

Haringey Friends of Parks Forum

General meeting, 4th September 2021 - in Bruce Castle Museum (first one since lockdown)

Present: Dave Morris (Lordship Rec) - *chaired*; David Warren and Lucy Roots (Queens Wood); Jane Dadswell (Bluebell Wood); Chris Chadwick (Priory Park); Chris Setz (Tree Wardens); Pamela Harling (Meadow Orchard Project); Joyce Rosser (Priory Common, and Rectory Gardens) – *took minutes*; Kate Swade (Tower Gardens Park); Vicci Midwinter (Coldfall Woods & Muswell Hill Playing Fields); Gordon Hutchinson (Alexandra Park); Joanna Yeung and Lindy Barrick (Weir hall Road Community Open Space); Cathy Meeus (Parkland Walk); Klaus Kueruer (Bruce Castle Park); Sara Mokone (Chestnuts Park, and St Ann's Green Spaces); Joan Curtis (Lordship Rec); Martin Laheen (Antwerp Arms Association); Martin Ball (Down Lane Park)

Also present for Part 2: Glynis Kirkwood-Warren (LBH Projects Officers), Lew Taylor (LBH Operations), Paul Ely (LBH Open Spaces Strategy) and Cllr Mike Hakata (LBH Cabinet)

PART 1

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Simon Farrow (Haringey Parks); Clare Parry (Downhills); Annabel Foskett (LBH Nature Conservation Officer); Mat and Helena (TCV); Ceri Williams (Chestnuts Park); John Miles (Parkside Malvern Res Assoc, and Haringey Rivers Forum); and Phil Chinn (Wolves Lane).

2. Minutes of last meeting

Minutes of meeting held on zoom on 3rd July 2021 were agreed.

3. Welcoming new(ish) groups

Dave especially welcomed representatives from Bluebell Wood, Tower Gardens (recent re-launch) and Weir Hall Road.

4. Open Spaces Strategy

The various draft documents making up the Strategy had been circulated to the list, and 2 recent special meetings had been held with the Forum to discuss them. Groups could send in written comments on specific documents if they wished. Gordon said that the documents tended to be very general and more detail would be useful. Certain documents applied not just to parks but cover the whole borough (eg the Biodiversity Action Plan and the Water Courses docs).

5. Biodiversity: Conservation Action Plans & Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

Annabel Foskett, Nature Conservation Officer, and TCV both sent in **written reports**, circulated to the Forum email list and printed as part of the meeting documents pack for all delegates present. [See APPENDIX 1 and 2]. TCV is drafting dozens of local **Conservation Action Plans** – in consultation with the local Friends Groups. Private consultants, MKA Ecology, are currently working with Annabel reviewing **59 SINC sites**. It was asked how often SINCs are renewed and what is the process? Annabel has a special guidance document which can be available – Dave will chase up and circulate. Annabel has the job of **responding to planning applications** to speak up for biodiversity and greenspace issues. Dave read out an extract from Cabinet policy from 2018 which commits the planning dept to ensure the needs of greenspaces are protected. The Council's **trees officers unit** has been understaffed for a long time,

and apparently extra staff are due to be taken on soon. The Forum is waiting for a date to be agreed to **meet up with Annabel** so we can discuss these issues together. **TCV** continue their range of activities for the public, volunteers and in partnership with Friends Groups – at Railway Fields, The Paddock, and at local sites. They are promoting the phone app **iNaturalist**, encouraging people to record wildlife at each local site – many Friends Groups have started to use this so please check it out. TCV have organised a free online workshop for Friends Groups about this on 30th September. Continuing their monthly **Newsletters**.

6. Parks Service staffing

Simon Farrow had recently informed the Forum (sent round the list, and attached to the meeting docs pack) that there is currently a staff restructuring going on, with some additional posts planned (possibly 25, 17 being front line, but some are seasonal). The Forum of course welcomed additional staffing. In particular the Forum wanted to ensure: a. that the new engagement and volunteering development posts would not substitute for the need for improved direct communications between Friends Groups and the relevant operations and project officers engaged at the local level. b. that increased staffing would ensure more ‘dedicated’ local staff at specific large sites (which is Cabinet policy), rather than just the expansion of mobile teams.

