

## Haringey Friends of Parks Forum minutes of meeting 4<sup>th</sup> February 2023

**Present:** *For Friends Groups:* Dave Morris *chaired* (Lordship Rec), Vicci Midwinter *minutes* (Coldfall Wood and Muswell Hill Playing Fields), Hesketh Benoit (Ducketts Common), Klaus Kuerner (Bruce Castle Pk), Joan Curtis (Lordship Rec), Glenys Law (Crouch End Open Spaces / CREOS), David Scott (CREOS), Alison (Queen's Wood), Robyn Thomas (Alexandra Park), Thunder (Queens Wood), John Miles (Parkside Malvern Open Spaces, Crescent Gdns + Haringey Rivers Forum), Quentin Given (The Paddock), Phil Chinn (Wolves Lane), Liz Ixer (Railway Fields), Anna (TCV), Clare (Downhills Park), Kate (Tower Gardens Park), Rosemary Dunn (Chestnuts Park), Martin Ball (Down Lane Park), Martin Laheen (Recycling champion), Metris (?) **For the Council (after 11am):** Sahina Choudhury (Parks Manager Operations) and Glynis Kirkwood-Warren (Parks Zonal Manager) **Apologies:** Michelle Lindson (LBH Parks and Green Spaces Volunteering Officer), Emma Betts (LBH Community Engagement Officer), Paul Ely (LBH Project Manager), Annabel Foskett (LBH NCO), Leyla Laksari (LUOS), Cathy (Parkland Walk), Aarti (Bluebell Wood), Jane Dadswell (Bluebell Wood), Ellie (Stanley Open Spaces), Anne Scott (White Hart Lane Rec), Sandra (Harmony Gardens), Jane (Tottenham Cemetery), Hilary Bournas (Council Projects Team), Ceri (Chestnuts Pk), Joyce (Priory Common), Rachel Seldon (Hartington Pk), Liz (St Ann's Green Spaces),

- 1. Minutes of last meeting.** Agreed. No matters arising.
- 2. New groups.** None reported.
- 3. Parks and Green Spaces Strategy.** See Paul Ely's update circulated to the Forum. It has been a challenge to collate the feedback to public consultation. He is not sure if the report will now go to Cabinet in March or be postponed (more likely). It is still intended to launch the Strategy at the second Haringey Parks Summit (in summer?).
- 4. Campaigns to save green spaces under threat.** i) The St Ann's Hospital site is now under development and so has been closed to the public. 50% of the trees on the site are under threat despite numerous objections. The Friends are taking photos to record how it is now. StAGS circulated a report to the meeting. ii) New Road Park is managed by London Borough of Haringey (LBH) estates management. It is under potential threat of flats being built on it. There is an active Friends group.
- 5. Diversity Working Group of the Forum.** First meeting was 2nd November and minutes were circulated to Forum. Anyone can join. Hesketh and Orla are interested in joining. Next meeting to focus on sport and fitness. It is agreed Dave to draft an on-line questionnaire to all groups, to be further discussed. Michelle (Parks Service Volunteering Officer) and Emma (Engagement Officer) are keen to support the group – we agreed they can join. Dave to add. Dave suggested groups could develop their own Community Engagement Plans (eg mapping other user groups and nearby groups to engage with, etc).
- 6. Liability and MOU.** David had been asked to become a Trustee of the CREOS charity and noticed a lack of clarity on liability if someone had an accident on CREOS site as a result of their work done. They do not get (and do not want) pre-authorisation for tasks like path making, grass cutting from LBH and LBH does not manage CREOS but there is no formal agreement on management of the land.

There has been discussion on this issue with LBH. A draft Memorandum of Understanding was consulted over in the Green Spaces Strategy docs. LBH has now differentiated between low and high level maintenance work by groups. Following chats with Michelle and Glynis, Dave drafted potential amendments to the MOU for discussion at this meeting.

Comments from the meeting included:

- Since pandemic insurers may not cover transmissible diseases. If groups have insurance, they should check whether it would cover tetanus for example.
- If groups are not constituted is there any issue of liability?

