



Clissold Park User Group News

Notes of our March 14th 2015 meeting

Apologies were received from: Cllr Rosemary Sales and Lorraine Worpole

Annual General Meeting

Elections

The following Group Representatives were elected unopposed:

Chair: Caroline Millar

Vice Chairs: John Hudson & Mark Foster

Secretary: Theresa Boden

Minutes' secretary: Delilah Jeary

Treasurer: Anna Gualtieri

Volunteers to represent particular groups using the park were:

Biodiversity - Richard Crawford, Children and young people - Alex Knox, Roderick Ryan and Cath Willgress, Cycling - David Pitcher, Accessibility - Antony Larvin, Dog walkers - Daphne Steele, Fundraising and events - Yvonne Hill & Hilde Oord, Music and events - Kath Willgress & Roderick Ryan, Newsletter printing - Betty Manning, Park History- Amir Dotan, Older People - Sylvia Anderson, Runners - Lee Stacy, Skaters- John Dye, Website - Isabelle Gore.

Caroline provided the **Chair's Annual Report**
View the Chair's Annual Report March 2015

The **Group's accounts** were presented by Anna and approved by the meeting they will be available on the website.

Main Meeting:

Caroline reported on the well-attended special meeting on Dogs in the park, held in the Tennis Pavilion (which has rooms available for hire) on March 4th. Although the Hackney Dog Warden had cancelled at the eleventh hour, our local community police officers were there and aided a useful discussion. Another meeting is planned in May, hopefully with the Dog Warden attending. A draft Frequently Asked Questions document is

being prepared and will be considered at the next meeting of the dog group.

Caroline also attended a Park development Board meeting on the 24th February, which had mainly covered the Café price changes and the Topmouth Gudgeon eradication (see item, below)

Bruce Irving then gave the **Park Manager's report** – including matters arising from the January Meeting.

User numbers in January were 175,000 – 2,000 more than January 2014, but in February were 172,000 - 5,000 less than last year probably because this February was much colder than last. The total for the year is still expected to exceed 3 million.

The House had been closed for 2 days to allow repainting and floor sanding in the most used areas.

The toilets will be refurbished before the summer, including an increase in the capacity of the tank supplying water. It ran dry during a particularly busy day and the House had to be closed

The main café servery had been reorganised to give more space to waiting customers and an extra till point installed in the ground floor. Further feedback on how well the Café works is welcomed.

Some minor changes to café price had been introduced with some items around 2% higher, rounded up to the next 5 pence, as well as some reductions and no increase on beverages. In answer to user feedback, cheaper crisps and drinks will be sold from the megavan in the summer as well as more expensive brands. There had been little or no customer reaction to the changes.

The Pump House had not made a profit and would be taken back from the café. Consultation

on alternative use will follow – but this must be profitable so as to make a contribution to the park's sustainable income and will be subject to an open tender process.

The café will now open each day at 8.30am
The Hackney Parks webpages now have automated reporting for park maintenance issues at: <http://www.hackney.gov.uk/parks.htm>. This has an automatic response, logging and progress reporting.

3 seasonal staff are being employed in Clissold from April the 1st and night-time litter crews in the summer

8 trees are being planted as replacements for losses of HLF funded ones.

Park staff contact numbers will go up on notice boards

The Tennis club building is in full use and will have a formal opening in April.

The tennis courts are being refurbished.

Solar battery powered guide lights will be set in the path between the clubhouse and courts.

Some young offenders will do their community service in the park Eg mulching the woodland path.

Eleanor Potter will return from maternity leave in April, to resume the Park Manager role, 3 days a week.

She will progress the consultation and planning for the development of the area behind the skate bowls.

Events planned include: Return of the children's theatre and workshop on August 27th; and possibly a fireworks and lights display in November; and a Christmas market and ice rink. Ell will also work on these with the Borough Events team.

Following the proposals prepared on behalf of the user group by its opening hours working group, the request to extend park opening hours in the mornings has been turned down. This request cannot be met at this time due to its cost implications. A formal response has been received from the Council which can be read on our website.

Night-time incursions have reduced and no further complaints received.

NB: ALL NEW INCIDENTS SHOULD BE LOGGED WITH THE POLICE SERVICE. PLEASE CALL 101

Because there have been three Cycling fatalities in Hackney since January, the Cycling Safety team were concentrating on road use and are currently not available to run 'Pit-Stop' sessions in the park, but this will be kept under review.

