



Clissold Park User Group News

May 2022 update

Present and Apologies

Mark Forsyth - Chair
Theresa Boden - Vice chair
Richard Crawford- Vice chair & Biodiversity rep
Caroline Millar - Treasurer
Delilah Jeary - Minutes secretary
Amir Dotan - History Rep
Quentin Geurs - Park Manager
Sophie Cameron
Hilde Ode
and several other park users

Apologies

Daphne Steele, John Hudson (Vice chair), Yvonne, Isabelle Gore

Introductions and Previous Minutes

Previous minutes approved

Park Manager's report

The **cafe** has bought new furniture for upstairs and is also getting new parasols for downstairs. The move towards a zero single use plastic policy is going well - salt and pepper sachets are now completely compostable. All prepped food now has all the nutritional information on it.

A **new general manager** has been appointed for Clissold House as Hannah is moving on. The new person will start in late May and there will be an update at the next CPUG public meeting.

Work on **the splash pad** is under way and it is hoped that it can be finished by the end of June, which means that it should be up and running in time for the school summer holidays.

Consultations around the **old pool** location will happen after the completion of the splash pad and will depend a little on how much money is left over from that work. There are some great ideas in the mix.

The **sustainable drainage project (SUDS)**, to deal with water run-off and allow slower filtration in key areas around the ponds, is on-going. Designs have been put in and it is being costed.

Plants have been ordered for the pleasure garden around the house. A way needs to be found to stop people of all ages from running and playing on the beds, damaging any plants in the area.

The **tender for the pump house** is finally live! As anyone who has come along to meetings over the past few years will be aware, this has been a long time coming. Anyone is welcome to put forward a proposal for it - details can be found at:

https://procontract.duenorth.com/Advert?advertId=95104d2e-66cf-ec11-8114-005056b64545&p=2241eb95-058a-e511-80f7-000c29c9ba21&fbclid=IwAR3VVqcpobmV0riDiRjdptwUWxkOxUIjxgHXQ10BfjEWOCgWI_v95jZgB20 .

Planning consent exists for a small retail or service business such as dog grooming or cafe / kiosk. A five-year lease is being offered.

Aviary - people have expressed concern over the lack of stimulation in the aviary. The staff who look after the birds are looking into putting plants back inside, but the birds may destroy the plants creating ideal conditions for rodents. Tougher plants that the birds can't damage are being looked into. The birds and all the animals are dearly loved and regularly looked after by a vet.

Terrapins are still present in the ponds. QG has looked at ways to remove them but it is a vicious

circle as no single organisation has a solution that meets all our criteria. If you catch them, you are unable to move them anyway. RSPCA and Natural England don't really have the answers either.

A Rocket composter will be installed as part of a ten-year strategy to become a zero-carbon service, with the aim to reduce and reuse green waste on our site. This composter will be for the cafe and the kiosk, keeping everything on site. It will take 50 litres of organic waste a day and turns it into compost in 48 hours.

Toilet refurbishment options are being considered to refit the park toilets as they are not fit for purpose in the summer. It is going to be very expensive but it is hoped that work can start this year. Recent vandalism has meant that the cubicle in the male toilet is currently out of action, but it will be repaired as quickly as possible.

A **volunteering session** will be held on Friday 20th May from 2-4pm, clearing woodland in the north side of the park. There will also be a litter pick and possibly spreading of some wood chip. If you want to join in please register an interest here:-
https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/woodland-litter-picking-tickets-329823148917?fbclid=IwAR2qysIENIDfPZwIBvptAfjTux9rATmKl6d2riFzdLsNTVB8chPCK_3YQWo

The **drinking fountains** were turned off during the pandemic. QG will look into turning them back on. Some repairs will be necessary.

The **wildflower bed** along the west side of the park is being trampled by people who are using it as a path. The signs were blown away in the storms earlier in the year, and the replacements were removed by park users. Park staff do not feel it has been a success, and it will probably be necessary to fence the area if this is to be repeated, although this particular location may not be ideal for a bed of this sort. Lessons learned will be fed into future plans. It was suggested that logs could be used to mark the area, which have the benefit of encouraging wildflowers and wildlife as well as preventing people walking over the beds. Logs and rotting wood have been successfully used in other parts of the park.

Bedding plants have been ordered for the more formal beds around the park. The original planting scheme has been adjusted to remove some of the sensitive plants from the list in favour of more robust

species. These beds will be planted in the coming weeks.

The **bins to the front of the house** have been wrapped up since the start of the pandemic and are now full of rotten refuse. QG will look into having them emptied, cleaned and brought back into use.

Many of the **signs around the park** have been either removed or are no longer readable. New signs telling people to keep dogs out of the New River are needed to help protect the nesting birds in the area. New signs will also be placed around the ponds asking people not to throw bread and saying that bird food is available at the cafe.

