



Clissold Park User Group News

Notes of our July 11th 2015 meeting

18 park users, 10 CPUG reps and Park Manager Eleanor Potter were at the meeting.

Items from last meeting

Dangerous Cycling by a minority of cyclists continued to be a serious concern. A few days before, while putting a lead on her guide dog, a visually impaired user had been knocked over by cyclist who then subjected her to verbal abuse. This had frequently happened and the user now felt so unsafe that she was reluctant to come to the park - the only place that her dog could be exercised off a lead. Others agreed that this problem was getting worse and that more action was needed.

It was agreed that bike usage needed to be monitored and volunteers would be needed.

A '**Pit Stop**' event in the park was being organised by Hackney Council, promoting considerate cycling and offering maintenance and safety help and advice. **Post meeting note – proposed date for this initial event is 29 July 2015, 4-7pm.**

Micro Volunteering – no volunteers had come forward yet but the scheme had had a soft launch, and would be publicised again in September with a press release.

The **Butterfly Dome** has extra opening hours on a Sunday morning. There are 5 tours per week (Monday 11am, Tuesday 5pm, Friday 4pm, Saturday 1pm and Sunday 10.30am)

School students' behaviour in the park: Eleanor had emailed SN School about controlling behaviour on the last day of term (Friday 17 July) and will also be asking the Park Neighbourhood Wardens to be in the park on that Friday afternoon.

Lee had seen considerate behaviour by SN students, clearing their litter as they left. He has been trying to make contact with the school but

has no reply to any emails. A meeting with someone from the school should be arranged in the autumn to maintain considerate behaviour.

Praise for the park A very long standing park user who had been away for a few years commented on the massive improvements to the park over the past few years which she felt were very noticeable. The park management team, the park staff and the user group were congratulated for their efforts.

Report by Park Manager Eleanor Potter

Park visitor numbers continue to rise. 351,887 came to the park in May; 329,000 in May 2014 and 287,000 in May 2013. This increase is impacting on the park's fabric and facilities.

Former Park Manager Michael Dixon had returned to take over the park's **horticultural and grounds maintenance**. Progress had been made on horticultural standards. Plans for the autumn included: - closing gaps in hedges, improving the planting in the pleasure ground (beside Clissold House); repairing fencing, railings and the lakes' oxidation fountains. Log seats in the outdoor classroom would be replaced and its layout reconfigured.

There would be an autumn planting of approx. **25,000 bulbs** (bluebells narcissus etc) which could prompt a community planting day. 20th September or later was suggested. EP would check

We were sorry to lose our long serving and very experienced gardener George Walker to a one year secondment at London Fields.

The Running Survey had 168 responses of whom 88% were satisfied with the park and 77% prefer a woodchip to a tarmac surface. EP will analyse the comments and report further.

Vandalism had returned to the park. The paddling pool sealant had been systematically

removed overnight on Saturday and the pool could not be used until repaired, costing approx. £1,000. But it was reopened on the day of the meeting. EP and her staff were thanked for responding so quickly.

The Commemorative fountain had again been vandalised and protective options were being considered.

Small scale repairs were to be done in the **play area**. The new playground maintenance regime for a weekly full clean and repair closes it for 2hrs on Monday but seems to be working well.

Both **New River pumps** were being restored, they both need regular servicing.

There had been repeated and serious problems with **Toilet Closures**. Clissold House water tank is too small for current peak usage and when emptied takes an hour to refill. This affects all of the water supply to the house. Professional advice had been sought and an additional tank needed to be installed, which is a complex and expensive project, hopefully completed in time for next summer. Meanwhile options will be explored for temporary toilets to be provided on the hardstanding area near the house over the summer holidays, but are likely to be costly.

The **Pump house** had returned to the Council's control but would remain closed over the summer. Tenders would be invited in the autumn and there were no expectations as to what its new use would be although it needed to be of some benefit to the park.

The Café was now opening at 8:30am and closing at 7pm when the weather was good.

Book People would be holding a low priced book sale on Friday 24th July from 10 to 2, and were particularly good value for children's books.

Tickets were still available for the **Concert at Clissold House** on Thursday 16th July.

Capital funding for **railings and fences** had become available, some to replace the temporary chestnut palings.

Deer manager and Vet Peter Green had visited and had been very pleased with the deer. A report would be made at the next meeting, together with a general update on the park's animals.

Events in the Park: Since last meeting there had been the DayMer Festival; Carter's Steam Fair and the Friends Together event. The excessive late noise heard the previous weekend came from the Wireless Festival in Finsbury Park. The DayMer festival stopped at 8pm

A user complained that there had been no disabled access to the Anatolian festival site. EP would inform the Hackney Events team.

CPUG events

The SN Literary Festival event run by us was very successful with 75 people attending.

The fundraising quiz sold out and raised almost £1000

A music event was held on 2nd July from 7- 9pm. Approx 150 people attended. They loved it but we did not have enough volunteer stewards on the day.. It cost £260 in total and it raised £50 in donations. More of these events would be planned, with more advanced publicity.

Complaints and Concerns – received since our last meeting

A (multiple) dog walker had been aggressively rude to someone who complained that they had not 'scooped up' after their dog. Enforcement Officers can have dogs put on a lead if their fouling is not controlled by their walker

Reports of cannabis being smoked around the paddling pool were passed to the police

Park staff had been verbally abused prior to the paddling pool being opened and before chlorine (bleach) tablets had been added to the water and had safely dissolved. Some people had been letting their children enter the pool whilst the gate was locked and before the chemicals had fully dissolved despite safety warnings from staff. It was agreed that it would be helpful to provide some written information explaining the risks involved in this behaviour. Action will be taken against those who persist in doing this as well as against those who abuse park staff.

Plans for the Lakes

Eleanor Potter's report on options for developing the wildlife and natural environment of the lakes had been published on the CPUG website and would be considered by Park Users to look at. A

decision would to be made in September and plant and/or fish life stocking would take place over the winter. The meeting agreed that this process was 'a consultation not a referendum' and that park management needed to take into consideration not only the wishes and suggestions of park users but also cost implications and the best plan for the general environment of the park on the basis of evidence and the policies in place in the borough.

Once again a plea was made for some kind of water provision for cleaning and cooling dogs after their visit to the park. The possible form, location and cost of this would be given more thought.

Our next meeting will be in Clissold House from 11-12 on Saturday the 12th September 2015