

# Haringey Friends of Parks Forum

## General Meeting, 5<sup>th</sup> February 2022 Bruce Castle Museum

**Present: Reps of Friends of Parks groups:** Debra – Bluebell Wood; Cathy Meeus – Parkland Walk; Gordon Hutchinson – Alexandra Park; Klaus Kuerner – Bruce Castle Park; Phil Chinn – Wolves Lane / Stationers Park; Pamela Harling [Minutes] – Meadow Orchard; Joan Curtis – Lordship Rec; Dave Morris [Chair] – Lordship Rec; Quentin Given – The Paddock; Joanna Yeung – Weir Hall Community Open Space; Alison - Queens Wood; Kate Swade – Tower Gardens Pk; Claire Parry – Downhills Pk; Martin Laheen – Antwerp Arms; Chloe – Hartington Pk; **From Council (for Part 2):** Paul Ely – Open Space Strategy; Sahina Choudhury – Assist. Head of Parks Operations; Glynis Kirkwood-Warren – Project Team Engagement Manager **Apologies:** Ceri Williams – Chestnuts Pk; John Miles – Parkside Malvern RA and Haringey Rivers Forum; Vicci Midwinter – Coldfall Wood and MH Playing Fields; David Warren – Parkland Walk; Sue Beckett – Nightingale Gardens; Stephen Brice – Pinkham Way Alliance; Joyce Rosser – Priory Common; Liz – St Ann’s Green Spaces; Glenys – Crouch End Open Spaces; **And:** Matt and Helena – Trust for Conservation Volunteers; **Apologies from Council:** Cllr Mike Hakata – Council Cabinet Environment lead; Annabel Foskett – Nature Conservation Officer.

### PART 1

- 1. Minutes of last meeting** (13 November 2021) Agreed. Query about the exact amount of grant obtained by Wolves Lane..
- 2. Open Spaces Strategy** Dave gave a brief summary of what has been achieved so far – approx. 15 workshops held with groups from the Forum over the last 2 years on various themes (resources, biodiversity and climate change, partnerships, involvement and empowerment). Notes were taken (and usually circulated afterwards). The Friends wanted to know if their comments had been incorporated into the draft documents, and if not then a reason for that. Many felt the process was a bit muddled and no-one wanted a box ticking exercise. What matters is getting the best possible policies with high aspirations, and the best possible set of practicable actions. [See more, below]
- 3. Parks Summit** This special event will be held in Alexandra Palace on Sat 5<sup>th</sup> March 11-4pm with max 100 attendees, mainly reps from key greenspace stakeholder groups (such as Friends Groups). This was circulated from Paul Ely before the meeting:

*“The input from the recent [Summit Planning] meeting with Friends [from the Forum] to discuss the approach and content was very helpful and we have sought to incorporate most if not all of the suggestions made. Some points to highlight as those I feel should be discussed [at the Forum].*

*1. The programme includes three 5 minute slots for community presentations from groups contributing to Haringey parks and at the end of the document we have referenced 4 potential groups who could present. Feedback would be helpful.*

*2. After this there is a ‘Just a Minute’ slot where any contributor can share something about their group that they feel others will be interested in.*

*3. After this and scheduled for 1.05pm, we have included a 20 minutes slot provisionally entitled “What do Friends want to see in the Strategy?” We envisage this as an opportunity for The Forum to share your core priorities about what the strategy should achieve and for some discussion to take place. Does the Forum want this slot and if it does is the current description of what the slot will be about an accurate one?*

*4. After lunch we are proposing to hold three rounds of workshops. Towards the end of the document, there are a list of potential workshop topics. Are these the right topics? Would Friends like to be involved in facilitating/co facilitating any of the workshops?*

*5. The invitation to the event will be issued next week via Eventbrite. The target audiences are: Friends groups, park user groups, community organisations, businesses in parks, organisations working in Haringey in parks and greenspaces. The assistance of the Forum and of individual Friends groups in sharing the invitation will help to reach the right organisations. Can the Forum please confirm that it will help?”*

Qs: What are the main purposes of this event? Is it a celebration of Haringey green spaces? A showcase for community involvement? Discussion on community/council collaboration? Part of the Strategy discussions? All of these? It was felt that this event was not the place to discuss detailed wording of the strategy, although it needed to be referred to, and up to date documents should be available for reference. Who would we like to attend?

