Haringey Friends of Parks Forum – General Meeting 5th Sept 2026

Present - Friends Groups Reps: *Dave Morris (Lordship Rec) – Chaired; Laurie White (FROGS – Noel Park, Russell Park); Susan Beckett (Nightingale Gardens); Peter Gray (Nightingale Gardens); Patricia Moody (Alexandra Park); Thunder Raven-Stoker (Queen's Woods); Daniel Meagher (Belmont Rec) - minuted; Ceri Williams (Chestnuts Park); Klaus Kuerner (Bruce Castle Park); Carol Gibbins (Manchester Gardens & Paignton Park); Chris Chadwick (Priory Park); Joyce Rosser (Priory Common & Rectory Gardens); Kate Swade (Tower Gardens); Cathy Meeus (Parkland Walk); Frances Saunders (Hornsey Tower).* ***From 11am, Council Rep:*** *Glynis Kirkwood-Warren (Parks Zonal Manager).* ***From 11:30am****: Councillor Erin Wolson (Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure).* ***FGs Apologies:*** *Robert How (Brunswick Park), Clare Parry (Downhills).*

Note: Minutes of last meeting: June 2026 minutes agreed as accurate.

A. KEY FORUM ISSUES

1. **Welcome to new groups:** No new groups present.

2. **Playground Upgrades:** Brief updates from those parks where new playground installation is occurring, thanks to various funding streams (CIL, Pride In Place etc).

Russell Park: Playground works complete.

Lordship Rec: Work has not started yet – will start this month.

Tower Gardens: Allocated approximately £80k from CIL, which then became £65k. Key aim is to replace the swings. The project manager from parks department is identifying things that will need fixing first – e.g. flooring, gate. Still waiting on a timescale and it seems to be delayed. Concern that money will be used up on basic 'necessary' fixes such as flooring and gates, and there will be very little left for actual playground equipment upgrades or improvements. Swing-set has no swings. It was noted regarding delays that any playground work had been suspended over the summer given the heavier usage by children during that time.

Priory Park: Playground equipment was improved last year – the Council managed to do a lot with approximately £100k.

Bruce Castle Park: Awaiting an update for an actual start date for the playground upgrade. Regarding the MUGA – this had to go through planning permission. There is a Playground Improvement Group liaising with the Council. The Friends group / Playground Improvement Group is largely letting the Council move forward and watching whether any aspect goes significantly off-track.

3. **Litter / Waste**

It was noted that the Parks Forum had sent a letter to the Council encouraging them to focus on litter ahead of the summer months. In previous years, the Council had hired part-time staff to help with litter, but because of the hiring freeze it has been a disaster this past summer. Various members concurred, noting that the start of the summer was particularly bad, and that a number of Friends groups had to organise additional volunteer litter-picks. Some parks (such as Russell Park) had received large 1000 litre bins as a temporary measure from the Council – but unfortunately this may sometimes encourage significant fly tipping. It is problematic that overall across the parks the number of bins have been reduced. If bins are full, and even if a Friends

group collects litter into a bin bag but which bag is not collected – foxes get in, creating the problem again (example: Priory Park). It was noted that enforcement efforts against repeat fly-tippers / litterers has helped (example: Nightingale Gardens). It was noted that waste management for parks had fallen apart (due to chrionic underfunding/understaffing) in earlier summer, and that the understanding was that the Council had redirected some housing staff to support parks litter collection (no doubt having a knock-on effect for housing). At Manchester Gardens, there are rough sleepers who leave behind litter, including broken glass.The dog waste bin at Tower Gardens is in a very dirty and disgusting state – it galvanized a number of locals and became a heated local issue.

4. **Fires:**

It was also noted that BBQs in the summer months represented a fire risk in the parks (example: Bruce Castle Park).

Fires reported from the summer: Paignton Park (one fire reported), Tower Gardens (a number of fires), Alexandra Palace (including a very significant fire – not sure of the cause, but it appears to have started where compost is collected), Bruce Castle Park (paper lit in the corner of the park, it lasted for 20 minutes and was “horrific”, the Council and police were involved); Tottenham Cemetery (4-5 serious fires, including the patch behind the church. The fire brigade came out. It appears to have been deliberate, by a vandal); Lordship Rec (several fires – including one significant fire, with trees on fire. Members of the Friends group overlooking the park closely monitored Lordship Rec for any potential fires.

