

Minutes of the meeting of the Friends of Downhills Park, Sunday 27 January 2019

Friends: Matt Battersby, Carmel Cadden, Chris Currie, Anthony Flaum, Emma Geraghty, Neri Gun, Sylvia Oland, Clare Parry, Jehan Shah, Kate Stilitz, Rod Wells

Parks team & Council: Glynis Kirkwood, Ed Santry, Seema Chandawi

Apologies: Jonathan Ringshall, Brenda Whittle, Stephen Whittle

The Friends of Downhills Park welcomed Glynis & Ed to the meeting & thanked them for taking time out of their weekend to join and provide updates on various areas of work underway in the park. Anthony & Emma joined the meeting on behalf of Tidy up Tottenham.

1. Minutes & matters arising

Minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2018 were agreed as a true record.

2. Green Flag

It was noted that the Green Flag had been restored in Downhills Park following the mystery shopping report that had highlighted several issues which had subsequently been addressed. A second report had been carried out in late December highlighting a further set of issues but the Green Flag was not withdrawn following the second inspection.

Glynis provided an update on the Green Flag position from the Council perspective noting that there had been an unprecedented level of scrutiny to the parks across Haringey and that the situation had been escalated with Keep Britain Tidy to understand why there was such close scrutiny. She also noted that some of the Green Flag report items identified fell outside of the scope of their remit, particularly in relation to play equipment which is subject to a separate inspection regime.

3. Outdoor Gym

Glynis noted that a consultation regarding the preferred location of the outdoor gym had been undertaken in December/January. There had been 20 votes for the bowling green location and 27 votes for the area opposite the wildflower meadow area. 3 votes had been submitted requesting no outdoor gym be sited in the park. It is likely that work will start soon and 6 pieces of equipment will be installed in the park. In terms of maintenance, the contractor is responsible for addressing any defects that arise in the first year, thereafter maintenance will be the responsibility of the parks team.

4. Pitch survey results

Glynis noted that a pitch survey had been undertaken in late November 2018. Extensive drainage is required and the soil will need to be sifted, redressed and re-laid. The estimated cost is £250k. Glynis will be meeting with Sean Burke to look at the figures, funding options and ways to tackle the pitch situation. Several people offered suggestions about funding that might be available.

5. Downhills Park Conservation

Ed outlined suggestions for conservation in Downhills Park. Ed had recently met with TCV to discuss volunteer days across the borough and there will be 4 days allocated to Downhills Park which will focus on the pond and wildflower meadow areas.

Ed had also discussed the pond with TCV and what kind of enhancements might be made to the pond area and to other areas in the park where there are problems with water/drainage and which might make use and/or a feature of these at a relatively low cost. He is also aiming to improve the connectivity of green spaces within the park.

With regard to the wildflower meadow, Ed noted that the maintenance hasn't been as it should have, with grass cutting not taking place when it should have done and some of the fruit trees having died. Ed is keen to put a plan in place to manage the wildflower meadow and monitor species that are found there. He proposes a plan that will take into consideration the corridor from the pond to the wildflower meadow and will share a proposal with the Friends of Downhills Park for information. Ed asked whether Friends might be interested in some wildflower ID survey training and several members noted that they would be.

Kate noted that she had worked with local schools on a 'meadow song' which had been inspired by the wildflower meadow in Downhills Park. It was suggested that a performance of the meadow song could be incorporated into Art in the Park or the Wind in the Willows theatre performance in June/July.

6. Downhills Park Pledge

Seema Chandawi was welcomed to the meeting. Seema had been elected Councillor in the West Green by-election in December 2018. As part of the by-election process and in light of the Green Flag issues, Matt Battersby had suggested that the Friends create a Downhills Park Pledge which all candidates were asked to sign up to. Seema had supported this pledge and shared her thoughts on the park and her commitment to having an honest conversation about investment in parks. She also highlighted issues around anti social behaviour and litter & rubbish across the borough. There was discussion about the range of complex issues surrounding litter, fly tipping, rubbish collections and measures that might be considered including fines and where money from fines is spent.

Anthony Flaum & Emma Geraghty outlined the Tidy up Tottenham campaign which is gaining momentum and has 400 members on Facebook and has established excellent working links with Veolia in relation to litter collection. They are keen to work with a range of groups to address issues around rubbish, recycling & litter collection.

7. Pocket Living development

Glynis outlined plans for access paths from Downhills Park into the Pocket Living development. Discussions are underway between council staff and Pocket Living to ensure that any reduction of green space is kept to an absolute minimum. A path has been agreed at the southern end of the development into Downhills Park which will allow for easier access to the development from West Green Road. The Friends requested that they are kept updated of plans regarding paths and access to the development.

8. AOB

- **Borough zones:** Glynis noted that the borough has been divided into 6 zones and she is going to be working in zone 3. This doesn't include Downhills Park. Steven Crabtree will be responsible for zone 5 which includes Downhills Park.
- **Access to the park:** Clare noted that measures to limit unauthorised access to the park were temporarily on hold.
- **John Mooney:** Clare noted that a plaque is to be placed on one of the park benches in memory of John Mooney.
- **Great British Spring Clean:** Anthony noted plans that Tidy up Tottenham are developing in relation to the Great British Spring Clean which takes place from 23 March to 22 April. The Friends of Downhills Park noted that they would be happy to participate & host a rubbish collection event in the park during this period.
- **Open air theatre:** It was noted that Quantum Theatre will be putting on a production of The Wind in the Willows in Downhills Park on Saturday 22 June 2019. It is likely the event will be scheduled for 2pm. Clare will follow up with Quantum Theatre.
- **Tottenham mixer:** Neri noted that the Tottenham Mixer would be hosted at the Downhills Park café on Saturday 9 February, everyone was welcome.

Next meeting of the Friends of Downhills Park: Sunday 10 March, 4pm, Downhills Park Café.