7. Campaigns to save green spaces

Concern was expressed about potential threat to build housing on Ivatt Way open space, next to an estate. Other threatened spaces mentioned included New Road Park and a greenspace by Park Road (no update on these). Designated public green spaces (eg all those flagged up as such in the Local Plan) are all to be protected via Fields In Trust covenants.

8. London and national update

Dave reminded groups about the opportunity to register with GoParks London and get ‘on the map’ – go to: <https://www.goparks.london/boroughs/haringey/> . People asked Dave to find out how many clicks pages get.

The London Friends of Green Spaces Network was due to hold a special zoom meeting on Monday 13th September for groups to share ideas and experiences on how they can make their groups/memberships stronger and more diverse (eg re age, ethnicity and range of interests). Dave was asked to send round the info. He had printed out (for the meeting pack) some key documents on this subject, written by and for Friends activists. People thought this was an important discussion, eg there’s a wide range of people in parks involved in sport, exercise, picnics and activities etc – we need to be in contact and welcome new involvement, and recognise the different ways people can get involved with Friends groups and in an ongoing way with their park generally. We agreed to hold a Haringey Forum zoom meeting on this issue at some point.

9. Any other business

- a) **Trees for Streets** information sent round list re opportunities for individuals to sponsor a tree in their street etc.
- b) **Big Green Week** A week of widespread community activities, 18th-26th September in the build up to the climate crisis global conference in Glasgow in November. Lots of events already organised in Haringey. Pamela asked to be sent information about others – she will circulate info to the Forum list. Includes big event in St Ann’s Peace Garden on 25th September (4U2 involved in organising).
- c) **Forum News list (external)**. Anyone can sign up to this. Pamela was elected to post to the list on behalf of the Forum. It was agreed to be a low-traffic list of

major news updates from the Forum (rather than from individual groups) eg our minutes, borough-wide events we support etc – and to be guided by our existing elist Guidelines. Dave to re-send those Guidelines noting the additional list.

PART 2

1. Brief Reports from Local Groups

a) Priory Park

Chris Chadwick talked about various refurbishments and maintenance issues. AGM held outdoors in June with about 50 people. Small gardening group continuing work. Petanque site issue pending.

b) Meadow Orchard

Pamela said this community orchard run by volunteers is open on Saturdays. They will have an Open Day in Big Green Week.

c) Down Lane Park written report sent round, including: Maintenance and repairs issues (some done, some outstanding). Issues with local regeneration and building works and their often negative impact on the park including some high safety barriers, threat to Living Under One Sun community hub boundary, and some late night anti-social behaviour from local temporary bars. Appreciated the popular People Need Parks activities.

d) Priory Orchard and Rectory Gardens

Joyce said that proposed development threatening the open orchard has been rejected. The SUDS drainage on Rectory Gardens worked well in July although flooding in Park Road.

e) Tower Gardens Park

Written report sent round. Kate said that they have re-launched and have risen from 20 to 60 members on their mailing list. A recent volunteering session with TCV opened up sightlines. Having an 'open house' event this weekend. Planning soon some autumn and winter planting. Want to progress a Conservation Action Plan. Hoping to become a pilot site for alternative to glyphosate weedkiller usage.

f) Lordship Rec Written report sent round, including:

Progress on maintenance of bike track, River and Hub toilets. Hub now fully open. Friends working groups all active (Litterpickers, Woodland and Orchard groups). Collaborating with various events/activities, and organising the annual Tottenham Flower and Produce Show on Sept 11th. Decided to put significant and ongoing effort into strengthening and diversifying our active membership, including an online volunteering sign up form. Developing the CAP with TCP. Lordship Rec documents were distributed to reps at the meeting - including re history, volunteering opportunities, structure of the group, and the forthcoming Flower & Produce Show.

