



Clissold Park User Group News

Notes of our January 14th 2017 meeting

At the Meeting

User Group reps and officers: Caroline Millar (Chair), Mark Forsyth (vice chair), John Hudson (vice chair present for part of the meeting), Theresa Boden, Ken Worpole, Isabelle Gore.

Hackney Council: Laurence Pinturault (Park Manager), Christine Rupprecht (Hackney Venues), Nick Thompson (Events), Ernie?) Park Ranger.

Plus around eight other park users.

Apologies received from Sophie Cameron and Lee Stacy.

Matters Arising from November 2016 meeting

Memorial trees: the fund in memory of Arthur and Christine Disney has raised £865. 3 new trees have been bought and will be planted soon.

Maps and info: we have found an illustrator and are talking to the Council to see if they will help fund the production of our pocket maps of the park and info boards in the park.

CPUG activities: we ran a stall at the Christmas Market which raised £300 for the new swings. The proposed celebration of 5 years since the HLF project completion has been postponed.

Biodiversity - the discussion paper which came to the last meeting has been amended in light of our comments and suggestions and has now been posted on the CPUG website.

Bird Walks: Ernie (park ranger) has offered to organise a weekend bird walk.

Life drawing – representatives of the life drawing class in Clissold House, who had come to the November meeting to raise concerns about the lack of storage for their materials, attended the meeting to repeat their concerns. Since the last meeting CLR Mete Coban and the Vice Chair (JH) have been around the houses with staff to explore the possibilities. JH reported that although he was sympathetic to the fact

that they did not want to have to bring their equipment with them for each session, he felt that it was very clear that there was insufficient space in the house to offer storage to all groups hiring rooms. Previously equipment had been stored in electricity cupboards and offices but this was no longer considered practical or safe. An interim solution of space in the empty vault had been offered but had been turned down by the group because it was too damp. The group felt strongly that a cupboard should be installed for their use somewhere in the House and suggested the drawing room as a possible location. It was pointed out that this room was used regularly for weddings and other commercial bookings and needed to be kept empty for this reason.

Christine Rupprecht from Hackney Venues acknowledged that a number of ad hoc arrangements had grown up over the last five years with regard to room rental leading to special arrangements being in place for some groups. In order to help address the significant deficit the house is running, the Council has decided that as of 2017 all groups should be subject to the same rules and pay full charges. Christine Rupprecht accepted that some of the communication with groups renting rooms had been less than ideal when Hackney Venues had taken over in September and apologised for this. The group has now moved to another venue.

The broader issues of room hire need to be considered in the wider context of the future sustainability of Clissold House (see below). This was to be discussed at the park Development Board meeting on 16 January 2017 which would be attended by four of the group's elected officers.

Park Manager's Report

The permanent park manager, Elle Potter, is returning from maternity leave in March. There will be a handover from the interim manager (LP).

Laurence is pulling together the final report for the HLF and will be submitting the final invoice. The HLF funding ceased at the end of December 2016.

A **new water tank** has been installed under the pleasure garden. This will address the problems the park has had over the last few years and, it is hoped, remove the need for portaloos in the summer. The flower beds will be reinstated.

Anti-social behaviour in and around Clissold House was reported to have increased. Significant damage has been done to the fabric of the house through vandalism. Partnership working with the school and the Youth Service has been established to try to find solutions to this problem. It was agreed that the Chair would write to Stoke Newington School to ask them to consider if any more can be done with regard to litter left behind at lunchtimes and the behaviour of a small number of students after school. It was recognised that the young people causing problems were from other schools as well as Stoke Newington School. **Action Chair to write to SNS.**

Seven new deer have arrived and six old deer have been retired to Devon. Both sets of deer seem happy with their new arrangements. The deer enclosure is now fox proof and fox free.

The incident involving a **dog attacking a cygnet** at the end of 2016 was reported to the police but they took no further action. The RSPCA was informed but did not get involved. The Council's enforcement team is following up the information they have been about the identity of the owners/walkers of the dog in question.

Events

Nick Thompson outlined the events that are planned for the park in 2017. Dates will be put up on the CPUG website as soon as they are confirmed.

Nick thanked all the CPUG volunteers for their help on the **Fireworks evening**. Some people had felt the fireworks themselves were not loud or dramatic enough but there was a need to take account of the well-being of the animals. Others had fed back that they were very good for younger children for the same reasons. Further consideration is being given to improving the ticketing process and access to the park (more gates should be open to deal with the high numbers arriving in the last 15 minutes before the start time).

Christmas Market feedback: Main concerns had been about clarity around which gates were open and shut after dark. CPUG has had some feedback at the event and afterwards about the prices of some of the activities such as Santa and the fairground rides. Some people felt there were too many food stalls. This has been fed back to the events team and to the market contractors (the Market Square Group).

The Chair reminded the group that there is a formal consultation process for every event and that events need to adhere to the agreed events policy for the park. If the policy is no longer being taken into account we need to look at it again and confirm what we think is reasonable in terms of the sorts of events, their duration etc **Action: Chair to check whether policy still being observed.**

The future sustainability of Clissold House

Christine Rupprecht, Hackney Venues General Manager, reported that Hackney Venues took over responsibility for running the House from GLL in September 2016. Clissold House has been making a significant loss for several years. The costs of staffing, maintenance and security are because of its very heavy use and the fact that it is open to the public most of the time. Commercial rates are charged for weddings etc and the house therefore has to be maintained to a high standard (for example damaged paintwork has to be repainted, floors require polishing, toilets have to be cleaned and checked and vandalised units replaced.) In order to reduce the current deficit and ensure that affordable community use of the space can still be provided, it is essential that the Clissold House starts to generate significantly more money and that savings are found. This will mean some changes to the way the house is run and managed. The Chair asked that CPUG be consulted and involved in any proposed changes.

Future funding of the park

The Chair pointed out that parks are not statutory services and the Council budgets are under significant pressure at present. Some difficult choices will have to be made in relation to both Clissold House and the park itself. CPUG has asked the Council to provide more information about the financial aspects of the running of the house and the park in order to help local people understand the challenges facing the Council and be part of the conversation about what needs to happen. The Council has agreed to prepare a briefing paper and present it to a future CPUG meeting.

Fundraising

Our crowd funding to pay for three new swings for the playground will go live this week and we will start to promote it in the next few weeks.

<https://www.spacehive.com/stokeyswingsinclissoldpark>

Next CPUG meeting:

Saturday 11th March 2017

11am to 12 noon. **AGM and meeting.** AGM is from 11-11.15, followed by the meeting. Elections for reps will take place.

Venue: Clissold House, Clissold Park.

Contacts

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

Interim Park Manager:

Laurence.pinturault@hackney.gov.uk or call 020 8356 4958

Café Management: clissoldhouse@capergreen.com

Room booking and house tours (GLL): Emma Finch
clissoldhouse@gll.com or call 020 7249 2308

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Lead Councillor for Parks:

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Police: 0208 721 2923 / 07879 603106 /

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Seargent in charge: Sue Wright

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Clissold Safer Neighbourhood Team: 020 8721 2923