**4. Conservation Action Plans and biodiversity generally** Annabel's update for the Forum is appended as circulated before the meeting. There was general dissatisfaction with not being able to have had a proper 2-way 'getting to know you' meeting with Annabel since she came in post, despite our calls for such a meeting. At the last Forum it was agreed by us and the Council that the Forum could call such a meeting, but in the end we'd not had the capacity to arrange it. [See later]

#### **5. Housebuilding issues affecting 'undesigned' green spaces**

Last autumn the Forum circulated concerns about the need to protect 'undesigned' green space generally in the borough from the Council's house-building program, eg spaces on and near Council housing estates, eg New Road Park, Dairy Field and Ivatt Way - as well as Mountview reservoir (Thames Water) and the Ally Pally filter beds (also Thames Water). This concern was reinforced by a worrying recent planning application by the Council to build on open space by a Council housing estate in Seven Sisters, which was passed despite contravening protective planning policies. All new housing should be on genuine brownfield sites. Quentin has raised the matter with Cllr Ruth Gordon (Cabinet lead for Regeneration) seeking assurances about some specific spaces, and Dave's letter from the Forum to Cllr Hakata before xmas has not been answered. We have called for local residents and users of such spaces, especially existing nearby Friends Groups and residents associations, to set up new Friends and action groups to protect, champion and improve such local sites.

**6. London and National updates** **Go Parks London** is inviting/urging every Friends Group in London to add their details (activities, website etc) to the London map. Please check out the Haringey page as it has basic details of every site, and a full page where a local Friends Group has registered:

<https://www.goparks.london/boroughs/haringey/>

**London Friends of Green Spaces Network**

continues to produce informative monthly 'Our Patch' bulletins, and has recently started a series of additional 'Greenspace Showcase' meetings where specific Friends Groups make presentations about their key success stories, followed by Q&A. **Parks funding** Councils across the UK continue to struggle with ever-reducing budgets, and national greenspace organisations continue to call for proper protection and funding (eg the National Trust has called for an additional £5.5 billion over the next 3 years) for public greenspace. Michael Gove in a recent speech about 'levelling up' referred to just an additional £39 million spending for some green spaces. Protection and funding can be made into an issue in the coming Local Council Elections on May 5<sup>th</sup>.

**7. Any Other 'Part 1' Business** **a.** A **tree summit** is being planned for some time in June. The Forum circulated the invitation to attend the first planning meeting. People attending included Alex Fraser (Tree Officer) and Cllr Hakata from the Council, and Vicci, Rachel and Quentin from the Forum. **b.** Martin made a plea for proper **recycling bins** in parks. Waste management is under review in the emerging Strategy. **c.** Pamela asked if there could be some way of indicating where groups are **gardening in unprotected green spaces**. There have been a number of cases of planting areas (eg bulbs in roadside verges) being cleared by the Council or Veolia. **d.** Glynis referred to the new Strategy's proposed 'MOU' agreement form for maintenance/management by Friends and community groups which might help resolve this. **e.** Joan brought up the requirements of some London funding bodies now requiring onerous **public liability insurance and professional auditing of accounts** – obstacles that would exclude thousands of small voluntary organisations including Friends Groups. The Forum agreed to send a formal letter to the Greater London Assembly and the Mayor's office calling for such criteria to be scrapped. Joan/Dave to draft.

#### **PART 2** *The Council representatives entered the meeting....*

**8. Open Spaces Strategy and Summit** **Strategy** Paul Ely reported he is working his way through the feedback comments made and whether and how these will be incorporated in the final draft (showing changes) that goes to Cabinet in July (but which he aims to be available for the Summit along with an updated overview document). It was proposed that the feedback document appends the notes from all the workshops. He is also working through officer responses/updates. Statutory public consultation will take place over the autumn. Phil Chinn requested to see updated budget summaries re staffing and financial information into 2022/2023. **Summit** A proposed detailed timetable for the summit had been circulated prior to the meeting. The main purpose said Paul is to set the scene for future working together. [See above]. Paul envisages inviting not just Friends groups but also relevant greenspace businesses, sports clubs, TCV and more. There will be outside speakers on inclusion, biodiversity/climate change and service quality/provision. The Summit was generally welcomed but concerns expressed included: are there too many objectives, who is the target audience, will the discussions really make a difference to council operations, does it muddle community engagement with the practicalities of what can be achieved, will

there be youth involvement, will it lift ambition? Chloe suggested that each Friends group invite people from two other interested local groups (eg a sports club or school) they know of.

