



Friends of Mill Hill Park

Residents committed to making a difference

Autumn 2021 | Newsletter 43

The view from the Chair

In accepting the position of Chair of the Friends of Mill Hill Park, handed on in such good state from Philippa, my first aim was to see if we could integrate the Park more within the community life of Mill Hill and its surrounds.

At the same time, Barnet Burrough Arts Council, led by our local Councillor John Hart and Hon. Secretary Pam Edwards, were looking to extend the BBAC-sponsored Theatre in the Park from its base in East Barnet to the west of the Council area, where Mill Hill Park, and in particular, its unused 2nd Bowling Green, seemed to offer the perfect home. As a trial run this year we hosted four plays; The adventures of Peter Rabbit, A Midsummer Night's Dream, HMS Pinafore, and Dr Dolittle. We did so in torrential rain (MSND), very strong sunshine (DD), and cloudy but dry (Pinafore and Peter); and under Covid spatial restrictions with the help of our Stewards, organised by Cathrine Clarke. There were problems, but overall we attracted relatively large and enthusiastic audiences of all ages; and found that the spare bowling Green was a marvellous host for such evens - flat and large enough to hold at least 400, excellent acoustics, and an unexpected boost in having everyone visible on the same enclosed level, so parents relaxed and children enjoyed themselves.



Cast, Stewards & organisers of Peter Rabbit which attracted an audience of over 250

You will have noted that this successful introduction of Theatre in the Park involved the collaborative effort of FMHP, MHRA, Rotary, and more recently the Bowling Club who have provided us with secure storage space for the generator, gazebo and the like. This is going to become the norm as we combine forces to tackle increasingly more



ambitious projects for the community of Mill Hill (see below).

Fate of the Pavilion and spare bowling green, out to tender.

This introduction of Theatre in the Park on the spare Bowling Green has happened against a background where the area in the Pavilion that previously housed the Nursery, and the spare bowling green, are going out to tender for commercial development. Will the Green be awarded on purely economic grounds (2,500^{sqm} for development within pristine Park?); or will it be awarded on the benefit its new use will bring to Mill Hill? Clearly, both factors will play a role, but there has been, and continues to be, massive flat/housing development in Mill Hill with little matching social development. Frank Orman is following this issue in detail on behalf of Mill Hill Residents Association and the Friends of Mill Hill Park. I doubt if any issue of comparable importance affecting our community's use of the Park will occur in our life time. This is an issue on which FMHP, MHRA, Rotary and our Councillors need to work together.

And for 2022...

For 2022 and beyond, we would like to run more events across the seasons of the year.

- 2022 is itself a special year as it is the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. With this, an extended long weekend of Thursday 2nd to Sunday 5th June will be the focus of national celebrations. Could we use this occasion for complementary events in the Park to showcase Mill Hill?
- Following our 2021 success with Theatre in the Park events, we would like to cluster other activities around these events on the same day. Face painting by Spinning Tops has been a start; can we add other events (e.g. musical) that make these family days?

Expanding our membership: we need more enthusiastic members to support this higher level of involvement.

- And I think we will finally have to embrace modern social media such as Facebook to enable us to have impact beyond our membership.



FMHP Tea Quiz

Thursday, October 7th in the Bowling Club.

The time is 2.00 for 2.15 start. It will be led by 'Chelle and Jim Paice. The cost is £10.00 including a raffle ticket. Sandwiches and homemade cakes will be provided. Book and learn more by calling 0208 959 2958 or emailing pm.welch@icloud.com