

## **Friends of Broomfield Park committee report to the AGM 2017**

Once again the past year has been a very productive one with teams of volunteers working tirelessly to preserve and enhance our beautiful park. We would like to take this opportunity to thank them all; without them our committee would be without purpose.

The Friends continue to have on-going support from the Borough and we would like in particular to welcome Loretta Hoy, Public Realm Development Officer. Loretta has replaced Julie Bland and her brief is to work closely with all Enfield Parks groups, overseeing their action plans and pushing forward with current outstanding work. As you can imagine, it is a big undertaking.

The park gained Green Flag status in the summer of 2016,; many thanks to Graham Deal and James Downing for helping to bring this bid to fruition. Graham and James no longer work directly with our park but both still give us their support and Graham is a frequent volunteer in the orchard.

We have continued to work closely with ward councillors, especially Daniel Anderson, and we turned to him when the problems with the boating pond and the netball courts came to light.

Our park would not be as attractive as it is without the dedication and work of our two gardeners, Bernadette and Mischa. Thank you to them both.

### **Activities and Progress made between May 2016 and May 2017**

**The Palmers Greenery** community cafe continues to go from strength to strength as it approaches its 3rd Birthday. We have a busy summer ahead with monthly 'Guest Cakes' on the menu, a Community Picnic on 18th June as well as another allocation of £5,000 for park enhancements (timing tbc). We are delighted to be part of the 'Unplugged in N13' project as a PitStop safe place for children and are looking into lots of other opportunities for local collaboration. All of the above is possible thanks to the commitment of our wonderful team of volunteers which we are always looking to grow.

### **Broomfield Park Conservatory**

In 2016 we were awarded Gold by Enfield in Bloom in the category Exceptional Horticultural Contribution for the Community. For the first time, we had an artist in residence, Cathy Taylor, who held a series of workshops (funded by the Greenery). There were ceramics on display which reflected the planting in the conservatory. This theme was continued with the Sketching session at the start of 2017. We have had a children's activity run by Chris Brook in March and our first plant sale in April. We continue to open every Wednesday and Sunday afternoon. A copy of our 2017 programme will be available at the meeting.

The main current issue for the conservatory is that the building woodwork needs urgent repairs. This is agreed by both the Parks Department Building Services and their contractors and has an estimated cost of £2000. The council has not yet agreed to place an order to get the work carried out, it has been noted for possible future action .

Loretta Hoy has suggested that to expedite the repairs, the Friends of Broomfield Park may wish to fund this work. The conservatory group have discussed and dismissed this option. The Friends do not have responsibility for the building and cannot be expected to take on an open-ended commitment for the maintenance of a historic 83 year old structure.

## **Bulb Planting**

This was a very enjoyable community event which brought together all the Friends' groups and many local families.

A big thank you to Enfield in Bloom who when contacted by Geraldine Anwar donated over 2000 narcissi bulbs. These were supplemented by 400 more unusual bulbs bought by Elizabeth Dobbie with funds from the Friends.

Planting wasn't easy as the ground was very hard but the resulting flowers in Spring by the Greenery and by the Boating Lake made it all worthwhile. Thanks to the Greenery for refreshments. It is hoped to organise more events like this during 2017.

## **Dipali and Sensory Gardens**

Volunteer work continues in these areas of the park, primarily as 'labours of love' by Mark Shanker and June Dawes and their helpers. The Conservatory sub committee takes a general interest in their work and Mark and June liaise directly with the professional park staff as required.

## **Broomfield Community Orchard**

It is now almost 8 years since the Community Orchard was set up. This year we won a Silver Award from Enfield in Bloom for 'Exceptional Horticultural Contribution for the local community'.

Events such as Wassailing, Apple Day and the Summer Picnic are popular with local people and help to raise money to cover the costs of the Orchard and Apiary and projects such as the Wildlife Pond and Growing Space. We also receive generous donations from many people, including Ralph Hutchings with his bug hotels and bird boxes and Anne Hutchings with her lino prints, which we sell at our events. The Broomfield Honey is also one of the jewels in our crown and the income from this has enabled us to get a secure storage shed and make good progress with the Wildlife Pond.

Our priority this year will be to plant up the Wildlife Pond and to grow soft fruit and vegetables in the Growing Space. We hope people will check it out and get involved.

## **The Apiary**

Last autumn one of the hives in the apiary was diagnosed with a notifiable disease called European Foul Brood. This had no impact on last year's honey which was collected months before the disease was identified. The local Bee Inspector from the National Bee Unit has overseen the management of this and I am pleased to say that after a follow-up visit on 24th April the Apiary has been given the 'all-clear'. Unfortunately our three bee colonies have now been reduced to one strong one and one very weakened that will probably not survive. This year's focus will be on restoring three strong hives and continuing the reorganisation of the site and equipment storage to try and support the health and productivity of our bees in the face of ever increasing natural and man made threat.