g) Coldfall Wood and Muswell Hill Playing Fields

Written report sent round. Had a useful meeting with Alex Fraser about threats to cut down trees near local homes – an independent report has been commissioned and there's a need to lobby the relevant insurance companies. They had had a visit with Annabel, TCV and the ecology consultant, and another one with Cllr Hakata. Do monthly litterpicks. Other issues: need funding for wildflower meadow; effects of high footfall over past two years; dismantling of new insect-friendly wood piles. Travellers moved in but been quickly moved on and the area cleaned up quickly.

h) Alexandra Park

Gordon said that the Friends' Visitor Centre now open on Sundays and has been a big success. Activities continue. Park is trialling ban on glyphosate.

i) Weir Hall Road Open Space

Written report sent round. Second annual harvest (some theft issues). Doing lots of work on the space including litterpicks and planning more hedgerows. Need water harvesting, solar lights and a path. Actively involved with the new Selby Centre and

Bull Lane open space 5 year development now underway - liaising also with adjacent school.

j) Parkland Walk

Written report sent round. Continue their monthly Newsletters. Regular litter-picking by their volunteers. Met with Conservation Officer, TCV and ecology consultant re Management Plan. Works on bridges have commenced. Waiting for a meeting with Cllr Hakata. Concern about risk to children from glyphosate plugs in tree stumps - need for more stringent controls in nature reserves. Issue about tree roots - what is the guidance? She seeks clarification that the Small Grants scheme is not just for public events but also for projects and long term needs of Friends groups.

k) Bruce Castle Park

Klaus talked about successful open air theatre event. There will be fun fair at end of September. The group trying to arrange meeting with Alex Fraser and Chris Patterson re park issues, but problem of getting responses to communications.. There is a problem with cars driving through park.

l) Queens Wood

David Warren reported on concerns about the flood relief scheme proposed for these ancient woodlands by the Highways Dept. There was a consultation in March, but the Friends have still not seen the report. The Friends strongly opposed the detail of the proposals, and as a result the scheme is on hold. Also the Parks Service rather than Highways are to lead on any future proposals, in consultation with the Friends. Lucy reported that increase in usage has resulted in loss of ground cover and much compaction of formal and informal paths, and much soil got swept away after heavy rains, causing ecological damage. Paths damaged. She said that there is a new 'biodiversity net gain' planning law due which should help nature reserves. Queens Wood working parties had kept going throughout lockdowns. 260 households are now signed up as paid members of the Friends. Still waiting for new benches. Problem with Japanese knotweed.

m) Bluebell Wood

Jane said that the new group and Council are addressing problem of top soil being washed away. Carrying out plant survey. Lots of interest in group.

n) Chestnuts Park

Written report sent in. They have good communications with Parks Service. Maintenance is poor in many respects including horticulture, grass-cutting and playground. Problem of adjacent toilets not being open on Sundays. Continuing their gardening sessions. 2 volunteers litterpick daily. Working with Councillors around problem of large unauthorised gatherings (music, alcohol and litter issues). Working with project officers re ideas for SUDS drainage. Want to meet up with the Conservation Officer. Supporting StAGS (see below).

o) St Ann's Green Spaces

See written report circulated. Based on the old hospital site. Have run a range of summer sessions for kids and also in conjunction with the hospital staff's own Green Group. More planned. Their partnership group (with other key stakeholders) meets every 2/3 months – they raise concerns over strengthening protection of trees and biodiversity. Need to meet with LBH Conservation Officer re their SINC etc. Planning a tree walk and contributing to a green/sustainability fair later this month.

p) Parkside Malvern Open Spaces

Noel Park Ward has the lowest level of tree cover in Haringey so seeking more street trees locally, including Alexandra Road and also at the Turnpike Lane/Wightman Rd junction.

Dave thanked all those who'd circulated written reports, which seems to be catching on. Joan asked if council officers get these reports. She will forward them to Lew Taylor.

2. Responses from Council Officers

Glenys referred to

- noted various Priory Park issues (including roses and petanque)
- agreed the small grants online form information needed looking at re its wording. She referred to other grant funding streams eg Lottery.
- She would take back issues about Parkland Walk
- Noted that the Council are trying to recruit more tree officers
- will follow up issue of cars in Bruce Castle Park, as will Lew.

