

Haringey Friends of Parks Forum – General Meeting 1 June 2024

Present: Friends Groups reps - Dave Morris (**Lordship Rec**) - chaired, Cathy Meeus (**Parkland Walk**), Frances Sanders (**Hornsey Church Tower**), Joan Curtis (**Lordship Rec**), Robyn Thomas (**Alexandra Pk**), Thunder Raven- Stoker (**Queen's Wood**), Deborah Cawkwell (**Manchester Gdns, Paignton Pk**) - minuted, Chris Chadwick (**Priory Pk**), Peter Gray (**Nightingale Gdns**); **From 11am: Council reps:** Glynis Kirkwood-Warren (Zonal Officer Manager); Emma Betts (Community & Partnerships Engagement Officer), Lily Labonte (Physical Activity Officer); **Apologies:** Klaus Kuerner (**Bruce Castle Pk**), Kate Swade (**Tower Gdns Pk**), ? (**Bluebell Wood**), Vicci Midwinter (**Coldfall Woods & Muswell Hill Playing Fields**), Pamela Harling (**Tottenham Cemetery and Wolves Lane**), Ceri Williams (**Chestnuts Pk**), John Miles (**Haringey Rivers Forum**), Roseline Lyanda-Mogaji (**Down Lane Pk Users Forum**), Cassandra Li (TCV), Quentin Given (**The Paddock**), Susan Beckett (**Nightingale Gdns**)

PART 1

- **Minutes** of last meeting in April agreed.
- **Matters arising:**
 - **Need for Senior Officer attendance / action on some issues** – Clare offered to write a letter.
 - **Implementing recycling letter to Council** - Pamela & Dave offered to do
 - **Forum Inclusion Group** - Deborah to convene, need to work out roles & core group (7/8 people). Can discuss outstanding issues to move forward.
 - **Forum core coordination group** – action needed to get this going
 - **New Friends Groups** – none reported
 - **Spaces under threat** - Railway embankment clearance: cutting back 6.5 metres, some trees can be a problem, bio-diversity corridors, safety. Haringey Tree Protectors meetings in June.
 - **Forum/Zonal Team Meeting 11 June** - to improve communication & find the best way to work together. *Update – it was very useful. Notes to follow.*
 - **Signage** - £5K [??]
 - **Wildlife Surveys** - Pamela to update Forum on her efforts to coordinate.
 - **London & National** - Lots happening via the London Friends of Green Spaces Network – working groups around bio-diversity, climate resilience, major commercial events. Falling budgets a problem almost everywhere.
 - **Protect Nature Now** – national demo in Central London on 22 June. Backed by many environmental groups. HFOPF to publicise assembling at Turnpike Lane. *Update: 6 or 7 met up, and joined the 50,000 or so on a powerful and inspiring march.*
 - **Parks funding crisis** - Joan to draft a letter to MPs. The 2017 Parliamentary Inquiry into parks made 17 recommendations. First meeting of the liaison body was a national meeting held in Lordship Hub, where funding was agreed to be the key issue. The Government paid lip service to this and so the crisis has deepened since then. 18 months ago there was

another Westminster Select Committee Inquiry - same result. Parks is not a statutory service, so can be easy to cut. Haringey Council say they need commercial events to raise money, but they undercharge. Procurement in the Council is clumsy.

- **Networks** All this underlines the importance of grassroots community networks supporting each other and raising concerns together. Dave distributed a list of existing Networks, including our Forum, at the recent re-launch of the Haringey Community Collaborative (funded by the Council to support the voluntary/community sector). Also included the Haringey Community Action Network, of which we are a member.

PART 2 - Council officers joined the meeting at 11am

■ **Brief reports from local groups:**

Queens Wood: Volunteer day with record haul of license plates. Dawn Chorus Walk - fully attended, even though at 5am Sunday. Wild flower walk. Family Fun Day. More volunteer sessions, some alongside TCV. Bat walk. Path network crumbling. Licensing of forest schools - need to ensure they are all proper.