## **Wildlife pond**

In the past year, laborious attempts at ensuring water retention - puddling with existing clay, and bentonite granules - failed. We installed a butyl rubber liner sandwiched in protective geotext material in early Feb (many thanks to stalwart volunteers!), and covered it with a layer of soil. Additional willow-hoop planting has reinforced the native hedge planted last year, and will

contribute to a species-rich natural barrier to the west of the pond. The pond is now holding water and we are ready to plant.

### **Wildflower meadows**

Professional rotovation of the annual meadow in the autumn created a much improved tilth. With Johnson-Mathey volunteers, we deep-weeded the meadow and seeded it with a native annual wildflower mix on 21st April. The upper, perennial, meadow has been part-weeded and part sown with annuals, but is largely being left to its own devices.

### **The Avenue**

Most small-leaved lime trees planted as a replacement of the original elm avenue appear to be flourishing - however a few look pretty dead. We hope that these may be replaced under the terms of the three year after-care contract with Enfield.

### **Remembrance Garden**

The good news for the Remembrance Garden is that in February a grant of just over £60,000 was awarded to Enfield Council by the War Memorial Trust for restoration and essential repairs to the Garden. The grant will cover repairs to the roof of the war memorial temple and installing new stained glass windows. Repairing the terrace paving and steps down to the pond. Repointing the entrance archways and replacing timbers in the pergola. Handrails will be installed by the steps to help disabled access. There will be a new plinth and working fountain in the pond replicating the original design and the fountain will be turned on for special events. The contractor has been agreed and the work should start in May.

Local schools have shown a lot of interest in the Remembrance Garden and are increasingly involved in the annual service of Remembrance in November.

### **Broomfield House**

In late 2012 the Council brought in a property consultant to take forward the extensive and very constructive Conservation Management Plan produced for the whole of Broomfield Park by Donald Insall Associates. Of thirteen options costed, the Council seems to favour the stableblock being converted in to accommodation, and new town housing being built in the stableyard and at best a 'House' rebuilt in some form, but only on at most half the footprint, possibly as an 'events centre'. It argues that this is the only affordable scheme.

The Trust and Friends of Broomfield Park who sit on the Partnership Board oppose this and are still waiting for an update review on the 2014 structural report which said that the remaining structure was restorable.

The Friends of Broomfield Park need to consider all the potential effects of a private housing compound within the park. The numbers are uncertain, but it could mean the stableblock being converted into two (three bedroom) houses, and four to six (three bedroom, 2.5 storey) houses being built.

The consequences of the disastrous fire on the evening of 29 April which has burnt out the row of cottages bordering on Broomfield Lane (also called the Garden House) remain to be assessed. They are part of the Grade II Star listed external wall which dates back to the late 1690s.

The Trust is proceeding with a separate bid to the HLF for a local history project. We tendered for a trial restoration of sections of the Lanscroon murals and have selected a candidate to carry out the work. We met with the Head of Walker School to discuss ways in which the project could link in with the national curriculum but would like to involve other schools, especially secondary schools.

We are intending to hold an exhibition in the museum at the Dugdale Centre next year. Any schools, teachers, ex-teachers or trainee teachers or anyone with exhibition experience who might be interested in helping should make contact with [broomfield.house.n13@gmail.com](mailto:broomfield.house.n13@gmail.com). There is more on this project at [www.broomfieldhouse.org/latest-news](http://www.broomfieldhouse.org/latest-news) . There is also a new Facebook page, “Broomfield House and the Lanscroon Murals” .

We have a new treasurer who will hopefully be confirmed at our AGM to be held in the Burford Hall on 9 May at 7.30pm.

### **Visit by a local school**

On a bright extremely cold spring afternoon, 90 children from Hazelwood Primary School, trekked through Broomfield Park, to find out more about this jewel in Palmers Green’s crown.

They were split into three groups accompanied by school staff and volunteers from the FOBP committee.

They visited the orchard and learned about the different species of apple and they got a first hand view of the beehives.

They visited the conservatory where they learned about caring for rare or unusual plants.

Their visit also took in the lakes and the house where they learned about the history of the park and its significance for the whole community.

The visit ended in the Remembrance Garden where they learned about the need to remember the local dead of all major world conflicts.

They ended up sitting on the steps eating their lunch, overlooking the football pitches. They had clearly had a fun, productive morning. This was an extremely successful morning. The committee look forward to welcoming Hazelwood School back to the park, to develop their knowledge and expertise of the outdoors. The school has collected £107 for the FOBP. The funds will be used in the conservatory. Thank you to the staff and children of the school, from the entire FOBP committee, for your on-going support.

