

# FRIENDS OF MILL HILL PARK

**Spring 2006**

**Circular No. 14**

## **CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE**

Following our regular meetings with local Councillor Wayne Casey and a representative from Barnet Council's Greenspaces Department, work on several improvements to the park have been carried out recently, which I am sure we all welcome. The basketball hoop has been repainted; litterbins have been replaced by the hooded variety (crow-proof?); the 'sofa/sculpture' has been completed; the Community Woodland sign has been reinstalled and repairs have been made to the walls of raised flowerbeds. All these improvements will help with our application for a Green Flag Award.

## **GREEN FLAG AWARD**

This is an annual competition designed to recognise the highest standards in England's parks and open spaces. The Assessment covers a number of criteria including maintenance, cleanliness, community involvement and a welcoming feeling. Barnet Council has now applied for Mill Hill Park to be entered in the competition for this award. Assessors will visit the park anonymously in the spring and a formal visit will follow later in the year, when a representative from Friends of Mill Hill Park will be present. The result of this competition should be announced in October.

## **CARVED TREE TRUNK**

We strongly recommend all members to visit (and admire) a recent addition to the park. You will remember that in 2004 one of the large oak trees opposite the tennis courts crashed down across the path and into the tennis court fencing. Barnet Council cut the branch off the tree, leaving the trunk on the

grass opposite, and repaired the tennis court fencing. In December the trunk was made into a sofa with two seats (following a suggestion for its use from Friends of Mill Hill Park) but its outstanding feature is the beautiful carving around the seats of acorns, oak leaves and the head of the "Green Man". It is certainly worth walking over to see and admire the splendid carving. On behalf of the Friends of Mill Hill Park and indeed all residents who love the Park, we should like to thank Barnet Council for this imaginative use of the fallen tree trunk, and also congratulate Dennis of OK Trees, who carried out the work.

## **BULB PLANTING – 9 DECEMBER 2005**

As advised in our last Newsletter, Park Keeper Andrew Hunter would be planting spring bulbs in the park and would appreciate help. It was a bright chilly morning and the first helpers to arrive were a group of young children from a nearby playgroup. Then two mothers arrived with their young daughters and several members of the Friends of Mill Hill Park Committee. Committee member John Smith and the "young mums" (and daughters) did sterling work helping Andrew to plant hundreds of crocus bulbs near the Wise Lane car park entrance. Walk that way in the spring to see the bulbs flowering. They should make a fine show!

## **PARK CAFE**

The closure of the café throughout 2005 caused many problems. However, the Property Services Department of Barnet Council is now finalising arrangements with a new tenant for 2006. We understand it is possible the café could be operational by Easter if all goes well.



## PLAYGROUND

Having the large play structure out of action for several months during the summer, because some of the wooden supports had become rotten, was obviously a big disappointment for children and their parents. It was repaired in November (at considerable expense) and the experience prompted us to enquire about the state of the playground in general. The position is that the present playground was installed 30 years ago and while all the equipment is now safe following the recent repair, and could well last for years, we still need to look to the future. We noticed that mud was oozing through the wood chippings on the ground recently – not very satisfactory in an area where young children play

Playground apparatus is now constructed of steel or plastic, which would avoid the sort of problem recently experienced. While there is no question of a complete overhaul of the playground we are exploring, with Council officers, the rôle the Friends might be able to play in obtaining charitable funds to finance replacement of certain items or to provide an extension of the activities available.

As a first step, it is obviously very important that we find out how current users of the playground view the existing facilities and what improvements or developments they would like to see. You will find a **questionnaire** with this Newsletter. If you are not in the habit of accompanying young children to the playground, we should be very grateful if you would pass it on to a relative or friend to whom it is applicable. We shall also be handing out questionnaires to families using the playground.

## SHRUB BORDER IN DAWS LANE CAR PARK

At our AGM last year members raised the problem of the continued neglect of this border and the fence facing on to Daws Lane, which makes a dismal and depressing sight

for passers-by. We made enquiries and found that there was a legal agreement, dating back to the original lessees, Country Gardens, which is still binding on the current occupiers of the site, Wyevale Garden Centre. This states that the Company should maintain the herbaceous border 'to a high standard'.

We therefore wrote to the Company last May, expressing our members' wish to see this work carried out. Although we received a letter in July, which indicated that the Company accepted liability and were looking at ways of resolving the situation, we are no further forward. This is despite two letters and a number of phone calls from the Council officer concerned and a further letter from us in September. As it seems (from information in the business press) that Wyevale are expected to dispose of a number of their Centres, we have decided to wait and see what happens before pressing for further action.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This will be held on Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> April 2006, at 10.30 a.m. in the Bowling Club. Tea / coffee and biscuits will be available.

Renewal Forms are attached, only for those members whose subscriptions are due in April.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Marion Dewing (Chairman)	8959 5013
Jean Smith (Secretary)	8959 7138
Joan Telfer (Treasurer)	8959 1499
Ted Anderson	8959 2979
David Bailey	8959 2373
John Smith	8959 7138