



Clissold Park User Group News

Notes of our September 11th 2016 meeting

Attending: Caroline Millar (chair), Mark Forsyth (Vice Chair) Teresa Boden (Secretary), Amir Dotan (Park History), Daphne Steele (dogs and walk), Lee Stacey (Running), Richard Crawford (Biodiversity) Delilah Jeary (Minutes). Approximately 10 further park users. Laurence Pinturault, Interim Park Manager

Apologies: John Hudson, Ken and Lorraine Worpole, Isabelle Gore

Future funding and running of the park

The 5 year HLF revenue funding ceases at the end of 2016 and we are likely to see overall reductions in funding from the Council as they respond to pressures in other areas. The running of Clissold House reverted from GLL to Hackney Council in early September and the Hackney Venues team has made a number of changes since taking over. It is likely that there will be fewer staff in the house and there will be periods when the office is not staffed. Further decisions about future funding and running of the park are expected after the Hackney Mayoral election.

CPUG is being consulted on any new budgets and new proposals. The immediate impact of the loss of HLF funding is the departure of the Park Development Officer (Lucy Gijzen) who ran the volunteering and schools' programmes. Both are currently suspended pending further decisions. The park manager post will also be reviewed as it too is partly funded by the HLF.

In order to increase the income generated in the park, high value commercial events of an appropriate scale will be considered. Community events will continue but there are likely to be more events which bring in some revenue such as the fairs held at Christmas and in May and September 2016. It was agreed that it was important that all events must be appropriate for the park, and not damage the general user's experience. CPUG will continue to press for maintenance and safety to be the top spending priorities.

Park Manager's report - Laurence

Following the departure of the Development Officer, the **schools programme** has stopped. A new post covering several sites is being considered, with funding being sought for three years

IT upgrades are being made in the office to enable it to be integrated with the Hackney Venues team. The House **water supply** improvement work is on schedule and monitoring of the water supply will continue. Once that is seen to be adequate, the portaloos will go. It is hoped that the resultant increased water pressure may help address some of the plumbing issues in the toilets. The provision of drinking fountains is being re-assessed across the borough. We expect to see work on the Beck memorial fountain and a new drinking fountain at the Lodge gate. CPUG fundraising will begin once the best model has been identified.

Fox-proofing of the **deer enclosure** is continuing and foxes will be removed once the work is complete. The foxes will be relocated to another area of the park.

CPUG needs to raise £10k for new small **play area swings**. We are re-looking for people with young children to take forward this project.

The **padding pool** will continue to be open during any hot weather until the end of September.

Volunteers are needed for bulb planting during October – details to follow.

A tenant business is still being sought for The **Pump House**. Small businesses appropriate to the park will be considered.

There will be a new **Park Survey** - details of how to complete it will follow

There has been a reduction in **anti-social behaviour** around the house after **intervention** by community officers. Dog control enforcement officers have been in attendance in the park on a number of occasions. They have talked to a number of dog walkers and **warnings** have been issued to owners with dogs not

under proper control, and those allowing dog fouling. Further targeted intervention days are planned.

A scam by children asking for money for 'a boxing club in Clapton' has been reported. Anyone asking for money must be asked for id proof such as a website or charity number.

Only one chicken is now left in its **bird enclosure**, which needs repair. Should the focus be on larger animals, or on rabbits? The future of animals in the park in general needs to be discussed.

The use of the **Butterfly Dome** also needs consideration. There are four options:

1. To reopen as a tropical dome. This incurs £6-8k running costs annually to manage temperature and humidity, and to source and nurture pupae. This also requires use of pesticides. It is attractive and popular with the public but is it sustainable?
2. To re-open as a commercial venture, managed by a garden centre or ??ZSL??. Entry would be charged, so it would generate income, but is commercialisation in the park what we want?
3. Become a British butterfly dome with only native species and self-seeding plants. This is low cost and easy to run, educational and ecologically favourable.
4. Close the dome and put the area out to tender for another use.

The meeting generally preferred the native species option.

Biodiversity rep Richard Crowthorn asked if we are paying enough attention to the main asset of the park: the nature itself. Is park management keeping its focus on biodiversity? An ecological plan is needed, managing for wildlife. LP agreed to meet Richard to discuss this before the next meeting and will report back.

LP is an ecologist by training and is organising a meeting with biodiversity manager to discuss seed and bulb mixes, trees, mowing regime, etc. Cost savings have to be made and this could be an opportunity to increase wildlife. Will also meet the Tree Officer, but there is currently no budget for tree planting.

Rats have been seen around the lakes, taking cover in the vegetation and new signs may be needed against dropping bread, which leads to an increased rat population

Some users worry about getting stung by **wasps** from nests in decaying trunks and rotting stumps in the park. Others saw these as good for insect biodiversity as long as any wasps' nests are dealt with promptly. Should the **excavated flower bed** in the rose garden be replaced with grass? The meeting wanted the bed restored, maybe with less high maintenance planting.

Summer Evening Music Events on 7 and 14 July were widely attended thanks to good publicity. The Cafe stayed open late. London Speaker Hire provided equipment at a 50 discount and the cafe cover this cost. CPUG paid the performers, didn't make a profit although – cost after sponsorship and donations was £350 paid for by Quiz Evening profits. The meeting felt this was money well spent by creating a friendly atmosphere that attracted a diverse audience into the park.

Warm thanks to Theresa for her very hard work.

The user group is against commercial **foraging** workshops in the park. People shouldn't take anything out of the park, including food. There isn't a formal policy in Hackney, but one is being developed.

Other discussion:

Lawrence - a park user runs a **fitness project**, working with people out of work, keeping people healthy and fit and job ready. The Transformers run free 'Boot Camps' in Hyde Park and Clapham and are looking for a location in NE London

Lee asked if the proposed **workout equipment** is going to happen. CM responded that it's part of CPUG's long term fundraising plans

Work on the **damaged metal railings** is being 'snagged'. Capping still needed.

Why is **New River** not flowing? A problem with the pump - which is being looked at.

Events in the Park

Open air Cinema 11 and 12 September, **Harvest Moon Festival** 16 to 18 September - similar to the summer event.

Open House 22 September - Amir is presenting a talk at on the founding of Clissold Park at 2pm and 3pm. Caroline and John will be running guided tours of the House

Fireworks 5 November. Tickets on sale online.

Next meeting: Saturday 12th November