5. **Maintenance:**

It was noted from the previous Parks Forum meeting and previous representations from Glynis Kirkwood-Warren (Parks Zonal Manager) that there was almost no available budget for most maintenance unless the issue was serious.

The path at Avenue Gardens is in an extremely bad and hazardous state. There had been money to get the path sorted, but now there is no money. The New River runs underneath part of that path – and the Council did not want to damage the culvert. However there is now a totally collapsed path.

It was noted that maintenance is always a problem: Parkland Walk rarelyr any maintenance); Bruce Castle Park (the paths in the park are receiving no maintenance); Lordship Rec (where the Friends group keeps an ongoing list of repairs needed and maintenance issues to regularly go through with the relevant Parks officers – but it is always a struggle to get repairs done); Paignton Park (asked for support to fix the broken fence surrounding the tiny forest, but said nobody turned up).

It was noted that all the Parks teams are stretched very thin, and that if team members are unwell or out of office, then the remaining staff are even more stretched and under double pressure. This can lead to significant delays on issues of repair and maintenance, and unacceptable staff stress.

6. **Meeting with Cabinet Member**

Dave Morris provided a summary of his meetings with the new Cabinet Member Councillor Wolson over the summer. Following on from the Greens’ manifesto commitments in May, he briefed Councillor Wolson on various of parks-related issues, the funding and staffing crisis, the role and

function of the Parks Forum and our partnership with the Council and Parks Department. [See Appendix 1 below]

7. **Capital budget for Haringey parks service**

The long-term additional capital budget for the Parks Service essential major works and improvements was understood to be some £millions supposed to last for the next 10 years. The Council appear to be now reviewing and eating into that every year.

8. **Parks Charter**

The Council have agreed to sign the Parks Charter. This is a statement confirming that the Council is now formally committed to ensuring well-run, well-maintained, well-protected public green spaces and to work together with Friends groups - and to putting pressure on the Government to provide adequate funding to achieve this.

We noted the importance of protection of greenspaces, and specifically the long-standing Council policy to protect green spaces 'in perpetuity' via Fields in Trust legal covenants on each of the 60 spaces identified in the last Local Plan. Unfortunately, this has ground to a halt after only 12-16 covenants as the Parks Service is supposed to pay the legal department to go ahead with this agreed admin work. Ridiculous.

9. **Depots**

The Council want to close a couple of the depots used for parks-related equipment and machinery. One at Bruce Castle – not sure what they want to do with that. One at Downhills. Unclear if the Council will intend to sell off these plots of land. They have been told to find a location for a new purpose-built depot. Apparently they have identified Dairy Fields on White Hart Lane, which is a green open space managed by the housing department - next to a kids nursery.

There was some equipment stolen from the Downhills Pk Depot – this has now been replaced. Generally the parks department gets equipment from the capital funding (see above), so there might have been insurance for replacing the stolen items.

10. **Events in parks:**

The new Council regime have promised to 'reduce' the number of inappropriate and controversial large commercial events in parks, mainly Finsbury Pk. As we had warned some years back, the Parks Service has become more or less totally dependent on the events at Finsbury Park for revenue.

11. **Park buildings:**

We believe there are are around 32 empty buildings in parks which need new leases. The Parks service used to lead on this but unfortunately its now managed by Property Services. We and the Parks Service need to ensure any new tenants enhance the green space and provide services and activities sympathetic to each site. The Parks Service should maintain some kind of final approval of tenants and the lease terms before these are entered into.

It was noted that various private households have unilaterally annexed (ie stolen) bits of Parkland Walk public nature reserve for private garden extensions. Due to years of lack of legal action by the Council many of these affluent households have claimed 'squatters rights' and the Council have decided to negotiate and charge for leases.

12. **Housing Estates Landscaping Contract:**

It is important that the Parks Service continues to also manage green spaces on housing estates as otherwise they would lose income and capacity.

13. **Green Flags sites:**

Numbers were cut 50% 2-3 yrs ago, despite Council policy being to expand such sites/standards. This means reduced spotlight visits, management plans and similar benefits across a number of green spaces in Haringey. This needs reversing.

