

CLISSOLD PARK USER GROUP

September/October 2009



With the fantastic news of a successful outcome to the Clissold Park Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid, and £8.9 million coming to Clissold Park, YOUR views are needed more than ever! Consultation will continue throughout the redevelopment.

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.

Meeting Minutes of 5th September 2009

Present:

CPUG elected Reps:

Ken Worpole, Chair; Matt Jeary and Caroline Millar, Co-Vice Chairs; John Hudson and Penny Crick, Communications; Yvonne Hill, Newsletter Secretary.

Leads: Simon Lissner and Mark Forsyth (dogs), Sylvia Anderson (senior citizens)

Simon Biss HLF Project Manager. Eleanor Johnson, Parks and Leisure Officer, Hackney

PLUS 24 Park Users (full list available on request)

Apologies: Michael Dixon, Park Manager; Councillor Karen Acock (Deputy Mayor) and Councillor Linda Smith

Ken Worpole welcomed all and announced the resignation of Penny Crick as communications secretary (emails). Ken thanked Penny warmly for her excellent contribution.

Matters Arising

- Minutes of the last meeting omitted mention of a discussion on the provision of covered shelter for older people. In addition, assurance was sought, and received, that the refurbished Clissold House would contain facilities for senior citizens.
- Concern was expressed about the terrible state of the New River. Would it be dealt with before the Heritage Lottery Funds (HLF) renovations? It was reported that Michael Dixon, Park Manager, would be dealing with it shortly.

Park Manager's Report

In Michael Dixon's absence, Peter O'Reilly, Gardener, mentioned again the **vandalism** in the toilets and to the floral display in the bowling green. There have been six arrests and prosecutions for graffiti in the park and the support and presence of Community Police Officers and Police was noted positively. Is it possible to ask them to visit more during school lunch breaks and after school?

CPUG discussion ensued on vandalism: What was the possibility of CCTV in the HLF upgrade? In the past the Headteacher of Stoke Newington School (SNS) would visit the park during the lunch break, to good effect. We should encourage a dialogue with the school. Simon Biss confirmed that youth groups and SNS had been, and would continue to be, part of consultations.

ACTION: Simon Biss to continue liaison with SNS. **Eleanor Johnson** will be meeting new Headteacher.

Are the animals in danger? If so, we have a responsibility to protect them.

The issue of **rubbish collection** was raised. It was recognised that most people are responsible but on fine days there are simply not enough bins and rubbish accumulates around overflowing bins. Could the rubbish be collected before park closure so that animals do not add to the problem overnight?

Concern was raised yet again about the lack of **Rangers' visibility and park security**. The continued lack of a handrail to the House was also discussed. Cllr Khan had not responded to either issue. **ACTION Ken** to contact Cllr Khan.

Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Clissold Park and House Restoration Project

Simon Biss, Project Manager, gave an update on the project, to be delivered by mid 2011, which includes Restoration of Clissold House, and re-design and upgrade to the park. Information is now displayed on posters in the park and on the website.

Simon reported the first stage of work would involve the dredging and de-silting of the ponds, and the closure of the red gra area to hold the material from the ponds for re-use in landscaping. Contractors will be required to detail their methods for capturing and decanting pond life ethically and effectively as part of the tendering process. Then early next year, the animal enclosure will close and the toilet blocks will be demolished. The Playground will not be closed until Autumn 2010. In response to a suggestion, Simon agreed to look into the possibility of temporary re-positioning of some playground equipment. **ACTION: Simon Biss**

In the next few weeks, the terrapins will be captured, checked by vets and the farmed out to responsible, interested parties.

Tennis Courts and Playground will remain operational during most of the project work. Temporary accommodation will be found for Tennis Club until the empty house on 3 Queen Elizabeth's Walk is ready.

Ken thanked Simon for his report and invited questions: **Once the de-silting of the lakes starts, there will inevitably be an exodus of rats. What plans are in place to deal with this?** Local residents and residents' groups' reps expressed great concern. Michael Dixon will organise for a rat-trapping programme to take place before work on the lakes starts. It was suggested that Hackney's Pest Control Department should also be involved, and that local residents should be informed in advance. ACTION: Michael

During the works' programme will essential facilities such as toilets/ baby changing and café be safeguarded? There will be temporary toilets. The contract for a temporary café kiosk will go out to tender. In spite of repeated requests there are still no baby-changing facilities. Simon agreed it would be in the tender for temporary toilets. ACTION: Simon

Have the lessons of the Leisure Centre fiasco been learnt? Simon assured the meeting that he was aware of the pitfalls, notably the danger of changing designs after the contract had been awarded.

Caroline Millar proposed that we celebrate the start of the works, with a User Group event, which was agreed. ACTION: Caroline and John Hudson.

How would the areas that remain contentious be addressed and handled? Ken recommended that within a year, an evaluation, with funds to alter what was not working, would be ideal. Simon confirmed that there was no budget for this. Ken urged that thought be given to post- evaluation remedial work.

Other questions/ raised: Is there to be adequate signage? Yes. If works were to be delayed, would that mean a delay to closure of café? Yes, if more than a month's delay. Could Simon publish a timetable of works? Yes.

The Skate Park: it was accepted that this was now set fast in the designs but the noise issue is generating increasing concern. A mother of a keen skate-boarder confirmed that it was a noisy sport and asked if it could not be sited away from local residents and nearer to the playground so that children of different ages could be supervised. Simon was not keen on visits to other skate-parks as there is not the scope

to support re-design. With sound baffling incorporated, the design should be good.

Water- Management: What designs are there? Is there a technical document? The park designers had said that the whole water system would be well-designed. There will be an even greater need for proper water management with the extension of the New River. Simon replied that there will be two bore holes: one at the centre of the park for the New River and one for Runtzmere lake, which will flow into Becksmere lake, with a water pump to maintain circulation and keep the water oxygenated. ACTION: Simon Biss to convene a Water Management meeting, within the next two months.

Cycling: The council has received complaints about dangerous cycling in the park. It was stressed that most cyclists are considerate but the minority who speed dangerously can frighten the elderly or vulnerable. There was also confusion about the cycle route to the Olympics and whether or not is routed through the park. ACTION: Eleanor and Simon Biss to organise a Cycle meeting.

Operational Hours: Could we review the opening and closing times? It was suggested that dawn to dusk would be more sensible. The boxes by the gates have been removed, which makes it difficult for people to climb over but this would inevitably lead to unofficial entries and exits. If there are more people in the park at the beginning and end of the day, this could assist security and inhibit vandalism.

It was agreed that first-class management of the park is key to the success of the HLF bid, and good staffing levels and security were top priority.

ACTION: Ken to write to Cllr Narghis Khan

For HLF Project issues contact

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For Park Management issues contact

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For Council issues contact

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To join Clissold Park Users Group contact

clissold@googlemail.com and visit www.clissoldpark.com or just come to the meetings!

**Next meeting of CPUG: Including AGM
Saturday 7th November 2009
11 – noon in Red Room of Café
ALL WELCOME!**