

Friends of Mill Hill Park

Spring 2015

Circular No: 31

Our "Keeperless" Park

Until approximately two years ago all parks in the Borough of Barnet had a Park Keeper. At one time Mill Hill had the aptly named Mr Gardener, and then latterly, Bruce. Bruce played a very important part in the upkeep and maintenance of the Park and in the quality of the environment.



He was always busy clearing litter, especially after summer weekends. He watered newly planted shrubs, making sure they survived in dry weather, and was always on hand to keep an eye out for any anti-social behaviour, and to answer queries. On his own initiative he started a small gardening club for local primary school children by the old toilet block near the Wise Lane Car Park. You can still see the butterflies on the wall of the building.

His presence is keenly missed. Only a month ago an illegal fight took place on the third tennis court, the second time this has happened. The net had to be replaced and the court cleared.

There is also no one to regulate the use of the tennis courts, which at busy times in the summer, can mean players having to wait a very long time for a game if others refuse to give up a court. However we are pleased that the tennis courts are free and with a little consideration from all using the courts, are a shared asset for children and adults alike.

Our small committee does its best to keep an eye on things, but we do need your help. As you walk your dog or jog round the Park please keep a look out for any problems and report them to us. Our email address is on the Park Notice Board near the Cafe. We would also be glad to hear of any ideas and thoughts that you may have on improving the park environment and facilities.

Park Audit

Once a year your committee organises a Park Audit. We visit all areas of the Park and report back to the Parks and Open Spaces Officer on our findings, giving praise where it is due, and pointing out any problems that may have arisen. One of our main concerns stemming from the Audit is the state of the flowerbeds outside the cafe, the Bowling Club and the first tennis court. After our report last year, shrubs were planted, but it was just

before a very dry spell, and no follow up care was given. As a result most withered away. The beds near the Wise Lane Car Park are attended to but for some reason not these. A Park Keeper would have solved the problem.

Our effectiveness in dealing with these issues is much hampered by the reduction in Council Staff. There are so few Parks and Green Spaces Officers now that it is often impossible for attention to be given to smaller, though annoying problems.

We are still trying to persuade the Council to construct a skateboard area for the older children to use. We feel this is an age group that has not been catered for. At the time of writing we have the support of a Local Councillor, the MH Neighbourhood Forum and are waiting for a Council response in relation to possible grants or other sources of fund raising.

Cricket Pavilion

We have encouraging information about the hideous container that replaced the burnt out Cricket Pavilion. Owing to the valiant efforts of the Mill Hill Neighbourhood Forum, and a letter of support from Friends of Mill Hill Park, the Council has agreed to fund a new (inflammable) building.

Hopefully we will see cricket in the Park again, perhaps even this summer. Having the pavilion will enable bookings to be made by amateur clubs who have drifted elsewhere.



Keep Walking

You may have read in the papers that a brisk 20 minute walk three times a week is better for your health both mental and physical than a visit to the gym. Our Park is ideal for this, a spacious and safe area in which to exercise. See you there!

Dog Walking

We with dogs enjoy the facility of the park, a rare place, where dogs may be let off the lead. We wish this to continue but it rests on the responsibility of dog owners to ensure their dog's behaviour does not pose a threat to people and we wish to keep the park a safe place for children. Or indeed attacks on other dogs in the park. It is also importance always to clean up after your dog and respect the environment.

Annual General Meeting

Our AGM is on Saturday March 28th at 10.30 am, to be held in the Bowling Club (next door to the cafe) by their kind permission. There will be coffee available beforehand. Do come and join us, it's your chance to bring up any topics that you feel need airing. Please tell your neighbours and friends who use the Park, and encourage them to come as well. We invite local councillors and representatives of the community who care about Mill Hill Park. Committee membership will also be duly nominated and elected.

It is also an opportunity to pay your annual subscription, if you do not do this by bankers' order. The subscription fee for one year is only £3 and enables us to make a difference and for you to participate in our activities.

We look forward to seeing you at the AGM and welcoming new members.



Committee Members

2014-2015

The committee meets bi-monthly.

Chair: Philippa Welch
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Treasurer: Ann Robinson
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Please send ideas on improvement in the Park to the email below:

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