14. **Rough Sleeping:**

It was noted that rough sleepers had been reported at a number of sites (including e.g. Nightingale Gardens) but that the Council has been slow at some sites to take any real action. It was noted that rough sleepers in parks is a complex issue, linked also to the deeper issues causing homelessness.

15. **London / National Updates:**

(1) There is a national ministerial review of the wide variety of official protections for designated green spaces, and their effectiveness. Dave circulated info to the various area greenspace Forums around the UK.

(2) There is an upcoming AGM of the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces happening in late September. Usually about 12-14 parks forums are represented. Dave will represent us, and the London Friends of Green Spaces Network. *Note: Look out for NFPGS Newsletters.*

16. **Haringey Year of Culture / Rebel Borough 2027:**

It was noted that 2027 was going to be a 'year of culture' in Haringey, to include celebrating Haringey residents' rebel past and present (and future!). Some Friends groups are considering how to be involved. It was noted that groups can apply for funding – but that the funding application page was extremely bureaucratic and difficult to navigate (and generally for a total of not more than £1,000 of funding). It was noted to raise with Councillors that it should be easier.

BREAK / Part 2 *

B. VARIOUS COUNCIL UPDATES (from Glynis)

(1) The P**eople Need Parks funding** for events was now all gone for this year. Emma Betts will produce a summary of all spending.
(2) **Events** – many community events this summer. Finsbury Park will host Oktoberfest and a funfair. There is an ongoing review of the parks events policy, being carried out by Parks officers Sarah and Simon.
(3) **Playground Upgrades** – Simone from the Parks team should have already or will soon be in touch with the relevant groups to provide an update on timings. We want to make sure

everyone knows when the projects will be going ahead and when they are scheduled to complete. ***Tower Gardens,*** £65k of pay equipment funding, risk of it being whittled down on small things like flooring, gates. Swings are really needed. Glynis raised the possibility of signage of planned works or improvements, and also noted that the Council retained some play equipment from other sites being upgraded which was not yet end-of-life (e.g. 3 climbing frames) and which could be potentially deployed to Tower Gardens. ***Pride in Place funding stream*** is enabling some further playground sites repairs and improvements. The team is getting maps ready for public consultation.

(4) **Discussion of byelaws and anti-social behaviour** ***Regarding BBQs and fires*****.** There are standard byelaws for parks across Haringey. Some others (e.g. Finsbury Park) have their own versions. Glynis can share the existing bye-laws, and there is a review of those and potential updates to those – including for example regarding e-bikes. The bye-laws generally cover areas only owned by the Council. The bye-laws will be re-drafted by the Council, then go for public consultation, then any amendments, then one more consultation, then to the Secretary of State for approval. The Parks Department is also looking at getting ***PSPOs (Park Protection Orders)*** in place more quickly. This can be used on e.g. dog control issues, fires. This will come around sooner than changes to the bye-laws. ***Lime Bikes / e-Bikes:*** There are additional solutions beyond the bye-laws. For example, Lime Bike company can control speeds for Lime Bikes in certain areas (such as parks). Lime bikes are reduced to turtle speed in the Parkland Walk. A question was raised regarding ***signage*** – how will new bye-laws be signposted, and can more signage be deployed to reduce BBQs / fires, use of e-bikes, and similar. Glynis commented that there are thousands of signs across the parks. Whenever there is a new project, the Parks Department will update signs across that park at the same time. In addition to signage – the Parks department needs actual budget to enforce. Lordship Rec Friends had produced their own signs at Lordship regarding BBQs and fire safety. It was noted that signage can be more positively phrased, so that there are not too many signs simply saying “Don’t Do This”. Glynis will circulate draft signage.

Councillor Wolson then arrived at 11:30am……..

C. SITE REPORTS FROM EACH FRIENDS REPRESENTATIVE

Noel Park FROGS / Russell Park (Laurie White): Successful festival in the summer at Russell Park – but it was very hot. (A sprinkler was a popular feature for kids!). Friends group doing their best to keep things alive over the drought, including new trees. Flytipping is a problem, as is anti-social behaviour. There is an outstanding issue with the community building, and the splitting of amenities. Regular litter picks organised by the Friends.

