

# FRIENDS OF MILL HILL PARK

Winter 1999

Circular No. 5

## WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR PARK KEEPER?

Park Keepers are already in place in five parks -Victoria, Childs Hill, Watling, Cherry Tree and Edgwarebury. They are said to have proved useful in these parks. They are on duty from Wednesdays to Sundays inclusive on a 32 hour week in the winter from about 10.30am to 4.30pm during daylight only. The Area Wardens attend on Mondays and Tuesdays.

We have been pressing for our Park Keeper, to be told that one was appointed and turned up for work but immediately resigned when he found out that he had no van! A new one has finally been appointed. His name is John Kirwan and he is due to start work in early December. He will be issued with a mobile phone.

Duties include graffiti removal, monitoring the public convenience, and dealing with vandalism. He will collect leisure fees and issue tickets, assist contractors and check their work and also ensure that the park is free of litter. Training has been quite extensive and the NSPCC have advised on caring for the safety of children in open spaces.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

Thanks to all the Friends who took the trouble to fill in and return the questionnaire about the park. There were many helpful comments and suggestions, and just as many brickbats.

Nearly everyone was worried about litter and vandalism, and after these, graffiti, all continuing problems about which your Committee is constantly in touch with Barnet Council officials. These matters are also brought up by Committee members and

others at the Local Forums. Most of you wanted more litter bins (emptied more often) and more seats - in good repair - and many of you valued the park for peace, quiet and relaxation. This survey will help your Committee to fight to keep our park as a haven for us all in the middle of what is now a very busy area.

## CAFÉ

The café is being extensively refurbished. The new café operator is Mrs Danielewicz, who expects to open in the spring. The family already run a café in Oak Hill Park. A popular and well run café will be quite an asset and a focal point in the park and will certainly have our support.

## TOILETS

We have been very concerned about the lack of this basic provision and have continually pressed the Council to make these facilities available. The most that has been conceded to date is that the toilet for the disabled next to the café will, on request, be unlocked by either the café operator or the Park Keeper. The use of this toilet will be monitored before any decision is taken on refurbishing the main toilets at the back of the pavilion. No financial provision has been made for the extensive work needed to bring the toilets up to a decent standard. Prominent notices have to be fixed on the doors to advertise their presence.

## DOG FOULING

Barnet Council is taking powers under the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996 which will enable their officers to impose fines of £25 for offences. The members of BARDO (Barnet Association of Responsible Dog Owners) are co-operating in this drive to improve the parks and open spaces.

## BASKETBALL

A petition was raised and presented to the Council to have a basketball court in the park. It is expected that this will be well used and appreciated, and be an outlet for young people. As requested, the Council have now converted the tennis court nearest to the A41 for winter use only. It will revert back to a tennis court for the summer season. Guy Patten has a particular interest in this initiative, and arrangements have been made for assistance from the Sports Development Officer and the Youth Service.

## MEETINGS

Committee members have represented the group at the various Community Safety Strategy and Area meetings. The former are chaired by the Director of Environmental Services and are attended by the Neighbourhood Management Service and various other council officials. Most of the Friends groups are represented and it is useful to exchange information with them as well as with the Council.

## PROBLEMS

The graffiti on the pavilion has been ongoing throughout the year. It has been removed as much as possible but it has been difficult to keep pace with it. During the summer the automatic watering system on the bowling green was vandalised, making it difficult to keep the turf in good condition during the one hot dry period we had. The pavilion was broken into with some damage to the structure, fixtures and property although nothing was stolen. The Hendon and Edgware Cricket Club had a sight screen destroyed. It would be helpful if members would be aware of these problems and report them to the Park Keeper or, if necessary, to the police.

## LIGHTING

The installation of lighting along the main paths has been completed recently and most of the lights are now on, leaving only the lights up from the garden centre unlit.

## CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

You might ask "What do the Friends achieve?"

We have lobbied hard for a Park Keeper, seeing such an appointment as being an all-round asset and improvement to the safe and efficient running of the park.

The full-size basket ball court should provide a previously missing facility for young people.

General maintenance and litter collection is largely satisfactory, and if it is not then we take up the matter with the relevant Council officers. Although we are quite independent we have all the contacts in that direction, and being a recognised representative body we have more influence.

Equally, negative aspects can be in the interests of park users, such as opposing a through cyclist route across the park.

Dogs are welcome in the park but not so the owners who do not clear up after their dogs.

Your Committee would very much welcome comments and suggestions at any time both from Friends and members of the public, young and old. We would endeavour to take these up with the appropriate authorities, so that this popular and pleasant area can remain of benefit and pleasure to all the inhabitants of Mill Hill and those from further afield who also make use of it.

## FRIENDS OF PARKS NEWSLETTER

Attached is a copy of the recent edition.

## MEMBERSHIP

One or two members have still to rejoin. We hope that they will and attach a form for those who may need one.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ted Anderson (Chairman)	959 2979
Joan Telfer (Treasurer)	959 1499
Joanne Anderson (Secretary)	959 2979
David Bailey	959 2373
Marion Dewing	959 5013
Guy Patton	959 5442
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