



Clissold Park User Group News

Notes of our January 11th 2014 meeting

At the meeting:

Caroline Millar (Chair), John Hudson (Secretary/Vice Chair), Ken Worpole (President), Eleanor Potter and Bruce Irvine (Park Managers), and 21 other Park Users.

Action from the November meeting

A planning application for the **Ice Rink** is to be made. It is intended to be in the old bandstand area from November 2014 to January 2015. Details on opening hours and prices will be given with the application.

Woodland track – the paths are still in a very bad state. An annual maintenance plan for the paths is needed. Hackney Sports Development is unresponsive. Should money be available for this? Eleanor reported that some work had begun this week and will continue, but supplies of woodchip from contractors are intermittent. A Borough-wide specification of works for park staff is nearing completion and a formal monitoring procedure will begin in the next financial year. Maintenance of paths using wood chippings high on that list, but it is a huge task and some work will also be done using volunteers.

The New River Mosaic is finished and a decision will now be made on where it will go.

Park Manager's Report

The December **gate count** recorded 148,790 people in the park, the lowest monthly figure of the year but the **total since May is now +2,076,000 already exceeded the year's HLF target of 2 million!** This is the first year of data which will be analysed to improve understanding of how people use the park and so support future planning.

Bruce Irvine takes over the **Park Manager's job** on 3rd February during Eleanor's maternity leave.

The **Parks Operations Manager** for the Borough, Mark White, now directly manages the rangers and grounds staff and he is here one or two days each week.

Staff training has increased over last few months through a formal programme.

Detailed **mapping of the park** has begun. This will be used to scope, cost and schedule tasks so that staff will be clearer and standards will improve.

Park By-laws are being revised and updated from their 1880 origins. When they are finalised and staff have received training they will be able to enforce them and guide users.

There is always somebody in the office with **radio contact with the Park Rangers**.

Works update: There has been resurfacing in the children's playground under the swings and the aerial runway. An artificial surface has been installed on the mound around the slide. A climbing access to the slide is planned for next year. Thames Water repairs delayed the resurfacing under the pendulum swing and mains repairs near the lodge haven't yet been finished due to wet weather.

The resin bonded **pathways by the House** have cracked because of faulty installation and need to be replaced. This is big job that needs to be scheduled after the summer.

Anti-slip coatings on the two new footbridges have started flaking and will also be replaced – next week.

The **survey of the old footbridge** has been completed. Major restoration is needed and a big project is planned.

The **replacement of forty failed newly planted trees** is being staggered over several seasons to increase their survival chances.

Work continues with John and Caroline on the **restoration of the commemorative water fountain** in time for the park's 125th anniversary in July. Following the visit of John Mills the Chair of the Drinking Fountain Association, a grant of £1500 has been made to the park. Match funding from Hackney Council will allow a full restoration of the fountain and surrounding beds to be done in the coming months.

Clissold House has been very busy with 757 bookings for 16,500 people so far this year and over 140,000 transactions in the Café.

Education work with schools has also been very busy. Since April, 65 workshops have been held for 1,652 children in active sessions in the park and booking are already heavy for next year and we need lots of volunteers.

A Community Outreach programme is planned with family learning sessions during holidays

Monthly free sessions are being given for the **1 O'Clock Club**, to give its users time outside in the park. The club was highly praised by Users for its work and popularity and the meeting saw a clear need for an uplift to the building and equipment and park staff are seeking greater clarity about who is responsible for what (e.g.fencing, landscaping etc) – Eg the notice board hasn't been changed in years and does not feel welcoming. It would be great if the resource could be made available to more people for more hours a week and in school holidays. Caroline reported that the Development Board discussed this the day before and senior park staff are meeting with staff from the Learning Trust in February.

The new **Town hall gate** is installed. Although the gate was locked during November, 32,000 people still came through it! So the gap in the railings has now been welded closed.

The **New River Pump** is now repaired but is not needed while there is so much rain. Yet again the chronic need for **rubbish bins** at the Queen Elizabeth Road Gate was raised. Bruce will follow this up.

CPUG members warmly expressed their thanks and their good wishes to Eleanor (Park Manger) who is going on maternity leave.

Chair's Report

A generous **donation of £350** had been received from the Clissold Residents' Association. It will be put towards the celebrations of the Park's 125th anniversary in July. Delighted thanks were made to the Association representatives.

The Cafe has introduced some cheaper **menu** options and customer feedback is more positive.

Councillor Jonathan McShane is introducing the Council's new policy of **non-smoking areas in Hackney parks** and would like to have the first of these in Clissold. This would be enforced by signs and the influence of park users. Proposed areas will be publicised soon. The meeting unanimously supported the scheme.

The park opened on the 24th July 1889. Its **125th birthday celebrations** will be held in June and July and the availability of the Clissold House was raised. The Council is able to offer some funding support. The day would be booked with the events team. Ideas for activities over the weekend are being sought from users. A re-creation of the historic opening day photograph was suggested and the archives will be

looked at. A brass band, a Victorian family fun day, a communal picnic, a silent disco were all suggested. A sub-group will be formed to plan it. Volunteers are welcome.

The **User Group's AGM** is in March with the election of the Chair, Secretaries, Treasurer and of representatives for all park activities. All Users should consider how they might be involved and volunteers are most welcome.

The **dates of future meetings** were discussed and alternate Saturdays and Sundays at 11am would be tried.

Lots of **broken glass by the big felled chestnut tree** resulting in dogs getting cuts on their feet was reported. Bruce will ensure that regular checks are made.

Can **feeders for small birds** be reinstated? In winter they have less food and these were placed near café so that users could see them feeding. Bruce will deal with this.

There will be a full report on the **ambient noise report** at the next meeting, as part of an item on Events Policy.

Future CPUG events

Our next meeting: Sunday 2nd March 2014, 11 to 12, Clissold House

Contacts

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