

Haringey Friends of Parks Forum – General Meeting 6 April 2024

Present: Friends Groups reps - Dave Morris (**Lordship Rec**) - chaired, Klaus Kuerner (**Bruce Castle Pk**) – took notes, Chris Chadwick (**Priory Pk**), Roseline Lyanda-Mogaji (**Down Lane Pk Users Forum**), Thunder Raven-Stoker (**Queen's Wood**), Pamela Harling (**Tottenham Cemetery and Wolves Lane**), Joyce Rosser (**Priory Common, and Rectory Gardens**), Jane Hutchinson (**Alexandra Pk**), Anna Pole (**TCV**), Kate Swade (**Tower Gdns Pk**), Susan Beckett (**Nightingale Gdns**), Deborah Cawkwell (**Manchester Gdns, and Paignton Pk**) – typed up the notes, Frances Sanders (**Hornsey Church Tower**), Quentin Given (**The Paddock**); **From 11am: Council reps:** Glynis Kirkwood-Warren (**Parks service Zonal Officer Manager**); **Apologies:** Clare Parry (**Downhills Pk**), Ceri Williams (**Chestnuts Pk**), Joan Curtis (**Lordship Rec**), Cathy Meeus (**Parkland Walk**), Vicci Midwinter (**Coldfall Woods & Muswell Hill Playing Fields**), Phil C, John M (**Haringey Rivers Forum**), Robyn L (**Alexandra Pk**). And **Parks Service reps:** Emma Betts, Sahina Choudhury, Lily Labonte

Note: Dave distributed a pack of key documents to all delegates present – they had been emailed to our internal list previously. A number of groups had circulated detailed local reports before the meeting.

PART 1 – Friends Groups meeting

- **Minutes** of last meeting in February agreed, with the correction that re Priory Park: lights, tennis court due to go in; one court due to have controlled access; hedge is between the 2 courts and the bowling green
- **Forum issues:**
 - **Inclusion Working Group:** Need a volunteer to convene next meeting;
 - **Forum meetings:** Clare was hoping to draft letter to senior officer as to why attendance is important (to be able to make decisions and move things forward). Re options for another venue for Forum meeting in other part of borough – this was not felt to be a priority as Museum venue is good. However, anyone was welcome to investigate other potential options, availability, costs etc. eg. Hornsey Library, Queens Wood, council-owned Woodside House.
 - **New Friends Groups:** Friends of Stanley Open Spaces, N15 launched their new playground in February.
 - **Playzones:** Update for Forum from Paul Ely in writing.
 - **Recycling:** We have proposed a meeting with the Parks Service (and other stakeholders such as local green groups) to try and develop a strategy for achieving what we all want to see – effective recycling of parks' waste. Tom Woods has replied that they are interested, but need to review first. Quality & separation problems (with collection). Could rubbish not be separated at the waste depot as is done in other countries? Education campaign required for users of parks. Pamela and Dave to draft Forum letter to LBH head of recycling.
 - **Memorial benches:** Council sent letter/email asking for views on new design, and whether nature reserves are appropriate. Benches need to be sympathetic to environment and in sensible places.. All happy to have benches (in the right place), but Parkland Walk exception due to narrow paths, and complaints re anti-social behaviour.
 - **Small green spaces within neighbourhoods:** Looking for potential sites (not established parks etc) to improve - grants available.
 - **Young Women's Network:** New network for discussion and consultation, especially re use and safety of public spaces. All welcome to invite women reps in your group. Meeting 10x per year with payment for attendance.
 - **Campaigns to protect green spaces:** Proposal for a residential building on a part of a private tennis club in Muswell Hill.
 - **What to do with anti-social drinking in parks:** Bit of a discussion, new enforcement team could engage.
 - **London Mayoral Election:** An alliance of London's environmental campaigns have organised a 'hustings' meeting for all the candidates. Taking questions on green spaces. All welcome to attend.