Nightingale Gardens (Susan Beckett, Peter Gray)**:** Friends of Nightingale Gardens is a sub-group of the local residents’ association. From Bounds Green Road, up toward Ally Pally station. Path in the Avenue Gardens section has collapsed, and is in an unsafe state. Friends group hoped there was money to repair, but there is a culvert near the path and river underneath making things complicated. Friends requested update from Council on what is happening. Continuing problems with rubbish, and enforcement issues against repeat offenders (fly-tipping). They do litter

picks. New memorial bench – a good sign, indicates that local families think the space is now nice enough for a memorial bench. Friends organised a successful community picnic in the park.

Alexandra Park (Patricia Moody): Alexandra Park is looked after by a trust. Friends Group incredibly busy all summer. Fundraising – raised £10k in 48 hours, and then more, for a bvoard walk - it now needs planning permission. Council support would be helpful. Friends celebrated their 20th anniversary with a fete at the Grove – well supported, opened by the Mayor. Park retains its Green Flag status. Part of a Green Route – Mayor of London Fund. £133k earmarked towards wetlands project. Negativity: wildflowers planted in park – but damaged by fencing that went up for event, and unfortunately then mowed.

Queens Woods (Thunder Raven-Stoker): Held many summer events. Bat walk – but lack of bats. Numbers have apparently dropped – maybe lack of water. First ever garden party for volunteers. Friends group has various working parties. 6th September: History Walk, 2:30pm, led by President of Hornsey Historical Society. Interested in any updates to bye laws re: dog walkers, e.g. limit on the number of dogs to person ratio, and when that would be coming into force. A number of unauthorised forest schools operating – but that includes e.g. school from Westminster. Need for billing to start properly at the start of term – at least 2 or 3 schools using the wood.

Belmont Rec (Daniel Meagher): Relatively new Friends group – formed 2023, with over 200 members. Very little Council investment in Belmont Rec since 1950s, except under-8s playground and circular running path – both installed in 2009 and now in very poor condition. Masterplan developed by local resident, has now been through multiple consultation processes with Council managing those consultations. Drainage survey conducted, with natural and sustainable drainage improvements planned. Now trying to get funding including external funding for improving paths – including the one circular running path which the adjacent infant and junior school uses for “Daily Mile” to encourage children’s fitness – which has to be suspended every winter and spring because of flooding of the path. Many trees planted, relaxed mow, pond installed and tiny forest in new nature area. Friends organise regular litter picks, bulb planting, tree mulching. Incredible support from local community and schools.

Chestnuts Park (Ceri Williams): Chestnuts is one of the parks downgraded by the Council so that is it no longer a Green Flag park. The park has been transformed over the years. Same problems at Chestnuts that you see at other parks. Drought – 2 of the big plane trees really suffering. Need support from proper tree specialists. Failed to have any engagement from the biodiversity officer. Need to think 50 years ahead for tree and biodiversity in our parks - more of these plane trees will fail. Various new planting dying from the drought – Friends group doing what they can to maintain orchard area. Native hedges – work with the TCV on this. Blackthorn hedge has survived. We also have a masterplan – a huge masterplan, a lot of time and money was spent on it. What Chestnuts really needs is a final report that pulls the masterplan and previous work all together – that would help us unlock things. The relevant person at the Projects team has left the Council, and it remains unfinished. Need to bring it into one document. Thank you to the tree surgeons – they left cherry logs – potential for natural playground. Put together a community based bid. The community centre needs proper lease and repairs. Not sure if lease for community centre is going to tender. Toilet on edge of park – part of Loos for Haringey. Toilets are semi-functioning. Ceri Williams will send note.

