



Clissold Park User Group News

Notes of our January 9th 2016 meeting

Notes of the Meeting on Saturday 9th January 2016

Apologies were received from Amir Dotan, Mark Forsyth, Hilde Oord, Delilah Jeary and a speaker from **Growing Communities**, who have offered to be at our next meeting.

From the last meeting

Proposals to display photographs and names of park staff have been put to their Trades Union.

The antique wooden benches under the bay windows of the garden café will not be relocated.

It is not Hackney policy to charge and licence professional users in the park (e.g. dog walkers, personal trainers) although some other Boroughs do this. The issue of personal liability, insurance provision etc., was raised and will be looked into.

Park Manager's report – from Elle Potter

The park continues to be very well used and **maintenance work** is planned such as resurfacing and fencing repairs.

Tree roots have caused significant damage to the drains serving the **One O'clock Club** which need to be repaired urgently and will include building a new soak-away.

The Play Area has suffered heavy flooding which will take a bit of time to resolve as its drains need to be rodded and cleaned. The seat on the aerial slide has disappeared and must be replaced before it is put back into use. The sandpit will be topped up and cleaned.

Playground safety was enquired about after a tragic equipment failure in another London park. Site staff are trained and undertake detailed safety inspections weekly, as well as general daily checks. In addition, an external company with play safety expertise undertakes extremely detailed checks quarterly and annually using specialist equipment, including a radar testing regime to check the structural integrity of wooden equipment as necessary.

Ponds – we still await the Environment Agency report which will inform our discussions about possible re-stocking. Bird populations appear to have improved since the ponds were cleared of fish.

A **New Head Gardener** arrives in February and will focus on improvements to the park's maintenance regimes.

The **water supply problems** in Clissold House are being examined by consultants and a (potentially costly) solution is hoped will be in place by April, ready for the summer.

The **Schools programme** continues to be busy, with increased bookings for the winter / spring terms. Feedback continues to be very positive and demand high so extra freelance staff are being trained.

The **Activities programme** also continues to be popular and the new season's programme is being finalised. A small charge may be added to help sustain this popular programme.

Procurement of a new operator for the **Pump House** continues and requests for proposals should go out in February. Please let people know about this and tell them to contact Elle Potter if interested.

We are four years into the HLF five year funding programme (i.e. until March 2017) so **Long term, strategic planning** for Clissold Park is an urgent priority; most importantly the continuation and sustainability of education and activity programmes in an extremely difficult financial situation. These issues will be discussed at the Clissold Park Development Board in February.

Report on the Park's Animals

Deer Enclosure - The Council is working with the RSPCA and deer experts to solve the problems with fox incursions, including possible improvements to the fence. There is a limited period during which foxes can be moved so it is now likely that the foxes will be left in the enclosure through the summer. In the meantime we are monitoring the situation closely.

Goats - Bob & Dylan are regularly monitored by vets and are very healthy (and very large!).

Chickens - Sadly three of our five chickens were lost when a fox got into their enclosure. These will be replaced, but new birds need to be introduced carefully.

Butterfly Dome - With 5,947 visitors this year the butterfly dome was again a great success. Expert advice has been taken from the butterfly specialist who manages displays at sites such as the Natural History Museum and a number of improvement requirements have been identified, including changes to planting, heating and ventilation. A very useful total of more than £800 was donated this year. There were enough volunteers to run extra tours but we always need more so do let us know if you're interested.

Birds - There are 26 birds in the aviary but as previously reported many are very old - some over twenty! They were donated from various sources, but are currently not being replaced. The future of the aviary needs to be considered and will be discussed with park users.

Overall – Our animals are cared for under detailed animal welfare and management plans, subject to regular inspection under the terms of our zoo licence exemption. We do need to think carefully about the future of the animal collection at Clissold Park. Whilst there is absolutely no intention of removing them, their long term sustainability and welfare costs need be planned for.

Complaints – none had been received since early November last year.

Points raised with the Park Manager by the meeting:

- Future plans for the animals should be linked with biodiversity education etc.
- Part of the lake railings has been damaged by a falling tree and needs repair.
- Resurfacing needed at the Church and QE Walk gates to stop big puddles forming
- Some of the Lake aerator fountains needed repair and their pipes reburying
- The litter bins should be emptied at closing time to stop the mess made by foxes overnight.

Park Events Scheduled for 2016

27 March	Kurdish New Year
18-30 April	Mannings Fairground
5-8 May	Circus Fantasia
23 May- 2 June	Anatolian Festival
21-27 June	Carters Steam Fair
2-4 July	Daymer Festival
15-18 July	Yoruba Festival

CPUG Chair's Report – by Caroline Millar

CPUG Park Events

The Christmas market was well run and much enjoyed. The CPUG stall was very successful with £135 taken from the sale of postcards and the generous donation by Ken Worpole of copies of his new book. We will run a stall again next Christmas.

Group reps will meet on the 18th January to begin planning the CPUG funded events in the park during 2016:

- Providing a venue for the Literary Festival in June
- Two Sunday afternoon lectures held in Clissold House on local history subjects – e.g's a history of the house, with slideshow; Mary Wollstonecraft; Abolitionists.
- Three or four Thursday evening musical events in the café garden
- Guided walks – co-ordinated with the Hackney events team
- Drawing walks
- Tea dances
- Open House day
- A community event for children and families

CPUG Fundraising Projects

Our efforts will initially be on providing extra swings in the play area and a new drinking fountain at the Lodge entrance. These will also be discussed on the 18th.

Complaints and Concerns Received (Standing Item)

Vehicles in the park are being driven too fast
Dog walker numbers 'out of control'
Dogs being let to go into the river – this is bad, especially during the birds' breeding season.

The next meeting will be on Saturday the 12th March 2016 at 11am

It's our Annual General Meeting so contact us to find out how you can help keep Clissold Park at its best. Or just come along on the 12th of March.

We meet on the second Saturday of alternate months

2016 Dates are: 12 March, 14 May, 9 July, 10 September and 12 November