**9. Staffing** Glynis explained the recent staffing reorganisation that has taken place. There would be a staffing increase, including frontline staff numbers. She outlined the new system of Zonal Officers who are responsible for day to day infrastructure issues, site inspections and liaison with stakeholders, especially Friends Groups. The zonal map (circulated before the meeting) shows the borough divided into 6 zones. The three zonal officers have been designated 2 zones each. The officers for each zone will be making contact with Friends groups and other key stakeholders in the coming weeks to introduce themselves. Zones 1 and 2 [glynis.kirkwood-warren@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:glynis.kirkwood-warren@haringey.gov.uk) Zones 3 and 4 [mark.bambridge@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:mark.bambridge@haringey.gov.uk) Zones 5 and 6 [chris.poore@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:chris.poore@haringey.gov.uk)

The Forum welcomed the planned additional staffing, and called for an organisational chart of the new staffing arrangements across the service.

**10. Local reports** Emailed reports from various attending Friends groups and those who were unable to attend were circulated to our list [see Appendices below – including Alexandra Park, Coldfall Wood and Muswell Hill Playing Fields, Crouch End Open Spaces, Pinkham Way, Chestnuts Park, Queens Wood, St Ann's Green Spaces, and Tower Gardens Park ]. Thanks to all groups who did so!

**Weir Hall Road Community Space** Regular volunteering continues with a monthly litter pick. Native shrubs and spring bulbs have been planted. The site took part in the Big Garden Birdwatch.

**Alexandra Park** The activity programme for the year is now in place. A scrub maintenance programme is being carried out to encourage scrub. Talks are going on to discuss a wetland area in the old filter beds, and the consultation on the Penstock tunnel under the railway. **Parkland walk** The friends have expressed their concern about the tree loss in plans for the replacement of the Stanhope Road bridge. See the website for details. Encroachment meetings continue with the Council. Annabel Foskett joined friends for a butterfly walk. The current committee is reorganising, so Cathy will be less involved on a day to day basis. Note: Simon Olley is collecting **a list for the Forum of enthusiasts and experts** willing to give walks and/or talks on nature conservation and biodiversity etc – please can all groups send him details!. **The Paddock** Weekly TCV work parties continue. Planned major tree work is now delayed until after nesting. The Big Garden Birdwatch revealed water rails on site. **Downhills Park** There had been a walk with the new zonal officer but there has been no follow up yet. Bulb planting has been done. A separate group has launched a campaign for better lighting. **Hartington Park** The AGM is planned for 6<sup>th</sup> March. A new outdoor gym is in place. Tree planting. Who should they talk to about a play area? **Bluebell Wood** This is a new group which will hold its first AGM in April. Work parties on the second Sat of each month. Major problems with top soil washing down when it rains. **Meadow Orchard Project** Open on Saturdays for volunteering. A variety of other activities also taking place. **Bruce Castle Park** Monthly litter picks are restarting. Talks are taking place about protecting the famous old oak tree. There was a nice article about the tree in Tottenham Community Press (now Haringey Community Press). The summer theatre date is now 25<sup>th</sup> June. There is discussion about the Antwerp Arms keeping the picnic tables on the verge near the pub. There has been a meeting with new zonal officer Mark Bambridge. Consultation is now taking place about the proposed Roundway housing development, with a public meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb. **Down Lane Park** Local tower-blocks development has led to over £2 million for the park. A user forum has been launched, in which Dave attended to talk about Lordship Rec experience. **Lordship Rec** The shell theatre is due for a major re-decoration. Preparations are underway for a weekly Park Run. The Hub has received a £7k 'match funding' grant from the London Community Energy Fund towards a solar panel installation. Plans are afoot for a weekend of celebrations (26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> Nov) for the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Luke Howard (local resident and namer of clouds). **Queens Wood** The Council does not appear to have yet taken into account the volume of comments on the proposed flawed flood management scheme. Work is due to start in June. Compaction problems. The Friends have monthly work parties. There will be an online quiz on 10<sup>th</sup> Feb, and family activities on 12<sup>th</sup> Feb. **Priory Common** A developer's threat to build a large building next to the orchard was rejected by the Council, but the developer has appealed.

**11. Council Responses re individual sites** **Bluebell Wood** – Glynis will get back to the Friends re drainage solutions. Glynis to also follow up re lighting in **Downhills Park**, play area on the **Parkland Walk**, and the delay on the **Paddock** contract. Re **Bruce Castle Park**, she will follow up re litter collection, and if the Antwerp Arms wants to keep the temporary outside benches they would need to make a formal request and it would be subject to formal public consultation. Glynis will pass on **other sites'** matters to the relevant officers, or (even better) groups should make direct contact with the relevant officer (see above).

