



## Clissold Park User Group News

### COVID-19 update, July 2020

To all Clissold Park users

We are clearly living in very strange times, and we have already missed two public CPUG meetings, so we are writing to give you an update on how things are going in the park, and hopefully explain why some things are happening, or not happening yet.

It is clear **that the park has been hugely important to many people in the area** over the past few months, and there has inevitably been some conflicts of interest at times. For many local residents Clissold Park has been their only access to outside space, whether that is for exercise while the gyms and fitness clubs are closed, or to allow children to burn off some energy or just to get some fresh air and clear their heads.

The **Council made an early decision that they would keep public parks across the borough open** if it was at all possible, and they have done this with remarkable success. The park staff have worked throughout, with the rangers and gardeners trying to keep on top of the ever changing situation on the ground, and many of the office based staff helping out delivering food supplies to vulnerable residents and other Covid-19 related emergency procedures.

**The User Group would like to offer thanks** to all of the people who have been involved in these efforts - from the town hall and elected members for their strategic planning, the parks department for the enormous amount of work day to day to keep the park available to us all and to the park users who have compromised and considered others and used their common sense to allow as many of us as possible to keep using this valuable and much loved place. Thank you to you all. It hasn't always been easy, but the park seems to have achieved an equilibrium which is a credit to everyone who has been involved.

One of the inevitable consequences of the increased use of the park has been **an increase in litter**. There are now a number of large skip bins in some of the busiest areas of the park, and we ask that if you can't take your waste home with you - where much of it could be recycled - please use the bins. If the regular bins are full please make the extra effort to take rubbish to the new skip bins.

There have also been several volunteer **litter-picking sessions** in the park. They have so far been held at 2pm on Fridays - meet behind the pavilion at the old bowling green. Please keep an eye on our Facebook page and Twitter feed for details as they may change week on week.

The **toilets** on the north side of Clissold House have been open for several weeks. The opening hours are restricted and currently they do not open until noon and are occasionally closed at short notice to allow for the necessary additional cleaning. There are also additional toilets in the bowling green pavilion which will be open during busy times. In peak times some people have been using the bushes as toilets and we really would like to discourage this. The Council message that you should go home if you need to go still applies.

The **playground** is also now open. Again, there is a requirement for extra cleaning, so if it not open when you get there please be patient. And also, be aware that the social distancing guidelines still need to be respected. I know it can be hard with children, but if we can all do our best.

The last **community meeting on street robberies** scheduled for the 16th June had to be postponed and has now been rescheduled for Wednesday 7th October 2020 at 6.30 pm. This meeting may be held on Microsoft Teams and joining instructions will be sent out nearer the time.

The theme of the meeting will be around developing a Public Health Approach to street robberies and peer on peer violence amongst adolescents in Hackney. The [Youth Violence Commission published a report](#) on serious youth violence this month (July 2020) - where this approach is discussed.

The User Group has given away about 65 copies of our **fold-up map of the park**. We are now charging again (£2.50 each) and we will give a donation to the Hackney food bank for every copy sold. Since we started charging again, we have sold seven fold-up maps and three posters, which means £10 goes to the food bank. Many thanks to Caroline Millar for organising this and delivering the maps around the area.

The **butterfly dome** has been inaccessible during lockdown, with the whole area closed to the public for safety reasons. Fortunately, there were no caterpillars in the dome. Once the area becomes accessible the situation will be assessed and plans made to get it up and running again, even if that means starting again with new plants.

The following is an update from Paul Mason, who is the manager of **the cafe in Clissold House**:

“All of us at the cafe appreciate the support we've had from our regulars regarding the take-away operation which has been in place since post-lockdown. We are currently aiming for a late August reopening of the cafe. We recently placed tables and chairs outside of the ground floor cafe in line with the government's easing of lockdown restrictions. Our team continues to support the park in carrying out litter pick sessions twice daily. We have been talking with some local suppliers as of late and hope to introduce their products into our operation very shortly. We also aim to start selling bird seed, with part of the revenue on these going directly to the User Group.”

We obviously don't know when we will be able to hold another **public meeting**, but as soon as it becomes possible, we will let you know. We may hold an extraordinary meeting as a catch up, or we might just wait for the next scheduled meeting depending on the timing. Until we can meet again please stay safe and look out for others whilst we all continue to enjoy Clissold Park.

I have also been asked to make a special mention of the **flower beds at the front of the lodge** by the Green Lanes gate opposite Sainsbury's. They are not to everybody's taste, but they have certainly cheered up many people in these difficult times.

All the best from the elected officers of the Clissold Park User Group.