- Queen's Wood took advice from LBH which was that they were covered by public liability but volunteers working on site need to be briefed that Friends of QW are not responsible in case of accident.
  - The MOU may need to reflect the different character and status of groups and sites. Some spaces for example are managed by Highways not Parks. Each group could negotiate their own wording if they wished.
  - LBH officially signing off any major volunteer works could be a protection for groups. It was agreed MOU should say LBH will sign off *in a timely manner*.
  - Will an MOU really get the respect and commitment it implies? This is what should already happen but doesn't always.
  - Does it put more work on Friends to write annual plans and reports etc. In return we would want such reports from LBH. Proposed to add in *LBH to share in writing re their annual action plans, and provide an annual report*.
  - Would an MOU provide legal protection in the case of CREOS?. Why doesn't LBH insure us (or pay for us to do it) as we put so much resource into green spaces and save LBH money. Agreed further discussion is needed.
  - Some groups get People need Parks funding for public liability insurance.
  - Lordship Rec have their roles and responsibilities set out in the joint management plan and Conservation Action Plan with LBH.
- 7. Meeting with Cllr Davies.** The second meeting organised by Cllr Davies, Cabinet Member for Communities and Civic Life was cancelled. We have invited her to the Forum.
- 8. London and National updates.** We all get monthly LFGN and GoParksLondon bulletins circulated. There are LFGN London-wide working groups we can join - on e.g. biodiversity, planning, dogs in green spaces, climate resilience. If interested contact Dave.
- 9. Haringey Rivers Forum.** Arup Architects have set up a team to take forward their offer to develop a vision for the Moselle. Cllr Jameson is Moselle Champion. They will systematically plot the river and pull together fragmented information. It will be a 50 year project to fully restore the river where possible. London Rivers Week is May/June. HRW has an active volunteer Water Squad open for extra people. Contact John.
- 10. AOB.**
- Hesketh has been thinking about how to get children involved with nature.
  - Phil reported back on Wolves Lane (see below).

*Council reps arrived. -----*

## **11. Friends groups' reports:**

NB some groups have circulated reports by email – see at end.

- i) *Ducketts Common (Hesketh).* Basketball is popular and bringing younger people in. Café is being expanded.
- ii) *Alexandra Park (Robyn).* They have had a consultant on wetlands to look at South-East corner. They are going to get funding from the Mayor's rewilding fund. Young 13/14 year old volunteers have been leading walks – one on birds. The Park's manager is going to have a deputy concentrating on sustainability.
- iii) *Bruce Castle (Klaus).* Bollards have been put in place to prevent car parking but one gate remains unlocked so problem continues. Plans for new MUGA with basketball court. There was discussion about creating a splash pool instead of renewing the paddling pool but the water consumption would be too high. There have been yet more fires at the ancient oak and elsewhere. TCV have put up wooden fence around the historic oak and there will be an interpretation board installed. The Friends and parks officers have had second spotlight meeting

but very little had been done that was identified 6 months earlier. The bin collectors continue to drive on the grass and damage it.