**12. Communications and partnerships with Friends Groups** Glynis explained that the new zonal team is still getting used to its new roles. Please take up any communication problems with her. She has prepared a template for officers to complete on any local site walkabout with Friends etc. It should be issued within ten days with outcomes and actions. The project team is responsible for major works and big projects (above a certain spend). Chris Patterson is on projects, Chris Poore is a zonal officer. David Theakston is a development manager. Sahina is responsible for landscaping operations, and waste/hygiene. Lew Taylor is now overall operations manager for green spaces and Stuart Hopking is working on Homes for Haringey green spaces.

**13. Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) review** – Annabel’s NCO report indicates many results are slightly delayed [see appendix] Paul Ely will see if the results so far can be communicated.

**14. Green Flag** Re-applications for the current 22 Green Flag sites have been made for the coming year – the Friends would like to see this number go up each year so as to achieve the Council’s policy of getting Green Flags for ALL sites capable of achieving them.

**15. Biodiversity** The Council to set up a meeting between Friends Groups and Annabel Foskett. It was agreed that the Forum (via Dave) would propose a rough Agenda to Annabel.

**16. Greenspace Events coming up:** People Need parks grants of up to £250 for activities this summer. Plans so far include 16<sup>th</sup> July party in Brunswick Park, activities in Fairland Park, 4<sup>th</sup> June launch of People Need Parks programme with a festival in Lordship Rec, 3rd/4th June weekend of play, visit of the South Africa High Commission to Oliver Tambo Park (formerly Albert Rd Rec). Lily Labonte is the Council greenspace activities officer.

**17. TCV report for the Forum** Has been appended below.

**18. Fields in Trust** – how are the plans progressing to covenant all Haringey’s 60+ Parks with Fields in Trust legal protection? Simon Farrow is asked to update us.

#### **19. NEXT FORUM MEETINGS**

Haringey Rivers Forum - Monday 21<sup>st</sup> February, 17.30.  
Haringey Parks Summit – Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> March, 11-4pm  
Friends Forum general meeting - Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 10-1pm  
People Need Parks launch festival – Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June  
Friends Forum general meeting - Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> June, 10-1pm  
Haringey Tree Summit – July

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**Appendices below...**

## APPENDIX 1 – WRITTEN STRATEGIC REPORTS

### CONSERVATION OFFICER REPORT [Scanned copy]

Friends Forum – Saturday 5 February 2022

#### Nature Conservation Officer Update

##### Ancient Woodland Ground Flora Surveys

As part of the Ancient Woodland Restoration project, the Woodland Trust have confirmed that the delivery of flora surveys will take place in Spring 2022 at Queens Wood, Coldfall Wood and Bluebell Wood. The flora surveys will make recommendations for the new woodland management plan.

**Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL) Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI)**  
GiGL on behalf of Natural England, the Woodland Trust, and other partner organisations are leading the project to update the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) for Greater London.

##### Volunteering

GiGL are looking for volunteer support for the Update project from roughly March onwards. Current plans are to involve volunteers with the sourcing and interpretation of historical maps and documents and the communication of the importance of both ancient woodland and the AWI. Please contact Frankie [frankie.moorman@gigl.org.uk](mailto:frankie.moorman@gigl.org.uk) if you would like to know more about ancient woodland, the ancient woodland inventory update project, or if you feel like you can contribute resources or information that may assist with the Greater London update.

To learn more about ancient woodland, the unique species that live in this irreplaceable habitat, and the threats they are currently facing please visit <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/habitats/ancient-woodland/>

##### Sites of Importance to Nature Conservation (SINC) reports

We are now starting to get the reports back and will be able to give a fuller update at the April meeting.

##### "Working together" (meeting outside of the Forum)

Work has commenced on developing the Terms of Reference (ToR) document which will define the purpose and structure of the 'Meeting' to work together and deliver habitat management objectives for individual Sites.

##### Climate Emergency and Natural Environment Working Group

I attend regular meetings with our Planning and Development team to influence new policies in accordance with the needs assessment methodology set out in the London Plan and Parks and Green Spaces Strategy. Topics are derived from London Plan policy and include Urban Greening Factor (UGF) for Haringey and Water Quality and Flood Risk Management relating to blue infrastructure.

##### Biodiversity Net Gain Regulations and Implementation

To give your views on the Consultation on Biodiversity Net Gain Regulations and Implementation please go to the following link: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/defra-net-gain-consultation-team/consultation-on-biodiversity-net-gain-regulations/> which closes 5 April 2022.