Lew asked to see written reports from Friends groups so he can follow up any issues. (Joan will send him these).

3. Open Spaces Strategy

Paul reported that two of the three planned latest round of meetings with the Forum had been held and had been extremely useful to get Friends' feedback. Notes will be circulated. Last meeting will be at end of September. Aim to have draft document to Cabinet in December. He asked for written thoughts/feedback on the draft documents before 22nd September if at all possible, even if comments already made at HFPP meetings. Comments on anti-social behaviour issues also welcomed (see policy documents previously circulated). Martin B asked what changes are likely due to Forum concerns expressed and pushed for more clarity. Gordon asked about the Biodiversity and Watercourses document stressing should apply to whole borough not just parks. He said the way currently drafted suggests limited mainly to parks - Cllr Hakata agreed "absolutely".

Dave said a key Forum concern expressed throughout the last 2 years of strategy consultation with us is that Haringey should have the highest possible aspirations, even if not all possible given current financial constraints. Eg. green flag standard for all sites, widespread dedicated on-site staffing, proper partnership-working and communications with Friends Groups etc.

Cathy raised issue of street tree sponsorship and asked if people in west of borough can sponsor tree in the east. Cllr Hakata said of 23 trees sponsored so far, there are more in the east. Martin B complained about "privatisation of our streets" which should be properly funded from public funds. Joanna agreed with Martin. Cllr Hakata said that Council budgets have been hammered. They aim for a massive expansion of tree canopy, "Haringey urban forest", but "we have no money" so we have these schemes. Glynis pointed out that the sponsorship funding goes towards care of the tree for first five years. Chris referred to the previous successful tree wardens scheme. He said that there are no tree wardens now. He wanted to re-look at future possibilities.

4. Staffing

Lew spoke to Simon Farrow's paper (circulated). At present 45 staff. There will be 17 extra front line staff, some seasonal. Dave stressed the Forum's view of the need for good direct communication with parks operations and project staff and also the need for more site-specific staff. Joan asked about training budget for staff – Lew said this was important but currently "very small". A replacement for Alastair Smith is "in hand".

Martin L said waste and recycling services in parks is poor. Paul Ely agreed. He said the parks service spend half a million pounds a year on waste management. Should find ways for reduction of volume and for more recycling. Is part of the new Strategy. Martin B stressed need for more basic maintenance in parks. Cllr Hakata agreed "in

terms of ambition” but stressed we need proper funding. Parks he agreed should be treated as if a statutory service.

5. People Need Parks

Glynis said that this summer activities programme is coming to an end. She would welcome feedback. Views expressed were positive, but need more ongoing activities for teenagers.

6. Saving Green Spaces

Dave welcomed Haringey getting a Government grant of £127 million for new Council housing but stressed need to protect green spaces eg New Road Park and Ivatt Way. He asked for assurances such sites would be removed from the ‘potential housing sites’ list. Cllr Hakata said that his priority was to increase green spaces (and their accessibility and usefulness) but also recognised the desperate need for housing. He is viewing sites around borough and getting residents’ views. Dave said that New Road Park is a test case on whether the Council is serious about protecting greenspace. Cllr Hakata said he is trying to ensure the Local Plan includes proper greenspace recognition and protection.

7. AOB

- a) **Grass cutting and litter** Joan asked if Friends groups and parks operations staff be informed in advance when grass being mown by tractors so litter picking can be arranged, otherwise broken glass and shredded cans problem. Lew noted.
- b) Martin B referred to “**100 days” of new Cabinet**. Cllr Hakata said that key progress included building on strengths of parks staff and promoting streets’ tree cover expansion.
- c) **Forum Walks booklets** Joyce said that these can be downloaded from www.haringeyfriendsofparks.org.uk website but we also have printed copies. It had been impossible to distribute these to libraries and community groups during lockdowns but now this is being done. Contact her if you want some.
- d) **Haringey Rivers Forum** John sent in a written report. Aiming to meet up with Cllr Hakata. Have responded in detail to the draft Strategy document on watercourses. Looking into volunteering and training of a ‘Water Squad’ to become active in the new year. Hornsey Wetlands Action Group is due to publish its proposals for saving and improving the site.