Hornsey Church Gardens (Frances Saunders). Oldest building in Haringey, dating from medieval times. Open day next Saturday. There is now a water source to aid watering. Primary

school closed, and is now a SEND centre. They are sharing water with us. Site was 'mystery shopped' this year for Green Flag purposes. Terrace outside – it is in a bad state. Part of garden of remembrance. Request that Friends group can still come to Glynis, who can then where appropriate liaise with Highways (who have responsibility for much of the site). Event in July – feels like a county fete. Teddies on zip wire. Huge amount of goodwill and respect towards the Friends group. *[Friends of Hornsey Church Tower also circulated a written report.]*

Paignton Park & Manchester Gardens (Carol Gibbins). ***Paignton Park:*** Lost Green Flag status. Issues with maintenance and cutting back branches. No water source, and cannot park near anything – so the Friends spend a lot of time lugging water around. Timing of planting problematic – a lot of planting in the spring, too hot and dry – encourage Council to move to autumn planting. ***Manchester Gardens*** – High levels of anti-social behaviour. Drug use, alcohol, rough sleeping. Near St Mungo's Hostel – a wet hostel. HAGA, another drug and alcohol charity, is nearby. Friends supportive of the charities' work – but the reality for Manchester Gardens is that is becomes a no-go space. Really desperate for a solution.

Bruce Castle Park (Klaus Kuerner). Rudolfo is the new Chair of the Friends group to replace Klaus – will attend next time. Friends group organises monthly litter picks. Two weeks ago – annual open-air theatre, with 300+ people, half of them children. Playground and MUGA upgrades – seems to be roughly on track; Council need to let Friends group know how best to coordinate. Trees – very dry summer. When big rains come – cannot deal with it. Not sure if Alex Fraser (Tree Officer) has time – a lot of branches hanging down. Maybe recommence spotlight maintenance and repair meetings in spring 2027.

Priory Park (Chris Chadwick). Three events organised by the Friends. People come together, and many hundreds of hours of volunteer time. A lot of new people involved. Major issue: paddling pool. Had Pride in Place money. Thank you to Glynis for what she has done. However, construction means that café is losing a lot of business. People put off, not going there. We have also requested a bollard between the tennis courts, to stop people driving into the park. There is an ongoing court case with Thames Water as to who owns the tarmac area. Friends group has over 1300 members.

Tower Gardens (Kate Swade). Has been all go in Tower Gardens. Park Friends Group is an off-shoot of the residents' group. They and other local residents also helped set up a Community Interest Company (CIC) to seek funding for managing empty public buildings on the estate. Re the one in the park, Inter University moved out as Council wanted to increase rent to £40k per year. The CIC has now negotiated a 1 yr lease and have organized a vibrant programme of events. Challenging process dealing with Council's outsourced legal department. Excited to now have toilets, tea and place to hang out. One major issue: No swings, adventure play area has been taken away, deliberate fires started on dead hedges – it seems that petrol was poured on these and fire lit. The group planted a number of new trees in spring – but these were then vandalised. Path was re-laid, but with gravel – that has caused accessibility problem. Launch day – solidarity with the community, a fantastic event. Plan regular kids activities, history display, drop in events, repair cafes etc.

Parkland Walk (Cathy Meeus). Butterfly walk. Wildlife trail. Spotlight walks – one coming up with Glynis. A number of urgent health & safety issues – but not much happening. Worried about fires – high risk. Damaging to nature reserve but also to houses. Better signage needed re: BBQs. Storm concern – Parkland Walk is all trees. Friends would like to know if there is a pot of money

towards stabilizing the path. People throw stones from viaduct onto the walk. Useful to get costings in advance of meeting about preventing that. Rough sleeping – Oxford Road end - very entrenched camping has been there months. Pond by Stanhope Bridge was poorly installed – no regard for it being a wildlife pond. Need to chase up contractors on snagging issues. Encroachment of private gardens into the Walk – transfer of legal responsibilities for leases, especially at Highgate End. Lease fees should have been reviewed years ago. Council should make the most of these – more £ should come to the Council. E-bikes remain an issue.

Lordship Rec (Dave Morris). Friends held successful bat walk. Have 5 working groups to maintain different parts of the park - all busy over the summer. Friends co-manage the whole site with Council. Annual Flower and Produce Festival coming up *(Note: Around 2,000 attended, lovely participatory atmosphere).* In the build up to the Festival there were a number of kids practical workshop sessions. Litter-picking group busy dealing with tremendous amount of litter at start of summer. Bike shop is now empty – need a new tenant that enhances use of park. Leftover bikes need to be rehomed. Hedges have not been maintained for years and are becoming forests.