- **Parks Service Zonal Team** : Still chronically understaffed. Awaiting return of Chris Poore & appointment of 3rd officer. A meeting with the Forum will be scheduled when staffing are in place.
- **Running the Forum**: We agreed to develop a stronger co-ordination group to share the load and responsibilities. [See previous meetings about this]. Deborah to join.
- **Wildlife survey/recorders group for Haringey** – Pamela involved in setting this up.
- **London and national Friends networks**: LFGN / GoParks bulletins are sent round to the majority of London's 1000 local groups - with info about seminars, issues, funding, meetings etc. All groups can sign up to receive, if you haven't already.

PART 2 - Council officer joined the meeting at 11am

■ **Brief reports from local groups:**

- **Manchester Gdns/Paignton Pk**: Recent litter picks with cake to get people in. Some planting. Planning summer event. Ping pong table in Paignton Pk damaged. Needs to be looked at & repaired.
- **Tower Gdns**: New flowers planted at entrance. Used funding money to do hedges. Planning summer community picnic following last year's successful event. Building only partially used – rented out to an education group. Bin bags dumped on flower bed: needs urgent action each time.
- **Hornsey Church Tower**: Owned by parish, managed by Highways Dept and Parks Service. Volunteer garden group very active. Graffiti incident. Litter bins need replacing: looking for contact details. Awaiting tree survey, spoken with Alex Fraser. Tree died after 1 year of planting, not yet replaced. Street/floodlighting does not always work. Tower as event venue? Condition of green space needs improvement. Garden remembrance area collapsing in part. Church yard management: needs an agreement in place between council & parish.
- **Alexandra Pk**: New saplings planted in the Grove. Problem with people removing stakes. Successful application to improve wetland area (£150K in total, received £50K). Friends organising lots of walks & talks as always.
- **Tottenham Cemetery**: Run by Dignity, not the Council. Friends calling for a new Management Plan, with Action Plan. Maintenance is being neglected. Tree in church yard had dropped a branch. Better liaison about trees at moment. June volunteering day. Bats expert coming. Hedgehog expert sought. Friends improving their website.
- **Queen's Wood**: Popular moss walk (46 people attended). 2 good volunteer days. Created some little channels to drain water. Involved in Great British Clean Up. Upcoming wild flower Sunday walk. Bird walk in May at 5am. Cabinet member for parks visited. Tarmac on paths is crumbling so Friends are pushing for repairs.
- **Down Lane Park**: Big redevelopment and refurbishment of the park now underway - in phase 1. 180 new trees to be planted. Walking group along with marshes group. Starting in March, activities for under 5s. Tennis courts cleaned. Working with Living Under One Sun centre and the youth sports teams. Good nature club.
- **The Paddock**: Next phase of improvements work started. Wildlife study (mostly by TCV) updated on website.
- **Nightingale Gdns**: Small group – meet once a week. Planting flowers & trees. Graffiti on border fencing is a massive problem - private fences not cleaned anymore. Huge mural lost to graffiti. New River is underground & seems to be cause of flooding in middle of park. How to apply for funding? Issue with householder incursions into park via gates in fences.

- **Priory Pk:** Meet every Sunday – approx 10 people – for gardening, planting. Some people doing Duke of Edinburgh award. Pétanque group – approx 50 members - would like to expand. Pursuing the repair of the historic Fountain.
- **Bruce Castle Pk:** Litter picks with refreshments. Summer theatre on 13 July (Great Expectations). Volunteering. Playzone planned (upgrade to existing hard sports area). Recommend headspeakers for walks and talks – only £30. Concerned with any ideas to increase the number of entrances – this originally came from the highly controversial threat to allow massive ‘takeovers’ of the park before/during/after major events at the Spurs Stadium.
- **Lordship Rec:** Planning Annual Flower & Produce Show on 14 September – lots of other groups getting involved to help. A Construction Company wants to have some corporate volunteering days in the Rec – Friends will be paid to arrange and supervise. [Going rate is £50-60 per person]. Lots of regular Friends’ working groups activities (12 sessions a month), and other community events. Held a meeting of all the park’s user groups (around 12 groups attended) to discuss how to better to continue to support each other and work together. Hosted a London-wide meeting (run by TCV and Wildlife Trust) of people involved in managing woodlands, to discuss a new woodland assessment tool being developed.
- **Stanley Open Spaces:** Launched their new playground.
- **Coldfall Woods and Muswell Hill Playing Fields:** Carrying out a woodland condition assessment. Local schoolchildren helping with meadow planting. Organising a number of activities including a stall at a local festival to increase membership, some walks, an art/nature project with refugees, and a bat and bird box survey. The gates to the playing fields need to be kept closed!
- **Chestnuts Park:** Successfully ensured the scrapping and re-think of a poorly-thought out Council plan for a flood project. Now hoping to re-animate the Master Plan for the park. Things which need sorting out include: the Community Centre lease, the leveling of the playing field, the relocation of the derelict basketball pitch, and parking in front of the Centre. Planning to celebrate the refurbishment of the tennis courts. Continuing their monthly gardening sessions. The Friends’ 25th anniversary is approaching!
- **Parkside Malvern gardening group:** [Report in writing] Continue to protect and maintain the small green spaces around their neighbourhood.
- **Haringey Rivers Forum:** [Report in writing] Moselle Brook Working Group brings together key stakeholder bodies (including Friends’ groups) to address ongoing issues. Haringey Water Squad volunteering continues, including surveys of ‘river fly’. Alexandra Park wetlands project is good news. Continue to promote SUDS drainage projects.

