

Friends of Mill Hill Park

Autumn 2015

Circular No: 32

Our Beautiful Park

With autumn we had the advantage of the magnificent sights of some of the trees as they changed colour and dropped their leaves. Because of the wet summer the leaves held on longer, and the change to autumnal tints slowed giving more time to appreciate the full splendour.

Especial note must be taken of the Scarlet Oak, next to the path in the Daws Lane entrance and also the Norway Maples further into the Park. Many of these trees, especially the large oaks, sit on the old field boundaries but there have been many planting schemes over the years. The oldest tree on record is in the Park extension across the A41 to commemorate the coronation of King George VI in 1937. There have been others since, among them one to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Her Majesty's accession to the throne. And there have been planting schemes initiated by the Mill Hill Preservation Society to celebrate the Millennium.

In 1991 the Community Nature Reserve was established. This was an ambitious project which included the nature pond but because of the lack of staff to oversee it, some of the original ideas have been abandoned. Luckily the wild flower field has proved very successful, and it is situated to the right of the



from the Daws Lane Car Park entrance.

What Have We Been Up To?

The past six months have been fairly quiet on the surface, but we have been busy behind the scenes. We continue to monitor the Park almost daily and report problems. Although low staffing levels mean we seldom get an immediate response, we continue to have a positive relationship with the park maintenance and regeneration Council staff.

At the end of July the Council were informed about two dead trees near the tennis courts, and reminded about a large branch which had fallen from another. An email was received on August 7th saying work would be carried out at the end of the month - at the time of writing the branch has gone but the trees remain - FMHP will keep safety at the heart of what we do.

As far as the cleanliness of the toilets is concerned (always an ongoing problem) there is some variability depending on what time of day you visit. Early in the morning they are usually spotless though sometimes lacking in soap and paper. On a recent visit at 2pm they were very unkempt, paper strewn everywhere. It is obviously not the fault of the Council that they are so misused. Oh for the days when Barnet employed an attendant to look after the park on a full time basis.

We have had one victory. After our Park Audit which took place in May, we drew attention to the problem of people exercising their dogs and leaving behind dog mess in the tennis courts. We now have "No Dog" notices on all the courts, basketball as well, provided by the Council. You now have authority back up if you politely point out that *Fido* should not be in there.

It is also encouraging to report that the standard of litter clearance and cleanliness seems to be holding up well.



The Neighbourhood Forum has been active in persuading the Council to remove the ugly graffiti covered containers that replaced the burnt down cricket pavilion. One has already gone and by the time this newsletter is distributed it is hoped that the other will have been removed too. We very much support them in their efforts to have a new pavilion erected and re-introduce cricket into the field

Skateboard Park Update

We are moving forward plans for a small skateboard park. There is a conspicuous lack of activities for the 12 to 18 year olds and we feel this would fill a large gap. We are applying for a community grant to help us in exploring the possibilities and, if the Council is agreeable, will apply for lottery funding. We hope with the increased emphasis on exercise and fitness and health in the community, and the growing population of young people, that we will be successful. Indeed skateboarding is being considered

as a sport to be included in the Olympic Games and we have heard from local young people that this is a facility that would bring social and leisure benefits as well. This initiative is supported by the Mill Hill Residents Association and the Neighbourhood forum.

Our Aims

As a Society we are here to try to ensure that the Park is well maintained as a beautiful and safe area for relaxation, and as a place where all age groups can enjoy different activities. Please let us know your thoughts on any improvements that might be made, or on any problems.

We also need your help in recruiting new members. A larger group will add weight to our powers of persuasion. Please ask your friends and other park users to join us. Our annual subscription is extremely reasonable - just £3.00 or £5.00 for a family membership.

If this newsletter comes with an attached slip it means your subscription is now due for this year. We would be grateful if you would send it to Ann Robinson our treasurer, or alternatively consider a standing order.

If you have ideas on how we might improve the park or you wish to be engaged or support specific plans and activities contact a member of the committee by email.

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