8. **Date and Place of Next Meeting** Agreed this will be at Bruce Castle Museum. November 6th and February 5th, 10am-1pm. Dave to book.

APPENDIX 1 – REPORT FROM LBH CONSERVATION OFFICER

Friends Forum — Saturday 4 September 2021

Nature Conservation Officer Update

Site visits

Site visits and meetings with Friends, key stakeholders and TCV have taken place during the last few months to discuss and seek input into their Conservation Action Plans.

Bluebell Wood Bruce Grove Wood Brunswick Park Coldfall Wood Downhills Park Finsbury Park
Hartington Park Lordship Recreational Ground Manchester Gardens Markfield Park
Muswell Hill Golf Course Palace Gate Embankment Parkland Walk Queens Wood Railway Fields
Scout Park Springfield Community Park Stationers Park Tunnel Gardens

MKA Ecology are also currently out on site conducting a review of the current condition and status of the 59 London Borough of Haringey's Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs).

Parks and Green Spaces Strategy/Biodiversity Action Plan

A Zoom meeting was held on 1 September 2021 to engage with Friends and key stakeholders about the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy which also support the objectives delivered by the other plans within the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy e.g., Biodiversity, Asset Management, Community Engagement, Watercourses, Tree and Woodland Plans etc. Discussion about key issues and challenges around protecting existing sites, increasing biodiversity, and reducing our carbon footprint as well as tackling the climate crisis and finance were discussed. Feedback and questions were taken.

Planning and development

Regular meetings with our Planning and Development teams to influence the way that our emerging new policies will be appropriate and well informed and delivered to an appropriate outcome, in accordance with the needs assessment methodology set out in the London Plan and Parks and Green Spaces Strategy.

“Working together” (meeting outside of the Forum)

A review of the resources to deliver these meetings is currently underway and a further meeting with Dave will be set up shortly to finalise the details.

APPENDIX 2 – REPORT FROM THE CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS

Clare, Anna, and Cassandra have been hosting events at the Paddock including Bat and Bird box building, wildlife surveying and guest speaker events!

To join in with the monthly events at The Paddock (see poster attached), please contact Clare: c.street@tcv.org.uk

To join in with our weekly wildlife surveying sessions at The Paddock (see poster attached) - please contact Anna at anna.pole@tcv.org.uk for further info.

TCV Haringey's schools project officer, Holly, has been busy running free summer holiday activities at Railway Fields. Holly will be hosting more activities in the autumn half term (week beginning 25th October). Contact Holly for more info: holly.creighton-hird@tcv.org.uk

Helena has been out meeting friends' groups and working closely with Annabel Foskett on Conservation Action Plan progress. Please contact Helena for Conservation Action Plan updates: helena.taylor@tcv.org.uk

TCV Haringey's citizen science project on the iNaturalist app is now really taking shape. The project is called “Haringey (London) Wildlife Project”. There are now 8 sites using the project, all of whom are engaging with their local community to encourage them to observe and identify species

when they are out in their local green space. You can find the Haringey project here: [Haringey \(London\) Wildlife Project · iNaturalist](#)

If you would like to learn more about the iNaturalist app, please join our free online workshop on the 30th of September, book your place here on Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/x/inaturalist-app-introduction-haringey-london-tickets-163873539167>

Our volunteer sessions are continuing across Haringey's green spaces and parks. Midweek volunteer sessions are running as usual on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday and then our weekend session on Sunday.

If you would like to sign up to our volunteer practical sessions in September, please click on this link: [Come and volunteer this September! \(mailchi.mp\)](#)

Or for more information about volunteering for TCV contact Mat: m.pendergast@tcv.org.uk

If you would like to view our September 2021 newsletter for more information on events, please click on this link: [September 2021 newsletter.pdf \(mcusercontent.com\)](#)

Find us on social media: @TCVHaringey

Best wishes from Helena, Mat and the TCV Haringey team.