D. COUNCIL RESPONSES (Glynis):

- **Russell Pk & Tower Gardens building leases** – Parks Dept no longer in charge of park buildings. Leases discussions need to be held with Property Services.
- **Flytipping:** Recognise issue of risk of household waste being left next to 1000litre bins.
- **Nightingale Gdns:** Glynis will ask Highways to come through re: collapsed path. Flytipping: Glynis will ask Highways to use cameras to deal with that.
- **Dog Control Orders** – Still needs to be consulted on and go to Council. Similar for dog walking / dog / human ratios.
- **Tree Team** – Plane trees tend to 'throw their limbs' during drought. It will be useful in Alex Fraser / trees report to cover what they are doing, and what can Friends groups do to support. Glynis will ask Alex Fraser to do a debrief ahead of next Parks Forum.
- Some of the Parks team is working on **planting colour palettes** for different areas within parks. To have some consistency in what we are planting, when are we planting it, why these plants. Also with future-proofing in mind.
- **Chestnuts Pk:** Glynis will speak to David about masterplan. Can potentially go through Kirsty's replacement. Toilet block – Glynis thinks Highways responsible. Community Centre – no update re lease.
- **Hornsey Tower:** Glynis will pass to Operations team to remove green waste. Terrace – Glynis will send email and include Conservation officer (Elizabeth).
- **Paignton Pk** – Water very costly. £10k to run new pipe. Perhaps speak to Triangle at Paignton Park. Maybe a water butt.
- **Spring / Autumn Planting:** We try to plant everything October to January. Occasionally we need to plant later because of limited people and resource for planting.
- **Manchester Gdns Anti Social Behaviour**. Enforcement officers working with St Mungos and other charity.
- **Events in parks** – Parks department working to ensure more clarity that those running events appreciate and respect the space.

- **Bruce Castle Pk:** Glynis to arrange meeting with incoming Chair Rudolfo.
- **Bollards:** Moving away from drop down metal bollards – these get stolen. Plastic bollards instead.
- **Priory Park:** Paddling pool – Councillor Wolson will connect. Recognise effect on café. Hard standing / tarmac area, case with Thames Water – stalled. An issue that affects all London Boroughs. Glynis / Cllr Wolson to follow up on timetable for completion of paddling pool works.
- **Tower Gardens:** Well done to the local residents on taking on running the pavilion. Please report rough sleepers through Streetlink. Even repeat multiple times. Glynis and Christoph will follow up. ***Trees being vandalized:*** Christoph goes through twice a week, trying to increase patrols.
- **Parkland Walk:** Signs coming. Pedestrian priority signs. Christoph put up 25 "no BBQs" signs, all taken down. 10 more. Glynis will ask David to send around notes ahead of viaduct meeting.
- **Lordship Rec:** Property services have changed lock on empty bike hut. Glynis has asked and will chase re: bikes. Would be nice for another community bike shop or similar local organisation.
- **Parks Zonal Team / Responses:** Since May 2026, only two people on team instead of six. Sorry for slow replies.

… AND comments from Councillor Wolson

- **Priory Park, Paddling Pool:** Sorry this is taking so long. Have asked for review of the construction and situation. Timeline they sent to me – but might change. Trying to figure out why Council did not hold relevant officers to account. Empathize with Parks team. Things can be improved within the Council so that we stick to timelines. I have been told 14 September start date, 23 September end date, 30 September curing complete, 1 October paddling pool opens. Issue of ramp / accessibility.
- **My job as Councillor is to hold officers to account**. There are 137 parks and greenspaces. I cannot be across every detailed issue, but I can try to ensure the Parks department and Council is functioning as well as possible to support those parks and greenspaces, and the Friends groups.
- **Flytipping:** Huge priority for us. Please keep reporting on Love Clean Streets app – allows us to see hotspots.
- **Communications between Parks Department and Friends Groups** – an area of focus for me. We also need to be better at forewarning communities rather than it becoming a reactive situation. Please do reach out to your Ward councillors. ***Dave Morris comment:*** Friends groups are your partners. The Parks Department needs proper communications, and direct communications with Friends groups. ***Councillor Wolson:*** I agree, it is crucial.
- ***Glynis noted that she receives hundreds of emails per day***, and does her best to stay on top of the different issues and respond or act where it is needed.