### **Photographic Competition 2016**

The purpose of the competition is to gain positive publicity for the park and to bring in people who may not have visited us before. The 2016 competition attracted 60 entries, fewer than previously. The committee selected a shortlist of 9 and the public then had the opportunity to select their favourites in the two categories - under 16s and above - at the Palmers Green Festival..

We have reviewed the competition and intend to publicise it more widely, including in local schools. Details will be placed on both the Friends website and the PGC community. Camera club members will once again be invited to submit contributions.

### **The Playground project**

We received some encouraging feedback via email following an article in Palmers Green Life including a request to consider children with disabilities in any improvements; we have taken this on board. A Facebook page has been set up which we will use for updates and feedback. More detailed requirements are being worked on and we plan to get these to the council in the near future so they can engage with their contractors to provide options and costing for improvements. Unfortunately progress has been slower than initially hoped as the arrival of future playground users has been keeping the committee busy. However, we hope to improve momentum in the second half of the year.

### **Report-on general maintenance and upkeep of the park**

**Netball Courts** - considerable inconvenience has been caused to the North London Netball League and other users. Due to the lack of court care over the winter months, deep growth of algae, mud etc has rendered the courts unfit for use. This has been corrected and a maintenance programme put in place. The Friends work closely with the netball players and are monitoring the situation.

**The Orchard** has had a few break-ins but with only minor damage and evidence of rough sleepers and drug-taking.

**Boating Pond** -it has been a difficult time for the members of Broomfield Boating club because of the state of the pond. After much effort by Sue Younger on behalf of the committee, the boating pond was cleaned in time for the Palmers Green festival. We have asked Cllr. Anderson to restore the annual pond emptying programme so that it can be cleaned and freed from algae. We wait to see if this happens.

The Council has changed the locks on part of the **Bowling green clubhouse**. This means that the weekly walking group have nowhere to register and meet up with other members both before and after the walk ( or retreat to if it rains).

One of the committee members routinely monitors the toilets, the bandstand, the playground and the green gym for problems and reports - or attempts to report - these to Enfield Council using the M3 reporting system. This system is not accessible to all, is very time-consuming and frustrating.

**Service Yard**- A number of break ins, via the Remembrance Garden, are of concern. Much work has been done after the same problem occurred last year. All these costs add to the general upkeep at Broomfield

After a long 'consultation' with the Friends, the Council has embarked on a path repair programme.

## **Wider involvement**

Enfield Council have for the past year arranged meetings, chaired by one of the local “Associate Cabinet Members” (who in our case is Cllr Bambos Charalambous) at which Council officers address, and respond to issues raised by, representatives of Friends of Parks (“FoP”) groups. The format has changed recently so that these meetings now cover the whole of the Borough and are to be held three times a year, instead of the initial idea of covering only one third of the Borough and being held twice a year. FoBP are represented at all such meetings; they are proving a useful opportunity to quiz and raise issues with senior officers, although frankly we have yet to see much by way of actual results from the points raised.

FoBP are also represented at all meetings of the Enfield Friends of Parks Consortium, at which representatives of a number of FoP groups within Enfield Borough discuss matters of common interest, partly with a view to lobbying relevant Councillors and Council officers, normally via the Chairman Peter Gibbs. Although there are considerable overlaps, the key distinction from the ACM meetings mentioned above is that the Consortium sets the agenda for its own meetings, and Councillors and Council officers only attend if invited.

FoBP also responds to relevant consultations published by the Council: for example, regarding the proposed revised “Parks Events Strategy” and “Public Spaces Protection Order”.

FoBP are also sometimes represented at the meetings of the London Green Spaces Friends Groups Network – whose Chair (Dave Morris, from Lordship Park in Haringey) is also the Chair of the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces !

## **Other events in the park**

Once again the park was host to a very successful Palmers Green Festival and a series of Sunday afternoon Blues concerts in August. Talkies held an open air screening of Ghostbusters on the bowling green and this was a fantastic success.

## **We need volunteers - a call for helpers**

The Friends group cannot maintain the current level of events without recruiting more volunteers. There is no need to be on the committee but we do need more sub groups with particular enthusiasm for activities e.g. music events in the park, theatre and the Palmers Green Festival. We are anticipating playing a much bigger part in the organisation of the Festival, under Phillip Chard’s steer, but without a committed band of volunteers it is unlikely to go ahead in 2018.

Are you interested in volunteering or do you know someone who is/might be? Please email [secretary@friendsofbroomfieldpark](mailto:secretary@friendsofbroomfieldpark) with an expression of interest and we will come back to you.