

# Friends of Mill Hill Park

Spring 2016

Circular No: 33

## Barnet Consultation on Parks and Open Spaces

This Newsletter is issued a little earlier than usual. Barnet Council is producing a questionnaire asking for the views and opinions from residents on our parks and open spaces. This is a great opportunity to make your voice heard by completing this document, and the Committee is urging you strongly to do this. If there is money to spend we want it spent wisely on improvements which will be well used, such as the success of the open air gym behind the Cafe. The consultation runs from January 18th but the closing date is March 13th, which is why we are asking you to act now. You can do it online at [engage.barnet.gov.uk](http://engage.barnet.gov.uk) or you can fill a paper form. You can obtain one by ringing 020 8359 4642. Please do join in this very useful exercise.

## Keeping an Eye on Park Problems

This winter has been so wet, but Park users are determined and have used the walks and the Cafe in all weathers. This is extremely important, as without our much regretted Park Keeper we rely on our members, and indeed the

general public, to report any problems they come across so we can pick up on any issues at the earliest stage.

## Park Maintenance



Park maintenance is vital. Early this year it was reported to us that a dog had got through the fence bordering Wise Lane and had been run over. Reportedly this had caused a traffic accident involving three cars, and sadly the dog did not survive. There is a wire and wooden paling fence that should have prevented this. One of the Committee investigated this and found that some of the palings had rotted causing gaps which were not visible to walkers on the park side of the hedge. We have immediately contacted the Council, and hope to see the repairs carried out swiftly.

We have also informed the Council about the large branch that came down in the autumn from one of the oak trees near the entrance to the tunnel under the A41.

>We have asked for a notice reminding dog owners to clean up after their pets to be put on the railings by the Cafe. This seems to be a favourite spot for dogs for some reason and it is most unpleasant. We do ask owners to be responsible and to set a good example. Owners are responsible for their dogs and it is a by-law offence with a fine enforceable by the Council – more people need to be made aware of this and we will look with the Council of more community education and awareness on dog fouling both in the Park and on general walkways.

## Skateboarding Area

Our efforts to provide a small skateboarding area are progressing albeit slowly. Our application to the Borough for the initial grant was deferred to the March Community Grant Committee Meeting so we will not know the outcome until then. In other ways the Council are supporting our initiative and we will be meeting Council representatives from the Open Space team to progress our ideas. We are also in the process of producing a

questionnaire by way of consultation with users of the park and the community. Learning the views of the community will assist us to provide evidence for any future Lottery Fund Application. We are heartened by the success of the skateboard park in Friary Park that is positively used by local teens and is being upgraded. Providing a facility for skateboarding will enable young people to use a space designed for that purpose rather than makeshift platforms and or using the paths round the Cafe. We feel that having a special area will concentrate their activities there and will work alongside the other activity spaces in the park. You will be consulted so we have your views before proceeding to design and build. We have the support of the council in principle (subject to community consultation), and the Residents Association and the Neighbourhood Forum.

### **Country Fair**

A firm has approached the Council about the possibility of holding a country fair in the Park in the summer, although the idea seems initially interesting, we raised the issue of access, and especially parking. When we held a Party in the Park to celebrate the arrival of the new playground equipment the parking problems were horrendous. Residents were unable to get to their houses in Poets Corner, the 240 bus could not get through, and the Traffic Wardens made the Borough a lot of money. We have put these views to the Council, at the time of writing it is expected

that a country fair will go ahead and there is continuing liaison in its planning.

### **Annual General Meeting 2016**

Our AGM is going to be held this year on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Bowling Club has once again kindly given us permission to hold it in their Clubhouse next to the Cafe. It will be at 10.00 am for a 10.30 am start and we will conclude business by 12.00 at the latest. There will be refreshments, and an opportunity to pay your subscriptions. If you don't already pay by standing order please consider doing so, it is so helpful.

We look forward to seeing you at the AGM and hearing your views and consider new ways of improving the park facility for all.

### **Committee Members**

The committee meets quarterly with additional meetings as and when required, we are keen to engage all park users in keeping the park a safe and enjoyable space for all. If you as a member wish to see the park improved in any way or have a contribution to make, or know someone in your road who enjoys the park, please feel free to come to the AGM on 2<sup>nd</sup> April where alongside updates and committee elections there will be an 'open floor' session.

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*'Spring is in the air' with the early daffodils in the park.*