**CPUG Biodiversity notes; based on the Clissold Park Biodiversity Report for Clissold Park User Group presented on Saturday 12th November 2016 by Laurence Pinturault .**

*There were lots of positive suggestions in the Biodiversity report but not much will get done unless we push for it!*

**The Context.**

Hackney Council Biodiversity plan 2012-2016 supports biodiversity in the borough.

Conservation and biodiversity is priority no3 in Parks Management.

Some species are singled out for special attention: Priority Species -Dunnock (Hedge Accentor), Song Thrush, Spotted flycatcher, Common starling and House sparrow; ‘Flagship species’ - include Stag Beetles and Green Woodpeckers. And ‘Target Species’ include Slow worm, Blackthorn, Song thrush, Common blue butterfly, bats and the Seraphim moth.

**The Action plan (*My comments in italics*)**

- Following the plan, the mowing regime has been ‘relaxed ‘ at the top and bottom ends of the park, to create areas with longer grass:

“Less frequent mowing allows herbs and grasses to flower and set seed, thus providing a foraging resource. Increased floral diversity and density attracts species, including pollinators, such as butterflies and bees.”

… *this is a great start!*

- Wildflower meadows have been planted by the New River and along the walk to the Pump House*.… and a suggestion has been made to plant more water lilies in the New River.*

- Recent large-scale pruning resulted in the loss of habitats for bats and woodland birds (the song thrush, Green woodpecker and bats are all Priority or Flagship species). The cut-down timber has been left to provide insect habitats. … *This is a step backwards for biodiversity*. *Replacement broad-leaf trees should be planted to ensure succession and new shrubs planted along the running track at the bottom end of the park to provide cover and nest sites for small birds.*

- Laurence suggested new planting:

Herbs on the mounds beside the skate boarding area, wetland plants besides the ponds and bur-reed, flag iris and sedge along the water margins. *… These will look great and the plants around the ponds will provide cover for ducklings that are predated each year by black-headed gulls*.

- the islands in both ponds provide suitable breeding sites for wildfowl and should be managed accordingly. *... rats must be trapped and removed from the site. Shelters for wildfowl might be considered to protect vulnerable chicks for extreme temperatures and predators..*

- The absence of fish (removed completely to get rid of top mouth gudgeon – an invasive species - a year ago) has led to the absence of herons, common terns and cormorants from the park … *consideration should be given to re-stocking one of the ponds with fish to increase bio-diversity.*

- The beds on the bowling green need replanting and tidying up … *this is a job for volunteers!*

- “The butterfly dome and area around the dome will be planned and re-developed from spring 2017 as a native butterfly area - Seraphin moth, Common Blue, Letter Hairstreak, Wall Butterfly and Small heath as target species”. *… Why not hatch native species in the butterfly dome incubator (as exotic species were hatched last year), and leave the top vents of the dome open so that they can breed in the park?*

- rats, terrapins and knotweed a must be controlled … *an on-going problem.*

- Interpretation boards that carry information about biodiversity will encourage public awareness of biodiversity in the park … for example:

- Tree species in the park

- Insect species in the woods

- Wildfowl species on the ponds

- butterfly species in the dome

- Wildflower species in the wildflower meadows

- Dragonflies and demoiselle flies on the New River

… *and possibly in addition,*

- A recent sightings board by the house for birdwatchers to add their sightings (some sort of security would be needed to prevent graffiti).

- A council map of green spaces in the borough and how they can be accessed.

*Funding will probably not be available for interpretation boards; this means fundraising.*

**Anyone interested in helping to put together a biodiversity action plan for CPUG, please let Mark know and I will convene a meeting to look at all these issues in August.**

Thanks!

Richard Crawford