##### Reporting / Emergencies and Out of Hours Contacts

To report any environmental emergencies to the Council please follow the contact details below.

##### Environmental Emergencies

If you wish to report an issue which poses an immediate risk of harm or danger to the public (e.g. hazardous waste, defects, flooding and obstructions which pose a health and safety issue), please contact us immediately.

By phone: Please call 020 8489 1335.

In Person: We have two Customer Service Centres in Haringey where you can visit us in person. Important: you must have an appointment to visit our customer service centres. <https://www.haringey.gov.uk/contact/in-person>

##### Emergencies and out of hours issues.

Haringey Council out of hours number

■ For out of hours emergency calls (5pm to 9am Monday to Fridays, and all day at weekends and bank holidays) call 020 8489 0000

■ This number can also be used for the children and adult social care emergency duty teams.

##### Report it

■ You can now report a wide range of problems without registering

■ If you have a general enquiry about an environmental issue, you can use our environmental issues contact form.

<https://www.haringey.gov.uk/contact/report-it>

## HARINGEY RIVERS FORUM – John Miles:

I've circulated details of the next meeting and will do another briefing before then. During the last year several Friends groups have become much more deeply involved in challenging collaborations around blue space. I hope we can demonstrate that in the Rivers Forum meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> February. With help from Thames21 we hope to have a functioning 'Water Squad' by the end of the year. There are also welcome signs that (after four years) Haringey is pulling together a cross-departmental blue space initiative in response to the Local Plan. The Strategy and the consultations around will have been of critical importance in achieving that shift. And last summer's floods, of course. Remember July 12th 2021!

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## THE CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS - UPDATE

As we informed you in our last update, our Education Officer, Holly, has moved on to pastures new. She was always going to be a very hard act to follow, but we have found just the person! Please join us in welcoming Hannah to the team!

A message from Hannah: *"Hello! I've just stepped into Holly's (-large and probably very muddy! -) shoes as the new Education Officer role in Haringey! I've been in various environmental education roles for the last 7 years, including stints with the RSPB and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and as a Forest School leader, before moving to London last year to join TCV over the border in Waltham Forest. I'm so excited to be back in the woods and part of this team - and look forward to meeting you all soon!"*

Bookings for school sessions are now open! Please contact Hannah for more info: [hannah.jones@tcv.org.uk](mailto:hannah.jones@tcv.org.uk)

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 February, please click here: [Mailchimp Survey \(list-manage.com\)](https://www.mailchimp.com)

Or for more information about volunteering for TCV contact Mat: [m.pendergast@tcv.org.uk](mailto:m.pendergast@tcv.org.uk)

There is a lot happening in parks and green spaces this year! If you would like to view our February 2022 newsletter for more information on FREE events and projects across Haringey, please click here: [February 2022 newsletter.pdf \(mcusercontent.com\)](#)

For Friends' group support and advice, please contact Helena: [helena.taylor@tcv.org.uk](mailto:helena.taylor@tcv.org.uk)

**Find us on social media: @TCVHaringey**

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## APPENDIX 2 – LOCAL FRIENDS' GROUPS WRITTEN REPORTS

### Liz Gray, Friends of St Ann's Green Spaces

**Connect with Nature:** Our activities onsite begin February 24<sup>th</sup> with the first of 4 more Thursday afternoon nature walk drop-in sessions for adults led by TCV's Liz Ixer. Organised jointly with Hospital staff group Greener St Ann's, they cater for service users and members of local community mental health support groups. Catalyst the developer are again allowing us access to Mayfield House so there's an opportunity for tea and talk after the walk. If we can secure funding, our goal is to provide regular year-round sessions.

**SINC conservation management and maintenance:** Last year's volunteering sessions, managed by TCV Railway Fields, enabled local people, Hospital staff and corporate teams to create a path on the Hospital section of the woodland for service users, staff and visitors. During the last of our 2021 Connect drop-in sessions, nature walkers with mobility limits were delighted to find that they could manage comfortably on the woodchip trail. We urgently need to secure funding now to maintain the work that's been done and, in time, to mirror it along the GLA/Catalyst section.

**Partnership group:** Next week gives us the quarterly opportunity for dialogue we facilitate with Hospital management and Greener St Ann's, GLA/Catalyst, London Wildlife Trust, TCV Railway Fields and Friends of Chestnuts Park. Aside from

ongoing issues of tree protection and public access to St Ann's green spaces, we need to focus on longer term opportunities for funding.

