

# FRIENDS OF MILL HILL PARK

**Spring 2003**

**Circular No. 10**

## **PUBLIC MEETINGS**

The Friends continue to attend the Area Forums. Those for Mill Hill are wide-ranging and cover such items as planning permissions, traffic management and many other local matters. They require a degree of commitment to stay the course but the advantage is that when a matter is raised it is usually acted upon and a written report delivered at the next meeting. We have raised the matters of park keepers and the dead trees and fallen timber littering the park since last summer. At the February meeting we were told that vehicles would not be able to go onto the grass to remove timber until May, as the ground is so wet.

The Greenspaces Forum, where mostly Friends' representatives attended and again aired their topics of interest, were useful. However, little positive action seemed to result. Barnet Council are proposing a downgrade, which we aim to resist.

## **PARK KEEPERS**

After our long campaign for a park keeper we have been disappointed with the service provided. It appears that our park keeper is one of the few who have a car and these few have to share out the locking and unlocking of certain parks across the whole borough. This duty considerably reduces their time available for other jobs.

They have now come under new management in the re-organised Greenspaces section of the Council. Their job description has been redrawn. We offered to have an input and failing that are trying to obtain a copy so that we know what to expect.

It is felt that the park keeper would be more effective if, instead of having his base in the Neighbourhood Management Office in Daws Lane, he were based prominently in the park. To this end we have asked our Councillor, Wayne Casey and the Greenspaces officials about providing a room with an external door in the pavilion. This is being costed and it could be possible to fund it from the 2003 budget.

We would like the park keeper to be much more visible to the general public and to interact with them. In addition to the litter picking, which he does well when he is present, a few more light duties would be in order.

## **CAFÉ**

The Café is expected to open in the season with the same tenants. It is a valuable facility in the park and would be more so if it were open for longer periods, but commercial considerations prevail when there is little or no business.

## **MILL HILL MUSIC FESTIVAL**

This biennial event will be held from 31 May until 7 June and will include some events in the park on the two Saturdays.

## **PAVILION REFURBISHMENT**

As reported, a year ago the money was found for pavilion refurbishment, including new WCs. The exterior was cleaned, a special paint and sealant applied, said to make the removal of graffiti easier. The next day graffiti had reappeared. The Council claim to have spent over £4000 on this clearance but the problem is still with us. Outside, additional lighting and sensors have been fitted in the hope of discouraging vandalism. New extractor fans and trunking have been fitted in the clubhouse WCs. Two new WCs, one each for gents and ladies, with baby changing facilities, were built at the rear of the pavilion. However, the proprietor of the nursery school was concerned that the gents WC was next door, and as a result it was decided to convert it to a changing room and refurbish the disabled WC next to the café as a unisex facility. The alterations are now complete and locking/unlocking arrangements need to be made to prevent vandalism.

## **AUDIT OF THE PARK**

The last audit of the park took place in September 2002 and was led by Cllr. Wayne Casey accompanied by members of your Committee and Council Officials. **Among the items completed from the previous audit were the following:**  
Benches refurbished on the bowling greens  
Conifers obstructing the bowling green water tank pruned

Pavilion refurbishment – see elsewhere  
Handrails installed on the lower bowling green  
Mini golf area repaired  
Café environs planted up (but then trampled down during the season)  
Scented plants in large containers installed by the top bowling green. These incurred some vandalism.  
Cricket outfield at clubhouse has finally regrown where sprayed and reseeded.  
Black poplar pollarded effectively, with good regrowth.

#### **Matters arising were:**

Children's Day Nursery not yet opened, awaiting completion of décor. Repairs to comply with the OFSTED inspection had been completed apart from a recent break-in, with damage to an internal wall outstanding.  
Rose beds adjacent to tennis courts were very overgrown with weeds, with bindweed, growing up the tennis court fence. It was felt that this was due to poor maintenance standards.  
Weed around the hard surface of pavilion leading to unkempt appearance.  
Further graffiti on the pavilion.  
Litter bins and poop scoop bins checked  
Nature reserve – offensive graffiti along the wall will eventually be covered by the pyracantha bushes planted there  
Island heather and rose beds to be refurbished from 2002 – 2003 budget  
"No Parking" signs on the gates in the car parking area, to allow for emergency entrance when necessary, are still awaited.  
The chestnut fencing along Wise Lane is in poor condition in many places and needs repair.  
The steel container at the Cricket Club is still subject to graffiti. It is cleaned or repainted as budgets allow.  
Tennis courts have a lot of moss on the court surfaces. They are to be colour sprayed in 2003.  
There are areas of flooding at the bottom of the courts, caused by a mains water pipe constantly leaking.  
All seats and benches in the park are to be cleaned of graffiti and treated with wood preservative.  
The old toilet building, which is generally sound, is to be left for the time being.  
The beech hedge is to be trimmed where intruding on the path.

A further audit was arranged for Friday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2003, but unfortunately the ground was

covered by the heavy snowfall of the night before. To gather everyone together for another audit is not proving easy.

#### **ARRANDENE OPEN SPACE**

Although not within our remit, Friends may like to know the Countryside Management Service in partnership with the London Borough of Barnet Greenspaces Section propose to carry out work to restore areas of traditional hay meadow within Arrandene Open Space. Posters will be erected in advance of any work commencing. The main threat to this type of habitat, of which there are only six in Greater London, is the reversion to scrub and woodland. The proposed work will address this decline.

Elsewhere on this site woodland cover has increased by approximately 6 hectares. It is proposed to remove 0.3 hectares of trees that have invaded the meadow area. They are of mixed age and species including oak, birch and non-native Turkey Oak, which have developed from a small number of pioneers. The larger areas of more mature woodland will be retained and managed more positively to maximise their benefit for wildlife and recreation,

#### **CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

The park continues to be used and enjoyed by many people, their children and dogs, not forgetting the wildlife. Our aim is for it to be preserved that way though much depends on good maintenance and, to ensure that, efficient supervision. Sometimes I think a dramatic change or improvement might be a good thing. We are always open to suggestions.

#### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

This will be held on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April at 10.30am in the Bowling Pavilion in the park. Coffee /tea will be provided. All members are invited to bring friends and neighbours with them.

#### **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Renewal forms are attached only for those whose subscriptions are due this year.

#### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Ted Anderson (Chairman)	8959 2979
Joanne Anderson (Secretary)	8959 2979
Joan Telfer (Treasurer)	8959 1499
Jim Rea	8200 5770
David Bailey	8959 2373
Marion Dewing	8959 5013