Priory Park: Since before Covid, cafe in need of repair, other stuff too. Dates from Festival of Britain. Steam Fair no longer visits as owners retired, YMCA fun run event has lapsed as YMCA gym has closed down so no-one to organise. Tennis for free is now a much reduced event. Lawn Tennis Association insisted on locks on all tennis courts as part of refurbishment works. Park Centenary coming: plans for restoration of historic St Pauls fountain are in development - in conversation with lottery funding (they loved the project!); City of London granite blocks (which they have agreed to donate) will kick off the celebrations with their transportation to the park.

Nightingale Gardens: great bulb display with a joyful public response - very proud & want to expand this. Power surge meant 400 properties lost power + street lights + park lights, imperial path treacherous. Problem with graffiti on household fencing – responsibility of owners to remove.

Lordship Rec: 12 volunteer sessions per month at mo in various parts of the park. Lots of maintenance and repair issues re paths, benches, skate park, flower beds etc – although the park is looking beautiful with good bio-diversity. Shell Performing Arts Collective organising or supporting a range of outdoor events this summer: Italian community event, Blockarama steel pans, Skate park DJ parties. Friends planning their 18th annual Tottenham Flower & Produce Show/Festival. Got £10k Lottery funding. Working with Annabel (Council conservation officer) to seek funding for lake repairs/improvements. New Chess table.

Hornsey Tower: bulbs made a huge difference. TCV site visit with ways to develop bio-diversity & seasonal ponds. Grass needs to be cut in areas - not a job for the Friends - used for an MP's photo shoot. Management of Church Yard is unsolved/confusing with Parks & Highways both involved; someone needs to be responsible. Glynis to talk to those involved: diocese, parks, chair of Friends. Need senior management liaison between Simon Farrow & opposite number at Highways. Apparently, on council documents, the church yard is often not seen as a green space. Clarity needed. Need storage unit installation. Event: Crouch End Festival.

Alexandra Palace: £50K from London Mayor Rewilding Fund for wetlands project down by the reservoirs with aim for more bio-diversity. Trees cut back. Friends are involved with this, as well as Haringey River Trust, Thames Water with implementation by LWT & Groundwork. Work must be completed by next year for the next chunk of funding. Friends did the TCV woodland assessment, very good. Whole range of activities. Rethink of The Grove area. Dave M urged the consultants to work closely with the Friends. The Palace wants to hold events there (June event upcoming).

Parkland Walk: good newsletter with wildlife info & conservation activities. Allowing sides to regenerate by narrowing the paths using 'arisings' - dead hedges - good habitat. Tree & moss walks. Wildlife Trail at Holmesdale Road end. Clay bridge. Path renewal: consultants recommendation was against wholesale resurfacing because it's bad for bio-diversity & aesthetics; public consultation; like-for-like repairs; highways involved; Sustrans - comparison of all possible surfaces; further consultations for possible designs. £100s & £1000s spent on consultants, leading to the conclusion that the Friends suggested in the first place! Some bits of the walk really need repairing. Conservation Management Plan - dependent on surveys - yet to be commissioned. Spotlight walkabout last January, but the Friends need the notes. Glynis thinks they were sent – will check. Cranwood problem re boundary.

Manchester Gardens: regular monthly litter pick, lots of party gatherings with a lot of mess left. 28 July event supporting London Homeless Welfare supported by HAGA.

Paignton Park: regular monthly litter pick with refreshments. Upcoming Sunday Funday 21 July. Ping pong table still wobbly movement.

Some additional reports were sent in by Friends unable to attend Forum: All welcome to send round such summaries.

■ **Council responses (Glynis):**

Queens Wood: middle paths, which are most degraded, will be fixed. Forest Schools: should only be one organisation. Other has been contacted & told should not be there - could be charged.

Priory Park: hole next to flats known about. Cafe to be surveyed with Property Team. Upcoming 100 year celebration - previously 'Hornsey Pleasure Grounds'.

Nightingale Gardens: good public feedback for Friends' bulb planting. Follow-up with Highways. Recommends reporting graffiti via Love Clean Streets, which feeds into Council systems. Glynis to

send round clarification of Zonal & Ops.[??]

Lordship Rec: Glynis to nudge Annabelle re lake. Water leak on hill - liaising with Thames Water.

