

# CLISSOLD PARK USER GROUP

NEWSLETTER AND MINUTES OF MEETINGS

**January/February 2009**



**Next meeting: Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2009  
Annual General Meeting 11 am to Noon  
Red Room in rear of Clissold House Café**

With many changes and new things happening in Clissold Park (lottery bid decision coming up soon) make sure that YOUR views are heard, This is also your opportunity to elect officers for the year. The meetings of this group are the main forum for airing public concerns about the way the Park is funded, managed and developed in the future. Whatever your main interest in the Park (playground, children, trees, wildlife, fun, football, tennis, running,...) you can influence future developments

To join the Clissold Park User Group (CPUG) mailing list and for this newsletter by email, contact [clissoldpug@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:clissoldpug@yahoo.co.uk)  
Or see [www.clissoldpark.com](http://www.clissoldpark.com)

**Minutes of meeting 10<sup>th</sup> January 2009**

Chaired by Ken Worpole

List of those present available on request

WE WERE VERY PLEASED TO WELCOME TO THE MEETING **JOHN WADE**, RECENTLY APPOINTED **DIRECTOR OF PARKS**.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING:**

**Lottery Bid** has gone in and in about 5 months time we will know whether or not there is about £8.9M to use for Park and House restoration (HLF+matched funding from Hackney). There is scope for refinement of plans, not all is set

irrevocably in stone. There are some contentious elements identified by CPUG: e.g the fact that neither 3QEW or the 10'clock Club building are part of the plans for the whole Park. CPUG had misgivings about the business plan but, although we did not see the details, a brief look suggested that there had been positive modifications. We remain very concerned about the plan to have separate managers for Park and House – this is a missed opportunity and could result in unhelpful divisions of resources and plans eg re events. Business plan is available on Hackney website. All costings will be rigorously scrutinised by Heritage Lottery Fund panel and unrealistic elements will be rejected. CPUG did send a letter of support for the bid but with some provisions e.g. that consultation continues. (letter available on website)

**Shelters in Park:** youth and older people have stated need for sheltered places to gather/sit and CPUG favours such provision for all.

**Café:** Noted with regrets that Café prices have gone up while quality has come down.

**Director of Parks John Wade spoke about new structure and future development of Parks under his leadership:**

At last, **Park Rangers** come under same management as other Park staff so that Clissold Park Manger (Michael Dixon) is now in charge of gardeners and Rangers. More sensible organisation of rangers, so that one team of rangers will work at weekends and in weekdays (previously experienced rangers worked in week leaving weekend cover to temporary staff to care for Park at busiest times). There is a **Park Strategy** for Hackney and for Clissold, the strategy includes: delivering the Lottery Fund bid, getting **3e Queen Elizabeth's Walk** used, hopefully for the **Hackney Tennis Club**, highly rated by Lawn Tennis Association who are working in partnership with Hackney to get the club office into 3QEW – the funding for this is reliant on '106' arrangement to be confirmed in February – ie that some new local building developments will have included a sum for spending on a community benefit development. HFL bid architect has been asked to propose a plan and quote (to have some joined up thinking – that will make a change!); **Sports development** officers will think about linking up leisure centres, green spaces and sports groups across Hackney.

**Questions and answers:**

This all sounds good and very encouraging but is this all management talk? How does it happen in practice? What links with real people? Pointed out by some present that real

contact with real park users is minimal. John Wade replied that he will ensure that area managers and development officers will attend our meetings and will link with people who use the park users generally. The Park Strategy will be placed on our website. Question about staffing levels meeting increased need in holidays and summer, peak periods – John Wade emphasised that his development officers would work on needs of all the 23 Parks and with all the user groups in Hackney and assured us that there will be greater communication and that the need for this has been recognised.

Is management going to be 'top heavy'? JW says absolutely not: him, head of Parks, North and South Hackney Parks managers and then rangers and ground staff – that's it – very immediate.

Will there be too much division between operations management and 'development'? No, it is key that they work together.

Question about visibility and availability of Rangers – JW noted that this is something that needs to be addressed, it will take time, but to begin with, notices will go up to say when Rangers are available and where they can be found if needed.

Questions about Events management in the Parks in Hackney – is this going to be improved and linked more with what else goes on in Park and community? Yes, and currently Events Officer post is vacant. Noted that schools often not told about holiday events for kids until shortly after the end of school terms...to be addressed. Rangers' function needs to be developed to include building up relationships with schools and other local groups. Playground and paddling pool – think about what sort of staffing is needed in holidays. (But please, John Wade, DON'T go Health and Safety MAD!!)

CPUG very appreciative of John Wade's clarity, enthusiasm, and focussed, realistic approach. Points made to John Wade asking for his further consideration:

1 o'clock club: an ugly and apparently underused building, not incorporated into the Park in any meaningful or functional way. Please can he ask the Learning Trust to find some way of integrating use of building with other Park activities. (information: building is now used in the mornings by Woodberry Down Children's Centre groups).

Lottery bid business plan still has the view that there would be SEPARATE managers for the House and for the Park. The CPUG feels very strongly that what Clissold Park needs is one, unified management of House and Park for optimal and creative use of both for the good of all. JW said he would keep this in mind and look into it.

#### Other Business

DOGS: Law has recently changed to mean that stray dogs are now the responsibility of the local council, not the Police. Need notices in Park advising people who to contact re stray dogs.

Plea for a railing to assist access to Clissold House café – can't wait until the optimal solution of the lottery fund alterations – this could be years away, Can something be done on a temporary basis now? JW will look into this.

There are currently six vacancies for Rangers – could use seasonal staff, but need more permanent people to fill posts – could use Government apprenticeship schemes etc, In the meantime, might YOU be interested??

And sad farewell to Jim Blinko, brilliant groundsman in the Park who has been moved to another Park in the Borough – all the best Jim!

**The next meeting will be the Annual General Meeting of the Clissold Park User Group and will take place on Saturday the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2009 11am – noon Red Room Café.**

**There will be Elections for officers at this meeting. Nominations welcome – contact [clissoldpug@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:clissoldpug@yahoo.co.uk) if you would like to know more about what you could do for your Park, and influence what it can do for you!**

#### CONTACTS

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Rangers' Office 7923 3660

**TENNIS BOOKINGS** through Hackney City Tennis Club in Clissold House 0207 254 4235  
[www.hackneycitytennisclubs.co.uk](http://www.hackneycitytennisclubs.co.uk)

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11 – noon  
Red Room Café  
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