

Clissold Park User Group September/October 2011



Paddling pool 29 September 2011

Attendees:

Caroline Millar (Chair), Richard Logan (Vice Chair), Matthew Jeary (Minutes Sec) Sylvia Anderson (Older People's Rep) Mark Forsyth (Dog Rep) Lisa Gormley (Children and Young People's Rep) Linda Smith (Councillor), Daniel Stevens (Councillor) Plus 35 other park users.

Apologies:

Ken Worpole, John Hudson, Cllr Aussenberg, Cllr Mitchell.

Minutes of previous meeting

Sylvia Anderson asked that the previous minutes be amended as she had not asked for a stage in the pavilion area but rather a small raised area where children could perform.

David Woodhead

The newly appointed Asst. Director of Health and Wellbeing introduced himself as the council representative at this meeting.

Dogs

CPUG wanted to open up a debate around dogs and whether there should or should not be a "code of conduct" for dogs and dog walkers in the park. John Hudson had drawn up a paper seeking views about dogs and dog walking in the park which was circulated at the July meeting and posted on the website. In summary, the paper enshrined the rights of dogs to roam safely in the park, clarified the

rights and responsibilities of dog walkers with regard to considerate behaviour towards other park users and the responsibilities of park users in general towards dogs. Some suggestions were made in the paper as to the need for dogs to be kept on leads if they could not be controlled, in particular around the upper cafe area (on the river side of the house) and at entrances to the park.

Eleven written responses were received, eight of which supported the general principles, and three of which objected to certain aspects of the proposals. Mark Forsyth, dog rep for CPUG, had also been talking to dog walkers about their thoughts and fed these back to the meeting.

Dog walkers at the meeting were clear that they did not want any more restrictions in terms of an increase in the number of dog-free areas or areas where dogs must be kept on leads (although there was support in principle for some new restrictions from most of the written responses received). Dog walkers did not want a "code of conduct" related specifically to dogs because they felt this was singling them out as a group, when in fact other groups could also create potential tensions within the park (e.g. cyclists, joggers, footballers etc.)

It was felt that it was only a small minority of dog-walkers who caused problems and they were unlikely to follow a code of conduct. For the majority of responsible dog walkers it was unnecessary. Other users present made it clear that they are either scared or uncomfortable with some dogs or have had negative experiences with dogs in the park. These people said they would welcome more control and particularly supported the suggestion that dogs should be kept on leads on the café terrace (and new rose garden café).

Questions were asked about how many dog incidents occur in the park

each year and if there is a record of incidents kept by the rangers. It was felt that perhaps rangers could be more proactive in dealing with incidents involving dogs. People should be encouraged to report such incidents immediately to rangers and it would be helpful if these could be recorded and reported back to CPUG.

It was suggested that it could be useful for another survey of park usage to be carried out and for this to include questions about dogs.

The council is carrying out its own dog consultation that is not specific to the park. The Mayor of Hackney, in his manifesto, stated that he wanted all dogs on pavements to be on leads but made no mention of dogs having to be on the lead in parks. The results of this Hackney-wide consultation are yet to be published.

It was agreed that there would not be a code of conduct for dog walkers specifically but that user group officers would draw up a short "welcome" notice, from the user group, to go on the park noticeboards, addressed to ALL park users asking them to behave considerately in sharing our valued park. This will be brought to the next meeting.

In response to questions, the Chair confirmed that dogs will not be allowed in the new fenced and gated cafe area on the Church Street end of the house, even on leads.

Dog walkers requested: a place for dogs to be tied up outside the toilets; free bags at the gates or somewhere easily accessible for dog mess; effective hedging and fencing around no-dog areas.

Mark Forsyth agreed to ask the Dog Trust to run dog-training events in the park, which would be widely publicised.

It was agreed that user group officers will draw up a paper pulling together the views expressed on dogs, in writing and at the meeting and this will be posted on the website. (This is now on the website) **CM/JH/MF**

Skate Park

The skate park, although very popular, is essentially not working properly as the bowl fills with water. Engineers have now sunk bore-holes to explore the issues. The Council is awaiting the results and addressing this issue with the contractors. Graffiti continues to be an issue and divides opinion. The solution of painting over the graffiti has compromised the rolling surface so a different solution needs to be found, possibly pressure washing or using chemicals.

CPUG officers will talk to reps from the skaters' group(s) to work out the best way for skaters to be represented on CPUG and for CPUG to work with the various groups of skaters. The Chair raised the question of the best way to elicit the views of younger users of the skate park. The Chair will follow this up. **CM**

Rangers

The Rangers were initially going to be based in the house. It appears this cannot happen now because of problems with equipment in the house and it is not clear where they will be. Rangers are key to the running of the park and it is vital that they are well trained and available when needed.

David Woodhead gave assurances that he understood the importance of the ranger service to the park. The Council is in the process of completing a restructuring of the service and he expects to see marked improvements in the service. CPUG will continue to push hard on this, as it is essential to the future success of the park. This will be discussed further at the next meeting.

Security

Concerns are that the house and bowling green pavilion are very vulnerable to vandalism – the Council has agreed that CCTV will be needed and this will be installed shortly.

Café

Café will be open at the latest by December but hopefully earlier. (**STOP PRESS** – house and café likely to open in early January)

Toilets

Toilets will be open week beginning 5th September.

House and Park Manager

Recruitment for this post will start soon.

Muggings in park

There were worries over children being mugged in the park. There needs to be urgent thought about how children can feel safe in the park. Work to be done with local schools, community support police and possibly an outreach ranger?

Action: the local Safer

Neighbourhoods team to be contacted and invited to next meeting. Councillor Smith offered to do this. **CS/CM**

Contacts:

Park Rangers:

020 8356 6834

This connects to a mobile

Park Manager:

michael.dixon@hackney.gov.uk

Council Officer for Parks:

Colin.stuart@hackney.gov.uk

Parks Development Officer

eleanor.johnson@hackney.gov.uk

Police: 020 8721 2923

or 07879 603106

Clissold.snt@met.police.uk

Sergeant in charge:

Sue.C.Wright@met.pnn.police.uk

To join the Clissold Park User Group

Email: clissoldpug@googlemail.com

Website: <http://www.clissoldpark.com>

Join our Facebook Page

Or just come to our bi-monthly meetings!

Next meeting of CPUG:

November 12th 2011 11am

(not 5th as originally advertised).

New Church Rooms, St Mary's Church

ALL WELCOME!

Agenda will include: Rangers, Safety in the park, emptying of rubbish bins, wording of CPUG welcome notice.