Bruce will be leaving the Park before the next meeting and he was warmly and thanked for all that he had done during his time at Clissold.

Lucy Gijzen, Park Development Officer, reported on the continued success of the popular **Schools Education Programme**: In 2013/2014 105 workshops were run for 2,661 students in Nursery up to year 6, from 33 schools and provided the park with income amounting to £8,500.

Teachers gave the sessions a 99% good or outstanding satisfaction rating.

The most popular sessions were 'Park Life', about the wildlife and the kept animals in the park and 'Seed Search' looking at its plant life. And 29 literacy sessions were also run by teachers.

The sessions are being reviewed to meet changes to the National Curriculum and additions on 'Orienteering' and 'Art in the Park' are planned. Also outreach sessions for older people, living for example in residential homes and for disability and minority groups.

Sessions will be run over 4 days a week instead of 3 with the help of four freelance additions to the team.

More of the popular Batwalks are planned – April's are already booked up; plus more Pond Dipping and Tree Walks and the monthly activity programme with the One O' Clock club.

The Open House, the Summer Nature Club and the Big Draw would all be run again this Summer

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED AGAIN to help with all these events and to help run the **Butterfly Dome**. Please email Lucy Gijzen (Lucy.Gijzen@hackney.gov.uk)

Last year volunteers in the park worked for 477 days or 3,339 hours! The Corporate Volunteer

scheme produced some excellent work such as the refurbishment of the park's benches and the park also receives income for providing corporate volunteering opportunities.

The interesting idea of 'Micro Volunteering' was being explored, which would give people the chance to do quick jobs in short time slots such as litter picking or weeding.

The team had also gained the Learning Outdoors Quality Badge and had new re- designed uniforms

From the Environment Agency, Fisheries Officers **Neil Winters with George Horne** reported on the **eradication of Topmouth Gudgeon** from the lakes.

The eradication of this invasive species by 2017 is a national environmental target, set to safeguard native species and habitats from its super-abundance and disease carrying threats. 18 of the 21 identified sites have now been cleared by using a chemical which inhibits gill function at a cellular level but is entirely harmless to any other species.

Nevertheless, there has been careful monitoring of the amounts of the piscicide in the park's lakes, which have quickly reduced to tiny amounts and it are expected to have entirely disappeared by the 21st March. All fences and signs will be removed and a further sampling test made in September.

As a result of this the EA team has removed a staggering *one hundred thousand* gudgeon (at all stages of growth) from the two lakes – none were present in the New River.

Very regrettably, this action also killed all other fish in the lakes and some 220 kgms of various species were also recovered, including Roach, Carp and Goldfish, all of which had been put into the lake over the years without permission or consideration for the their effect on the lake's ecology. It was not possible to save these.

The park now has to decide what will be done with the lakes. Without fish, their waters will become clear and plant growth and invertebrate species will flourish and diversify. Fish eating birds will go elsewhere (probably to the nearby East Reservoir) but other species will find homes there.

If the lakes were re-stocked with fish, they would have an effect on invertebrates and amphibian

species and must be managed, perhaps by allowing angling; but in some way a balance in the environment must be maintained.

The decision will be for the Park's management to decide in consultation with users, but in any case fish could not be re-introduced until next winter. Park users must also be made aware of the potential dangers of dumping unwanted fish into open water. The sale of topmouth gudgeon has already been banned in the UK.

Bruce confirmed that there would be consultation on the issue and Neil offered the EA's advice and support in doing this.

The meeting thanked Neil and George for coming and for all their work in the park.

Other Business:

Park 'Phone App. Ken is still seeking help in progressing the design of this information aid and guide.

DO YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW HAVE THE SKILLS TO HELP? Contact us!

Sylvia asked if any more thought had been given to putting a stage in the Bowling Green area. Bruce said that it couldn't be funded at present but would be kept in mind as part of a future review of the Pavilion's uses.

The next CP UG meeting will be in Clissold House on Saturday the 9th May 2015

Contacts

Park Keepers: 0208 3566834. This connects to a mobile.

Park Manager: bruce.iring@hackney.gov.uk
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Café Manager: Paul Mason

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Clissold House Room booking Emma Finch
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Lead Councillor for Parks:

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Clissold Safer Neighbourhood Team 020 8721 2923