- iv) *Chestnuts (Rosemary)*. Ceri has emailed round their written report. They are doing 6am litter picks. They also have refuse vehicles driving on grass. Still big issue with unlicensed parties and sports tournaments leading to litter and defecation. Public loos were not being managed and have now been closed. Have talked to Lawn Tennis Association about upgrading the courts. They reported playground disrepair in Dec 2021 but nothing has happened yet.
- v) *Queen's Wood (Alison)*. Have had a recent spotlight meeting. The café is temporarily closed so there are no loos open. They have suffered compaction from footfall and have a monthly working party putting dead hedging in to steer people away from tree roots - three young people joined them recently. They have organised a programme for the Summer including a Geology walk with Diana Clements. Highgate Wood has started to charge for dog-walker licences so they are coming to Queen's Wood instead.
- vi) *Tower Gardens Park (Kate)*. They have a new driveway and some refurbishment to playground. Pollarding has been carried out. They do monthly litter picks and have done bulb planting and the big birdwatch. They want to do a tree survey with TCV.
- vii) *Downhills Park (Clare)*. They planted bulbs and the daffs are coming up. The playground has been refreshed. They are part of the LBH meadows pilot project. Want to know the litter collections schedule for the Summer. They will be planting trees on 4th March. There has been consultation on future management of the tennis courts.
- viii) *CREOS (Glenys)* Site looking very well looked after. Veolia empty the dog bins voluntarily as not part of contract. They also have an increase in paid dog-walkers. They try to work with them and some do pick up litter and report issues. There is a resident camper who has been there 3 years. He can be aggressive and there is litter and defecation. LBH have not been responding to emails. Friends want to know plan for Japanese Knotweed as they don't want spraying in a nature reserve and are hoping for injection treatment but nothing has happened. They would be prepared to do it themselves: they have a specialist available.
- ix) *Lordship Rec (Joan, Dave)* Park runs every Saturday (9am) have really taken off and the Hub opens at 8.30am for them. The Friends are raising funds to get an outdoor drinking water dispenser. A changing places unit for people with mobility needs is to be installed by the Hub. The Friends got another Green Flag for their management of the woodland. They held a wassail event in the orchard. They had a hazel coppicing workshop and made lots of stakes for fencing - if other Friends want some do ask. The Shell theatre new mural has been graffitied. They have put in 2 applications for London funding but been turned down. There was a memorial event for Rocky who founded and ran the bike project/shop, but sadly suddenly died in December. At a major event organised by the Friends and Tottenham Clouds at the end of November the Rec was officially declared the world's first ever Cloud Appreciation Park, and the Luke Howard Weather Station was unveiled in the Hub.
- x) *Parkside Malvern Open Spaces, Friends of Crescent Gardens, and Haringey Rivers Forum (John)*.
  - Hornsey Park Rd community gardening continues. Issues with Highways dept. A tree was removed just before a planning application was made to build next to it. It is agreed to narrow Mayes Rd/Hornsey Pk Rd which is good. They are going to plant a hazel plantation to regenerate the mound at Mayes Corner. About 8 people do all the work and have come to accept they can't do all the community engagement as well.
  - Friends of Crescent Gardens (White Hart Lane/ Stuart Crescent) group is now building up and the jobs they have to do are manageable. 13 rain gardens were installed in 2018 and were spectacular but are they actually taking rain off the road? It was expensive planting with no maintenance plan and it is unclear whether the new contractors are doing anything there.
  - See info above re Haringey Rivers Forum and Arup's project for the Moselle River.
- xi) *The Paddock (Quentin)*. Work on treating Japanese Knotweed is underway so large areas are out of bounds. They have found roots growing within brown asbestos so will bury the knotweed and cap it under a membrane. At the moment the main role of the Friends is to disseminate information but from April they should be able to be more active.

- xii) *Coldfall Wood and Muswell Hill Playing Fields (Vicci)*. After a long fight the group of trees under threat from an insurance claim were felled. LBH proposed putting a tarmac path around the playing fields but after meeting with Friends have now agreed to use a more suitable and attractive surface (Breedon). They are pleased to be one of the wildflower meadow project pilots. Thames 21 visited to have a look at their stream and seasonal pond.
- xiii) *Railway Fields (Liz)*. They want to open the site more at weekends. They are offering free drawing classes for adults. There are successful children's events but unfortunately older children do not usually come. They held Tree Fest in December and Bird Saturday in Jan. They would like to have a weather station. You can check their social media on Facebook, Twitter and Insta. TCV do the physical work and the Friends' role is more promotion and looking at how to get more diverse users.
- xiv) *Wolves Lane (Phil)*. This is Metropolitan Open Space and used to be open 7 days a week before the Council pulled out. In 2017 Organic Lea got the lease. In 2020 they got £2m Lottery funding and work is still awaited. [Update – planning permission was recently obtained]. There is little current public access. Some people want the cemetery next door to be able to expand into the space. The two main users are commercial. Phil would like to meet with LBH and the leaseholders. It was agreed Dave will contact the current user groups to send an update or attend our next meeting.
- xv) *Down Lane Park (Martin)*. Outdoor gym and playground in need of repairs. Trucks are churning up the edges of paths. LBH has started a 'co-design' project with the new Users Forum to improve the park, with developer input. The developers want to move all the facilities onto the open space. Living Under One Sun café and space continues to be very active.
- xvi) *Weir Hall Road Community Open Space (Joanna)*. The school has taken back the land and locked it. The Friends group need to be given a key to continue to access and maintain their space. They were growing stuff there.
- xvii) *Misc written reports*: Circulated to our list plus to Council reps - Stanley Open Spaces, Chestnuts, Bluebell Woods, Hartington Park, Lordship Rec, and St Anns Green Spaces.