Hornsey Tower: Ops Team cut the grass. Problem for small areas is that small mower stolen from Keston Road Depot along with hand mowers. Glynis to chase up.

Parkland Walk: good deadheading. Spotlight notes due from 30 April meeting. Encroachment action inactive for 18 months. Want to work closely with Friends, who don't feel heard and not comfortable about process.

Paignton Park: Glynis has asked Chris Poore (Zonal Officer) to fix table tennis table or get a new one.

- **TCV update (Anna):** Continue to run range of practical activities. Wildlife at Paddock. Newsletter with monthly activities. 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. Japanese knotweed eradication.
- **Updates/issues from Council:**
 - **Physical Activity Officer (Lily) report:** People Need Parks programme has some funding cut. Summer programme booklet & will try to do in other seasons. Priory Park Run left out & will be added next time. Newsletter, Active Communities. Safety for Women & Girls in Parks - want flyer on every noticeboard. Walking Programme (which uses parks). (Feedback that walkers very impressed with Nightingale Gardens.) Haringey Walks Newsletter which Lily took over a couple of years ago has increased walks from 9 to 17. Joan suggested a community gardens walk. Priory Park - couple of ideas. Link with existing Friends Forum Walk In The Park booklets and cafe walk flyers.
 - **Community & Partnerships Engagement Officer (Emma) report:** Safer Parks for Women & Girls initiative. Network of 16-30 year olds - 15 applied of various ages; there's funding for 12, but ideally will keep all. 1st meeting in July with 10 monthly meetings across the year. Team ethos. Want to know what is their experience, with them to lead, feeding into designs, events, etc. Clare (Downhills) & Roseline (Down Lane) really helped. Link with Safer Parks for Women & Girls network. Every meeting is held in a different park. Send through any ideas. Survey for how women & girls used parks ('Make Space for Girls') baseline (from quarterly survey). 6 parks for initial focus: Down Lane Park, Finsbury Park, Markfield Park, Belmont Rec, Oliver Tambo Rec, Ducketts Common. Age Well Festival (partnership) on 21 September in Bruce Castle Park will be an active day with 5 elements. They may have a stall at the Tottenham Flower & Produce Festival the previous week. 'Happy To Chat' benches pilot. Plan to use existing benches with a banner with a QR code in Bruce Castle Park, Chestnuts Park, Russell Park & Priory Park. To launch next Friday. Haringey Reach & Connect.
 - **Budgets:** The budget Glynis requested for the Zonal Team was significantly more than what they got – she shared the details with the Forum. Dave wrote to senior officers asking for the details for Projects, Tree Maintenance, Play Fitters etc so we can understand and appreciate their challenges – still awaiting reply. Cathy suggested that there should be more flexibility between budgets. She said it seems that there is loads of money for 'nice-to-have' items. General Council reserves getting low. Does the Council have dedicated fundraisers? There is a bi-weekly officers group – aspirations, spreadsheet, working together, trying to line up funding. CIL - still getting some funding from that for parks – eg Springfield Community Park. Suggested Dave to write to Simon Farrow re CIL regeneration funding.
 - **Zonal Officer Communication:** meeting date between Friends & Officers set for 11 June. Zonal Team now complete with addition of Jake Benmore & Chris Poore back from sick leave. Dave will send draft agenda points to Glynis & check room. *Update – it went well. Notes to follow.*
 - **Recycling:** Glynis to send spreadsheet with all double bins (required for recycling). To bring in Veolia to help. Awaiting meeting with key stakeholders. Still desire for waste depot to sort as in other countries such as Germany.

- **Padding pools:** delay in opening due to budget constraints - meaning patching work.

■ **AOB**

- **Anti-social behaviour:** Glynis reported that park bye-laws are out of date. Needs to be passed by Secretary of State. But new bye-laws do not include encroachment/trespass. Relying on PSPOs (Public Space Protection Orders). New Enforcement Officers expected August.
- **Haringey Borough of Culture:** coming up in 2027, with funding - themed as the 'Rebel Borough'.
- **Ageing Well Event:** Bruce Castle Pk on 21 September.