■ **Council responses:**

Paignton Pk: Inspection will happen & grant application opportunity.

Tower Gdns: Love Clean Streets app works for parks as well as streets (highly recommended by Glynis). Council fly-tipping officer has left – so work falls to Glynis & Chris (zonal team).

Hornsey Church Tower: Complex site – responsibility of Highways. Glynis to contact them again: request for license of shed sent to legal team – can take time. But keep going in the meantime.

Tottenham Cemetery: Glynis to ask for specific ring-fencing of resources. Need to ensure things get done by keeping reminding.

The Paddock: TCV have a base there and manage the site – the Friends help in other ways.

Nightingale Gdns: Graffiti is Veolia issue – new problem with insurance. Cleaning fences is responsibility of home owners. Will request bollards to keep vehicles out of park. Glynis has contacted Thames Water & is awaiting response re flooding issues

Priory Pk: Hopefully issues with the tennis courts now being resolved going forward. Re pétanque, will find out what's happening.

Bruce Castle Pk: Can see that any new gates could be controversial. New Zonal Officer, Jake Benmore (previously in Enforcement) – Glynis will introduce to the group.

- **TCV update (Anna):** Continue to run practical activities at the Paddock, Railway Fields and around the borough. Newsletter with monthly activities. Improving things for wildlife at Paddock. School groups at Railway Fields. A few events & workshops coming up. Bio-Blitz on 27 April. iNaturalist Big City Challenge intro training, so we can do it in our own spaces. Paddock paths & signs upgrade starts July, plus Japanese knotweed eradication.
- **Updates/issues from Council:**
 - **Budget updates:** Glynis will ask Simon Farrow to circulate the 2024/25 budget.
 - **People Need Parks:** Small grants funding will be available for this year as usual.
 - **Playzones:** Paul Ely called a meeting to discuss all the issues - attended by officers plus 3 of the 4 affected Friends Groups. Proposals are now being finalised for submission for funding.
 - **Recycling:** This is recognized as an issue which needs to be addressed, and that the Forum needs to be involved in the discussions.
 - **Memorial benches:** "The Eastgate" type of bench with solid foundation – costs have increased to £2.5k. But considering other additional memorial options, eg. plaque-only on existing bench, bug hotel or trees via Alex Fraser. When all options clear, email will be circulated.
 - **Small green spaces appeal:** Please send recommendations re potential upgrade to neglected small spaces within neighbourhoods.
 - **Young Women's Network:** Friends Groups female reps/members welcome to participate.
 - **Zonal team:** Now complete with 3 officers, so a date can be agreed for a meeting to improve communication as soon as Chris is fully back in action (probably June).
 - **Paddling pools:** £18K shortfall regarding length of time can be open. Over the summer, parents would like more days open than council has budget for – the council can afford weekends before the summer, then all week during the summer holidays. Crowd-funding?? Not thought to be a realistic alternative to adequate funding for the Parks Service.
- **AOB**
 - **Ageing Well Event:** Bruce Castle Pk on 21 September.