

FRIENDS OF MILL HILL PARK

Spring 2012

Circular No 25

Notice is hereby given that the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held on Saturday 31st March 2012 at 10.30 a.m. at the Bowling Club.

Playground

The new playground has been up and running since mid-November to the great pleasure of young children and their families. Many people say it is the best playground they have ever visited, and indeed it is very crowded - with some visitors forsaking their regular parks. We now have a playground which can accommodate the 'baby boom', and will cater for the varied needs of children for many, many years to come. We have outlined some of the work that has been required to achieve this in previous Newsletters, but must add that pressure has continued even up to now, and most of it has been borne by two members, Clare Zinkin and Cara Demetriades. Clare has had the additional responsibility of seeing it all through in her role as project manager. Thank you both for your extraordinary exertions.

The Launch Party

This will be on Sunday 25th March. This is the latest date to which the Lottery would agree, so we are hoping for fine weather! The enclosed flyer shows what is on offer, and why this should be a great occasion. Very importantly, there will be four marquees to provide shelter, so many of the attractions will be 'under canvass'.

This is thanks to the generosity of *InLondon*, a local firm of Estate Agents. We are very grateful to them, and to other

sponsors. We are not able to list them all here, but will give due acknowledgement in our next Newsletter. In the meantime, many thanks to all of them, and to all those organisation and individuals who have supported the lottery bid from the beginning.

The work of organising the party has been carried out by an *ad hoc committee* of members and friends, under the direction of Clare Zinkin. They have laboured mightily, and achieved wonders, as you can see from the range of activities on offer on the day. It proves there is wide support for the park and what it represents from the local community. We thank them for all they have done. **Now, we would ask any member who is able to offer help on the day to volunteer their services.**

Volunteers: we are responsible for dealing with litter, so help will be needed to pick up litter during and after the event. You may be able to help the committee generally, as well as giving information/directions to people. All volunteers will be given green *Friends of Mill Park* T shirts, and will be supplied with gloves, litter pickers and waste bags for rubbish collection. Some volunteers are also needed to hand out water, and look after participants.

If you would like to help, please email mail@busylisters.com or mailhillpark@gmail.com or call Clare Zinkin on 07957 232 617 and leave your name and phone number.

Annual General Meeting

You will see the notice for this at the start of the Newsletter. We usually have a fair attendance, and would be glad to welcome even more! The committee have met four times in the course of the year, and have been following up matters directly with the Council. These will be referred to in the Chairman's report, and you will have the opportunity to bring forward your concerns. We are grateful to the Bowling Club for once again making their room available to us. Tea and coffee will be served before the meeting, so come in time to allow for this.

Subscriptions

We have reached a point where we need to simplify our arrangements. The present system involves three different subscription periods – one, three or four years – which creates complications both for collection and accountancy.

The committee have agreed (our Constitution gives us the power to do this) that from 1st April 2012, we will move to an annual subscription only, but give members the option of paying by standing order. At first, this will only apply to members whose subscriptions are due on this date. If you are one of those members who joined last year, and opted for a longer period, you can rest easy until 2014/15. We will gradually move to everyone paying an annual subscription as their payment becomes due in the intervening years.

We have changed the category 'family' membership to 'joint', which is more accurate, as our Constitution stipulates members must be 18 years or over. The membership forms will give space for both names to be given, which means we can give an accurate estimate of numbers when required.

At the same time subscriptions are increased from £2 to-£3 (individual) and £3 to £5 (joint) - possibly the first increase in our 15 year history. However you choose to pay – cheque or standing order – we hope you will continue to give your support.

The future

Parks everywhere are under threat in the present economic climate, so we cannot feel secure. Has the threat of privatisation gone away? There are indications that it is intended to introduce charges for **Daws Lane car park** and we shall oppose this, as we did on two previous occasions. This car park is part of the original park, and the Council would be in breach of covenant to raise revenue from it. We hope the decision to make **park keepers redundant** is not a sign of worse to come. We are told that mobile teams will visit the park once a day to replace this service. We will be following this development closely to see how it works. We plan to carry out our own audit of the park on a regular basis.

Bruce Warner has been park keeper at Mill Hill since 2007, and I know you will agree he has done a fine job. Members have spoken at successive AGMs of their appreciation of all he has done to keep the park looking at its best. Most importantly he has taken responsibility, and by his presence has given reassurance to park visitors. He has introduced children from the play group to the delights of horticulture with the container garden around the old toilet block. There is much more we could say, but space does not allow. Thank you, Bruce. We will miss you.

Committee Members

John Smith (Chairman) 8959 7138
Jean Smith (Secretary) 8959 7138
Ingrid McKeown (Treasurer)
Cara Demetriades, Peter Keeley, Chelle Paice,
Sue Platt, Liz Reid, Philippa Welch, Clare Zinkin