E. A NUMBER OF FORUM ISSUES FOR THE COUNCIL TO NOTE (via Dave)

a. **Staffing & Budget:** Want to know that you are doing everything you can to improve parks budget, including pressurising Government. Want to at least protect the existing budget.

b. **Policy Update:** Council has at last signed the Charter for Parks – a commitment for communities to be involved and parks to be properly managed, maintained and protected. Glynis mentioned may consider another local ***survey of Friends Groups.***
c. **Litter & Waste.** #1 priority early summer 2026. Some improvements. Managed to survive summer just about. ***Glynis:*** We have increased messaging around people taking litter home with them. ***Klaus:*** People taking litter home will hopefully save Council some money.
d. **Playground Upgrades:** Overall, going well. Should be further consultations and updates going out re some sites.
e. **Buildings:** All park buildings need to be occupied by appropriate enhancing organisations with park-relevant activities. 32 buildings empty.
f. **Byelaws:** Discussed before.
g. **Fields in Trust protective legal covenants:** Need the whole portfolio to be completed, as agreed. This is really simple. It seems to be stuck because of an internal issue. The Council need to tell legal service to finish the process.
h. **Green Flag:** Council should aim to get back green flag status for those parks where it was removed. Should be restored and increased.
i. **Trees** – Need a report for us from Alex. ***General note:*** regular officer reports are important to everyone.
j. **PSPOs** – Already discussed.

F. AOB

1. **Year of Culture.** Parks & Friends should be a part of that. Some difficulties with a complex process for Friends groups applying for funding in relation to the Year of Culture.
2. **No availability of bulbs from Parks Department this year.** Need to apply elsewhere, eg to the MPGA. If a Friends group does plant bulbs – please send map to Glynis so that mowing team is notified.
3. **Downhills Park** – unable to attend this meeting but sent round a detailed written report.

Appendix 1: Haringey Parks strategic issues - Follow up meeting 19th August 2026

Cllr Wolson (Cabinet Member) and Dave Morris (Haringey Friends of Parks Forum)

Agenda/issues

Dave explained latest situation as he understood it (based on chats with officers) for each of the points below. Cllr Wolson's response to each point (as summed up by DM) is in italics.

1. Key strategic issues for both partners

1.1 Partnership and Co-Production together - making it a success (including commitment, communications, maximising the potential etc) *Cllr Wolson: Keen to make this work*

1.2 Budget – ensuring ongoing and appropriate resources. Revenue, capital, NCIL, Government. *Cllr Wolson: We have a financial crisis. Looking into options. Support pressure on Govt to fund Local Authority services properly - Council reps will attend an Anti-Austerity Conference in Hackney in Sept.*

1.3 Staffing – ensuring adequate levels for all teams. Remove recruitment freeze (of full time and agency staff). *Cllr Wolson: She recognises the problem and urgency. Also that contracting out creates fragmentation. Need to protect integrity/numbers/skills of Parks Service. Considering options. Any unfreezing or expenditure above £1k needs to be approved by 'Spending Panel'*

1.4 Maintenance – ensuring effective maintenance is able to be carried out. *Cllr Wolson: Recognises the problem. Considering options.*

1.5 Improvements / capital budget – aspirations, and opportunities. *Cllr Wolson: will look into how to draw in funding if match funding is needed, & that officers have time to prepare bids.*

1.6 Policies (Green Spaces Strategy, Haringey Local Plan, Sign the Parks Charter etc). *Cllr Wolson: Will check park issues are reflected in Local Plan, including identification of all SINCs. Council have agreed to sign the Parks Charter (will put in writing)*

2. Specific urgent issues

2.1 Litter and waste collection – Clean Team, Friends Groups, Veolia + Longer term aspirations (eg recycling) *Cllr Wolson: Recognise understaffing, and urgency, and need to keep 'in house'. But the Parks Service have paid Veolia to put in large '1100' bins in many places, and Friends Groups can apply online to get Veolia to pick up any bags collected in a litter pick or after an event (5 days notice needed). Recycling is a long term aspiration.*