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**Alison Watson - Friends of Queen's Wood**

1 PROPOSED FLOOD MANAGEMENT SCHEME: Nothing has yet been finalised. Last October FQW put forward ideas on how the scheme might be improved. In an email earlier this week the Council confirmed that these ideas will form the basis of the further work that needs to be undertaken prior to finalisation of the scheme They have set out a timetable for this work with a view to a start being made on implementation on 1 June.

There is still a lot to do before the scheme can be regarded as fit for purpose and not do unacceptable damage to the Wood FQW wants to ensure that the process and timetable provide the opportunity for full engagement with the Council before any decision is taken to go ahead with the scheme and expects to be responding with concerns on this score in the next few days.

2 MONTHLY WORKING PARTIES continue successfully.

3 PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES: FEBRUARY 10 ON LINE QUIZ on Queen's Wood and ancient woodland generally. All welcome to join, email [meetings@fqw.org.uk](mailto:meetings@fqw.org.uk) . February 12 Bark rubbing and tree identification for families. April 2 Wild Flower walk. Information on our website.

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**John Miles: Parkside Malvern RA**

Today is Hornsey Park Community Gardening (PMRA). We'll be pruning the roses at the lavender garden and starting a long-delayed litter pick in the shrubbery at Mayes Corner. In January we cut back the grasses on the Mayes Corner SuDS and had good cooperation from Parks in removing their green waste. We're heavily involved in negotiating the road layout and large new SuDS on Mayes Road at the back of the Mall and have had, by contrast, terrible cooperation from Haringey and St William over greening the proposed zebra crossing on Hornsey Park Road. Some officers 'get' co-production and some are actively opposed to it. The Cycling and Walking Strategy has been of limited help although asserting the local interests of pedestrians is productive.

This spring we plan to do a little pop-up plant recognition programme next to a biodiverse brick wall on Turnpike Lane heavily used by pupils from Greig City Academy and St Mary's Primary School.

**Crescent Gardens:** The huge rain-bed installations opposite the Civic Centre are the Highways' engineers pride and joy. There are now two good information boards. But they were installed with no provision for ongoing maintenance. At Joyce Rosser's invitation PMRA got involved in a putative Friends of CG initiative 18 months ago. Working with a handful of committed residents nearby and two ward councillors we've improved drip zones, cleared swales, monitored the drain inlets from the road (too often blocked making the whole thing pointless) and, last month, cut back the grasses and intensively cropped two beds. We've started clearing around choked plants in one of them. Although there is still no constituted Friends group this will develop as a Haringey Water Squad project. We have good cooperation from Parks who have cleared out some trees that dried out in the summer of 2020. We submit written reports through Glynis. Regen have put in three trees and could be asked to install more.

What the Park really needs is attention to its biodiversity. This could be addressed by waterside planting in the swales, something we've started discussing with Glynis. But given the low footfall (mostly, apart from the industrial-scale pigeon feeders, folk passing through) general cleanness and decent basic maintenance this park shouldn't be a priority for the Parks Dept itself. Resources will be much more fairly deployed elsewhere. With some imagination over the next few years, and with good support - and even more important, recognition - this could become a really imaginative citizen-led wildlife/horticultural/green corridor project.

Having had no proper forward planning - but with the Civic Centre refurbishment now in hand - a steering group should be set up to help put all these things right. Friends of Parks and residents groups who find they have SuDS programmes in the offing should take note. There is an intention to cost future SuDs so as to include maintenance but that may prove to be

wishful thinking. Bizarrely, Haringey still acts as if the borough is covered in hidden volunteer groups just waiting, like plants in the Colorado desert, for a burst of rainfall.

**Parks Summit:** I support this with both hats. The more publicly accountable the Strategy becomes the better and the more Parks are ready to go when its published and approved also. Three things I'd like to see emphasised are:

- 1) Private initiative: the huge contribution made (and responsibility incurred) for green space and tree cover by local residents: quantitatively, trees in private gardens probably contribute around half the borough total.
- 2) Urban greening: strategic importance of green, blue and open space which is not the direct responsibility of Haringey or comparable statutory partners ('how can we plant more trees etc?').
- (3) Recognition: the need for Haringey to recognise across the Council the scale and importance of resident-led initiatives and associations, the contribution we make and the pressures we face. Outside the dialogue with Parks or Low-Traffic Neighbourhood conversations we continue to be largely invisible - the Turnpike Lane newsletter is the latest prime example. Will Comms be at the Summit and, if so, there to learn about us?

