



FRIENDS OF MILL HILL PARK

November 2005

Circular No. 13

Chairman's Message

Autumn has come late this year - and so has our Newsletter. The long summer months and the length of the school summer holiday period meant that many people of all ages and from all parts of the Borough were able to enjoy the sunshine and the park's wide open green spaces for days on end, as one sunny day followed another. Several events made the summer memorable - the advent of the 7-a-side football nets (good), the splendid crop of blackberries which ripened on the bushes in the park (good), the closing off of the slide in the children's play area for most of the summer holidays (sad) and the closure of the park café for the whole summer (appalling!).

Your Committee continued to meet regularly and kept in close contact with Barnet Council staff over any problems. Their prompt assistance on a number of occasions has been very much appreciated. The regular park audits give us the chance to pass on your views to Barnet Council and are very valuable. Committee members have also attended the local Area Forums organised by Barnet Council, where matters can be raised on your behalf.

Skateboard Area

This proposal has hit a bad patch this year. Following a further assessment of the extended area to the rear of the


Council/T.S. BAROSSA building which a skateboard site would require, it appears such an extension could possibly damage the roots of the row of trees planted on the grass. A request for members' views on the proposed skateboard area elicited a very low response, so we are still uncertain of the views of members on this subject. It is true that a considerable number of members have voiced concern about the amount of noise it would create. Your Committee is unanimous in its opposition to any large part of the park's green spaces being concreted over for use as a skateboard site. Further, Barnet Council states it does not have sufficient funds available for such an expensive project.

Children's Play Area

In midsummer Council officers showed your Committee how the wooden legs of the slide were rotting away at ground level, making it dangerous. The slide was then cordoned off to prevent its use. In early November the slide was repaired and is back in use.

Park Café

In our last Newsletter we stated the café "should be opening soon". Alas, it was not to be! We understand negotiations between Barnet Council and the applicants became bogged down in detail with the result that the café has been closed



throughout the year. As the lessees of the café hold the key to the public toilet, it meant the public toilet was locked throughout the summer, causing considerable distress and also aggravation to the Bowling Club, who were constantly receiving requests to use their spotless toilets.

7-a-side Football Pitch

The nets for this pitch were put up in the park for the use of young people wishing to play/practice. The money for the site was provided by a police initiative and actioned by Barnet Council. The pitch is very popular, is regularly used by at least two local schools and a number of young players.

Dogs in the Park

We have all seen them, trotting into the park with their owners, then let loose for a run around and a chance to relieve themselves, put back on the lead, then dog and owner return to the car. Responsible dog owners (and fortunately there are many of them) bring plastic bags and clean up after their pets. These bags can be left in any of the park's waste bins (not just in a dog litter bin). However, for those careless dog owners, particularly those who allow their pets to run around where young children are playing and take no action to keep the area clean, fines have been increased. It is an offence to allow a dog to foul without clearing up after it in all parks, play areas, sports fields and local nature reserves. Fines from £50 upwards could be the result of offending.

Park Keeper

Andrew Hunter has been able to spend more time in the park this year and it is good to see the flowerbeds looking so neat and tidy. On Friday 9th December, residents are invited to meet Andrew at 10.30am by the café. He will be planting bulbs, and any help with this task would be gratefully received.

Membership of Friends of Mill Hill Park

We enclose a membership application form with this Newsletter and, if you know someone who may be interested, please do not hesitate to let him or her have this form.

Questionnaire

Also enclosed is a questionnaire from the Council, which they have asked us to distribute. If you complete this please return it to our Secretary, Mrs J Smith, 24 Marion Road, NW7 4AN and she will pass them on to the Council

Finally (as the shops insist on telling us) Christmas is coming. So, on behalf of all members of the Committee, I should like to wish members and their families a very happy Christmas and New Year!

Committee Members

- Marion Dewing (Chairman)
- Jean Smith (Secretary)
- Joan Telfer (Treasurer),
- Ted Anderson (Committee Member)
- David Bailey (Committee Member)
- John Smith (Committee Member)