The **information signs around the new splash pad** area seem to be in the wrong place and QG will look at providing more signs in better positions, also possibly including pictures of what the final result will look like,

The meeting was reminded that the **User Group public meetings are held on the second Saturday of every second month**. If you want to sign up to the mailing list to receive a reminder of the meetings go to www.clissoldpark.com, there is a button on the right-hand side of the homepage.

The **fountains in the pond** should be back up and running.

History panels for Clissold House are being reprinted and will be going up shortly.

Updates since last meeting

A length of **new hedge** which was purchased by the User Group has been planted on the south boundary of the park along Stoke Newington Church Street to the west of the old paddling pool. Park staff are watering it with the bowser. It was suggested that the User Group could buy some more hedging plants to fill gaps in existing hedges. QG will look into what is needed and it will be further discussed at a future meeting.

The **old paddling pool area** is being opened for park users. If the gate is open everybody is welcome to use the area, but please remember that it is a dog-free area.

A **memorial will be held for Tony Cumberbatch** at 15.00 on Saturday 21st May. Tony was a well-loved long term user of the park, and a refurbished bench

will be unveiled in his memory on the path leading from the drinking fountain to the corner of Green Lanes and Church Street.

A memorial will also be held for Sylvia Anderson, a long-standing member of CPUG who was our representative looking after the interests of older park users for many years. The event will be at Saturday 28th May at 16.15 at the Claremont Project, 24 - 27 White Lion Street, N1 9PD.

Some people have asked if there could be **adult access to the new splash pad**. The playground and old paddling pool had a policy that only people with children could go into the area, it has been suggested that there could be sort times where adults without children could use the facility. QG will look into the practicalities.

Proposed Expenditure

The meeting was asked to agree to spend £650 in support of an initiative run by an organisation called Healthy Minds, Healthy Bods (HMHB), who are proposing that they will hold weekly walks in Clissold Park with the intention of improving the physical and mental health of participants. The plan is that walks will take place every week, on Thursday mornings from 11am - 12.30, for an initial 6 months from June to November 2022. The walks will involve a maximum 30 people and hopefully feature occasional guests to highlight things such as trees or aspects of the history of the park. The money provided by the User Group will help pay for refreshments and to advertise the events.

The meeting unanimously agreed to this proposal. The cafe will be asked if they can offer a discount on refreshments for the walks. Lawrence Curtis from HMHB will report back to the User Group at the September meeting.

Further information about Healthy Minds, Healthy Bods can be found at www.hmhb2016.org.uk

It was pointed out that **other groups already organise walks in the park**, for instance on Tuesday and Thursdays at 1pm there is a walk for older people and Statham Grove Surgery has a walk once a week. We will try to find details of these events and include them on our website and social media feeds.

The meeting was also asked to **provide money to purchase caterpillars** to be placed in the butterfly dome. The dome is in a good shape and can now provide food and shelter for caterpillars. The plan is

to buy in some caterpillars, feed them up and keep them safe within the dome and then release them into the park when they have pupated in the hope of establishing butterfly populations in the park. £250 was agreed by the User Group

Nesting Birds

The meeting was reminded about areas of the park where birds nest and the need for extra care in these areas. Richard Crawford, the User Group bio-diversity rep, is speaking to QG about possible signs to raise awareness of the issues.

Vote for new CPUG Chair

Mark Forsyth has previously said that he would like to stand down as chair of the User Group, and Sophie Cameron agreed to stand as the new chair.

Mark resigned from his position as chair and thanks were offered by the meeting for his time as chair.

Theresa Boden, group vice chair, took the chair, Caroline Millar proposed Sophie as the new chair, seconded by Theresa and the meeting voted unanimously for Sophie to become chair. Sophie is a long-standing participant in the User Group and has previously been a Hackney Councillor for the Clissold Ward. Sophie introduced herself to the meeting and was welcomed by all present.

Existing committee members have all agreed to keep on in their current roles to support the handover.

It was again stated that the User Group is very keen to bring in voices of all park users and especially the ones who don't always get represented at the meetings.

AOB

The meeting minutes will be put on the website as soon as they are available.

The **Antiques Roadshow** is coming to Clissold Park from 8th - 11th July with filming taking place on Sunday 10th. It is a ticketed event and is sold out. There will be some disruption in the area around the house for the whole time the crew are in the park. The old rose garden, the hardstanding and the dog-free area will all be used and will be inaccessible for that time. A question was asked whether this will provide money for Hackney parks, but the answer is uncertain. There shouldn't be an impact on football

and other activities in the park, but it will mean much of the house is inaccessible to the public, although the main cafe area on the raised ground floor of the house will remain open.

Because of the filming in the weekend of the 9th July the next User Group meeting will be held on Saturday 16th July