edge of park. So benches would be safer. Not long term installation. Let her know about issues. Lew – will try to get an update on Bruce Castle Park sports events

Lordship Rec gates into park issue – Council taking up / not simple.

Glynis said re. Down Lane Park lights issue – street lighting team investigating. Repairs now done? Martin to be sent info.

Other updates

Dave noted, for the Forum:

- a) TCV report in writing sent round list
- b) Relaxation of Covid restrictions
- c) People Need Parks events 26th June Lordship Rec and 31st July Finsbury Park. Timetable of events in other parks. Glynis - will circulate People Needs Parks programme. Happy to support GoParks.
- d) Open Spaces Strategy – to be further discussion with Forum before public consultation

Glynis – encroachments and fences – identify where incidents so can work with enforcement (to be circulated).

Glynis – small grants (£1000 per park) to become live in summer. Also smaller grants from Active Community (up to £500)

Lew – reorganisation of parks service being discussed. To be signed off with TUs, etc. Positive restructuring. Will inform Forum of launch date.

Haringey Local plan – all need to keep an eye on any issues affecting public greenspace.

AOB

Paddling pools - Contractor to do surveys to see if OK for June. Any issues contact Glynis Kirkwood-Warren at the Council.

1st-7th June is National Volunteers Week

Chat – lots of contributions, links and thoughts were put into the ‘Chat’ during the meeting.