[https://www.haringey.gov.uk/sites/haringeygovuk/files/turnpikelane\\_newsletter\\_january\\_2022.pdf](https://www.haringey.gov.uk/sites/haringeygovuk/files/turnpikelane_newsletter_january_2022.pdf)

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### **Kate Swade - Friends of Tower Gardens**

- We had our AGM and updated our constitution (thanks everyone who shared examples of theirs, our new one with a strengthened way of removing people from the group is [here](#) if anyone's interested).
- TCV are going to be running an experiment in the park to understand the best methods of pesticide free weed control, which is super exciting
- and we had our best turnout ever (13 people!) for our January working party session where Helena from TCV came to explain the project
- however, the challenging individual who has been doing unauthorized work in the park also turned up and was quite aggressive; the TCV project is now postponed as Helena understandably doesn't feel safe going to the park by herself (she had prepared a nice leaflet with the dates that she was planning to be there).
- Chris Patterson has been supportive and has referred the issue to his ASB / legal colleagues - I'm waiting on their advice about what we should do next. All advice from others would be really welcome!
- In better news there is some money to show the playground some love, replace some of the more rotten wooden bits etc, so we will be pulling together a working group and doing a survey to get people's thoughts on how best to spend that money.
- The council is also commissioning some work to improve the Risley Avenue entrance to the park which regularly floods as soon as it rains, which will really help with accessibility when that's complete.

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### **Ceri Williams – Chestnuts Park**

We have met with our new zonal liaison officer Chris Poore and went over the endemic problems in the park all caused by lack of inclusion of so many key aspects in any parks maintenance plan and lack of adequate staffing, the examples are too numerous to list here, but you'll all know what they are! In particular we have concerns about lack of any sense that there is any horticultural senior supervision or monitoring of the state of the park or its maintenance.

The results of this lack of attention include the degenerate of the beech hedges, the destruction of the rubberised flooring of the playground due to lack of sweeping up twigs and mud, and further vandalism of equipment when broken stuff like the zip wire seat and the music equipment in the sensory isn't mended. Our chronic problems continue including the failed drainage of the main field and the need to move the derelict basketball pitch from the NE corner of the park into another area of the park which is not immediately overlooked by flats, and where a new hard surface can be created away from the roots of the big plane trees. There are also perennial problems connected with the collection of rubbish from the Community Centre.

In January we helped the LBH flood team submit a bid for creating SUDS in the park, on the condition that we along with

the Rivers Forum are involved in the Steering Group, and that this bid is accompanied by funding bids by the parks service aimed at solving the state of the main field and making other improvements to the park. We continue to liaise with the St Ann's Community Forum and, via our work with sister group Friends of StAGS, to liaise with both the developers of the St Ann's site and the managers of the Mental Health Trust site. There should be opportunities in due course for both improvements to the park and to community facilities. There are currently no plans by Catalyst for providing outdoor MUGA type facilities on site, and so the need for this type of facility from families in the 900 new homes will overwhelm our one small MUGA plus derelict basketball pitches. A proper joined up solution to the green space needs in Chestnuts Park and the St Ann's site is needed, but it's nigh on impossible to line up the relevant players and agencies to achieve this.

The Friends continue our monthly gardening sessions, looking after the fruit trees, beds, willow and wildflower meadows. We held a special session working on one of our wildflower meadow strips with Andy Newman's family, and all shared memories of Andy during our break. We will be planting in the park in Andy's memory in the coming year, possibly a silver birch stand.

We are delighted that TCV bring their volunteer teams each year to care for and lay the perimeter hedge.

Our volunteers Jenny and Sean still do their clean up of the park early every morning.

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### **Stephen Brice – Pinkham Way Alliance**

Pinkham Way (PW), adjoining A406 N Circular, is one of 9 Grade 1 (Borough) SINC's in Haringey. The Council's Open Space and Biodiversity Study 2014 assessed the site: *'Unique in Haringey for its size and habitat mosaic ... a rare resource of high ecological value'*. Natural England consider it to be of Metropolitan Importance, and it meets the London Plan criteria for designation as MOL. There's no public access.

PW (area c 6 ha), was the site of the Friern Barnet Sewage Works, closed in 1954 and demolished some years later; since then it's been totally reclaimed by nature. Like its companion sewage works, Coppetts Wood/Glebelands (now designated LNR), Pinkham Way was used for landfill until c 1980. From closure until the fencing was renewed in 2009/10, it was the open space for residents of the Freehold Community. (That's the area to the east as Colney Hatch Lane South approaches the bridge over the N Circular).