**12. TCV report (Anna)**. They would usually be working at the Paddock but as it is closed they are doing some on-line activities and survey of wildlife around Tottenham. They do practical projects 5 days a week. They are on all social media including TikTok. More 18-25s are coming along as a result. They are running a tree coppicing workshop on 8<sup>th</sup> Feb and a wildflower meadows workshop. Contact Cassandra for info. They will be doing a report on the self-seeded willows in Lordship Rec in Feb. They are involved in the Ancient Woodlands Project in Queen's, Coldfall and Bluebell Woods. They will be putting in small areas of fencing to see if it reduces trampling/compaction to aid regeneration.

### 13. LBH Officer responses

- Glynis attends monthly cross-departmental meetings including homeless services and Police. They can ask for redeployable CCTV cameras and can include Chestnuts re the large gatherings.
- The dog PSPOs are up for review this year and they will consult, including with the Forum, on whether to reduce number of dogs a dog-walker can have. They will change the notices on sports courts which at the moment allow dogs when courts not in use, to say no dogs at any time.
- Annabel previously recommended to CREOS landowner to treat knotweed. Will try for this season. In general chemical herbicides will be used where necessary.
- The Lordship Rec Shell graffiti: As this is a mural this will be discussed with the Friends.
- Wolves Lane: Glynis will need to go back to Simon Farrow to check.
- Woodside Park got a new playground but it took 2 years.
- Sahina said vehicles should not be driving on grass and will raise again. Some operatives prefer to drive than walk as they should. To be reported to Area Supervisor.

- Unable to say when the new Greenspaces Strategy will feed into LBH budgets.
- White Hart Lane and Finsbury Park are in the mini forests project. No further info available on the hoped-for borough-wide increase of tree canopy to 30%.
- Recycling will be part of the final strategy.
- Glynis agreed to email additional responses to specific groups.

**14. Michelle Lindson, Volunteering Officer** circulated an update including: Volunteer tree planting at Perth Rd playing fields. Wants to gauge interest in working with St Mungo's Putting Down Roots project. Reminds us to get onto the Go Parks London database. City Nature Challenge is April 28<sup>th</sup>-May 1<sup>st</sup>. If groups have digital leaflets please email Michelle.

**15. Emma Betts, Community and Partnerships Engagement Officer** circulated an update introducing herself. She has particular focus on sections of our communities who could be better engaged in Parks and Greenspaces. She will be administering the People Need Parks small grant scheme from April.

**16. Updates/issues from Forum.**

- Liability and MOU: The Forum and LBH could look at the option of insuring groups in future (or at least ensuring access to funding so that groups can afford to do so). The MOU needs a review date e.g. every 2 years. Need to add in that LBH will be responsible for signing off any substantial volunteer work within a reasonable time period. Each group can negotiate its own version. LBH should be committed to the agreement, not just a tick box exercise. Each group needs to consider how it will benefit them. It will give consistency over a long period as members of groups may come and go. If we agree to provide an annual report LBH must too. MOUs will be voluntary – not all groups will want one. Dave to send Glynis an updated revised version of the MOU for the Council to consider.
- At the Haringey Parks Summit last year Simon Farrow agreed basketball nets will be put up at Ducketts so people can actively use the courts. The new Landscape Manager is Robert Liss and Glynis will introduce him to Hesketh to get this achieved.
- Glynis has circulated a link to the Commonplace page which is the Council's online page for all current park project consultations.

**17. AOB.** a. Question whether there is capacity for officers to take on all the current consultations. Glynis said the various officers will have different projects and responsibilities. There are posts yet to be filled but hopefully staff will be in place by the end of March. b. Question whether there is a policy process for protecting mature trees – this will be covered in the new strategy. Request that someone from the tree team attend these meetings as there are always tree issues.

**18. Forum meetings in 2023:** Saturdays, Bruce Castle, 10am-1pm – April 1<sup>st</sup>, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, September 2<sup>nd</sup>, November 4<sup>th</sup>.