2.2 Biodiversity - Trees, SINCs, Conservation Action Plans, mowing, TCV etc *Cllr Wolson: Recognises challenges.*

2.3 Protection of greenspace – Fields In Trust, Local Plan etc. *Cllr Wolson: Will check with Simon Farrow why the implementation of Council policy to protect all designated sites (60 sites?) has stalled after only a dozen or so. Local Plan should include all the (revised) SINCs.*

2.4 Playgrounds - monitoring current projects, ensuring maintenance *Cllr Wolson: Noted*

2.5 Depots - some existing depots facing closure / site to be sold off. Plus looking for sites for new ones (including Dairy Fields green space)? *Cllr Wolson: Will look into.*

2.6 Equipment - eg the agreed long term capital allocation for parks is under review, so some expenditure plans are in limbo? (eg for machinery). Hedge cutting chronically delayed. *Cllr Wolson: Will look into.*

2.6 Events in parks – community & commercial. End dependence on inappropriate events. *Cllr Wolson: Reviewing current policy, aiming for less of the inappropriate commercial events and more community events.*

2.7 Park buildings – usage, and leases. Possibly 32 park buildings are empty and needing action to ensure they are appropriately leased out to enhance their site. Plus Finsbury Park toilets closed for months (due to dispute over who should pay for repairs?). *Cllr Wolson: Leases now under control of property services & corporate landlord. Will look into. Fins Pk toilets issue being grappled with.*

2.8 Housing landscape contract (maintenance, and expected to manage new sites without funding eg Civic Centre) *Cllr Wolson: Recognises vital for Parks Service to keep the housing landscape contract. Will look into any issues.*

2.8 Standards - Green Flag - restore the sites cut 3 years ago. *Cllr Wolson: Will look into.*

2.9 Co-production communications – with local groups, and with the Forum *Cllr Wolson: Will review current system. Will ask key officers to send bi-monthly reports before each Forum. Also 'spotlight' visits need written action points, to be shared. She will attend next Forum.*

3. AOB

3.1. Partnership meetings eg Forum, possible celebration event, other (re general or specialist issues) *Cllr Wolson will attend next Forum.*

3.2 Rough sleeping *Cllr Wolson: Ongoing challenge. Her colleague responsible for housing issues is mindful of this.*

Appendix 2: Report from Downhills Park (Clare Parry)

- We had a successful & well attended Art in the Park in early August

- The East London Shakespeare Festival put on a performance in Downhills Park in late June & I gather it was also well attended & widely enjoyed

- There have been a couple of external events in Downhills Park over the last two months which have had a mixed reception by the general public. There was a fair in Downhills held over two weekends in late July. I attended a spotlight walk in advance of the fair & whilst I wasn't at a post site inspection, it seemed as though the park had been left in a good condition. Last weekend here was a Soca event in the park - I haven't heard much about that other than a comment on the parking in the park.

- The entrance to Downhills Park at Belmont/Downhills Park Road was widened to allow access for larger vehicles. This wasn't handled particularly well in terms of external communications (a fact that Glynis has acknowledged) and it is still unclear to me what happens next & when the new entrance will be reinstated. It would be helfpul to have an update.

- Work on the playground has started this week & so we look forward to the new installation over coming months

- Work on the MUGA has been delayed. Project timelines & costs have escalated since the original design & some features will no longer be incorporated in the installation. Anne Poole has kept us well informed & been open to consultation feedback & discussion.

- Lighting in the park continues to be a source of frustration to me - a combination of lack of communication from the team & an unwillingness to engage with the discussion has continued in some areas. The installation to the tennis court is not what we were advised of at the project planning stage. The installation for the MUGA now has to change - we have been advised of this.

- Like many parks - litter has been problematic over the summer months, I recognise the reasons for this but it also continues to be a source of frustration that we rarely move this forward year on year.

- Like all parks - the extreme weather conditions over recent months can be seen in the park.

- There have been challenges with play equipment & paddling pools being used in the area adjacent to the cafe. This is complicated & I don't propose to go into detail here. Glynis is aware of the situation.

- A shout out to a local resident who got in touch earlier in the year to advise that there were tadpoles in the pond & what could we do to ensure their survival. She & a neighbour set up a system to ensure there was water in the pond - a big thank you, definitely a success for the season.