In 2011, Barnet Council, the owners, sold two thirds of the site (for cash, and with no planning permission) to North London Waste Authority (NLWA), which proposed to construct a huge (300,000 tons pa) waste plant there. Within 18 months (Nov 2012) NLWA had found its waste forecasts to be so inaccurate that the plant wasn't required. Since then it has had no short, medium or long term plans for the site, which has become a strategic embarrassment.

It has nonetheless tried strenuously to protect its £12m investment. These demands have put Haringey, the relevant planning authority, under enormous pressure. The ensuing multi-layered and tortuous fight has lasted some ten years, during which time PWA has submitted some 20 detailed responses to planning consultations on Haringey's various plans, to the North London Waste Plan (NLWP) and to the NLWA.

Although the site is included in the North London Waste Plan, the Inspector has set out in black and white the numerous planning constraints and conditions, which now, counter-intuitively, gives the site excellent protection.

It's PWA's committed work over the years, supported by over 2,500 local residents, that produced this result.

PW has well over 100 plant species, including c 3.5 ha of semi-mature woodland; the rest of the site is so densely vegetated during the summer (largely with comfrey about 8 ft high) that heavy duty strimming is needed to make any sort of path through it.

A number of Red and Amber list birds nest and forage on the site, which is also very rich in invertebrates, some significantly rare in London. A few endangered species have also been found.

C 25% of the site is in Flood Zones 2&3, and a small area is the Effective Flood Plain (A406 runs along the old valley of the Bounds Green Brook). A culverted stream runs though the site, nearing the surface as PW begins to approach the A406

Like all SINC's, especially mosaic habitats, Pinkham Way requires management. Neither NLWA, since 2011, nor Barnet Council, since the 1960s, has lifted a finger, although NLWA has at least successfully controlled wide areas of invasive plant species. (Both authorities naturally commit themselves to protecting SINC's, especially Priority Habitats and Species).

Years ago PWA submitted a Site Management Plan to Haringey and NLWA, which they have both ignored. We now have new planning officers in Haringey, and we find a much better atmosphere than previously. Our aim in our submission to the Local Plan will be to suggest strategies based on the Management Plan which the Council might feel able to support, so that the site can be opened up and enhanced, and the stream de-culverted where practicable.

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**Glenys Law – Crouch End Open Spaces**

Apologies for not attending but I feel it is too soon for face to face meetings. The CREOS Woodland walks are in good shape, with the new hoggin path now completed and no reports of flooding or muddy areas yet this winter. The CREOS meadow is of course a muddy bog, but that is only to be expected in the winter months. There has been little littering or vandalism, although it has to be said that our illegal camper is still on site after three years, with apparently no further action from Haringey. The future of the Highgate Wood School field still hangs in the balance. Lovingly cared for by CREOS volunteers and much appreciated by local people, it remains within the education but is rarely used by the school. Unable to afford improvement costs, the school is looking to a semi-privatised agreement with the Shepherds Cot Trust to develop it into another cricket pitch. It would be an appalling loss for the community if public access were reduced or denied. The space is currently used as a recreation ground for public use and our hope is that will continue. History tells us that the whole CREOS site was transferred to the parks department in the 1970's, but that did not happen. Annabel and Glynis visited last year and said they were going to look into this anomaly and we look forward to hearing if there has been any progress in transferring any of the CREOS area from Education to Parks.

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**Gordon Hutchinson - the Friends of Alexandra Park**

We are now back into the swing of our usual activities (except talks), and have recently completed our programme for the year, with around 50 activities - walks, family activities and conservation work.

On the conservation front, considerable efforts have gone into re-establishment of an area of scrub, a valuable habitat which was being lost because of tree cover. This cover has been reduced, areas have been cleared by volunteers assisted by TCV, and replanting of bushes has started. Two community orchards were planted in the park a few years ago, and we recently benefited from advice and demonstration of fruit tree pruning from one of the John O'Conner grounds maintenance team.

We assisted the Park and Palace Charity management team with the preparation of a bid for a grant from the Mayor's Re-wild London Fund, for the initial stages of design of a wetland, fed from a SuDS, for the lower part of the park near the Thames Water reservoirs. This is an element of a wider proposal encompassing suggested environmental improvements on the Thames Water site, a greenway to enhance the Penstock Path, and the possible development of a café/hub in the south east corner of Alexandra Park. Various local groups have been developing these ideas, and Thames Water, the Council and Alexandra Park and Palace have joined the local group in exploring these proposals.

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