

## **Minutes, CPUG Nature Recovery meeting, 23<sup>rd</sup> February**

Attendees: 27 people at the meeting including Quinten Geurs, area manager Hackney parks and green spaces) and Russell Miller (local ecology consultant)

Richard Crawford, CPUG Biodiversity officer introduced the meeting, which had 3 aims:

1. To think of ways we can raise public awareness of biodiversity in Clissold Park.
2. To find common ground between different groups of park users around a plan for Nature recovery.
3. To form a group of park users concerned about Nature Recovery in Clissold park to take the discussion forward.

2). Russell Miller, a local ecology consultant, talked about the Hackney North Marsh Habitat improvement project he is coordinating and suggested some ways in which the ecology of Clissold park could be enhanced to provide sustainable habitats for species such as toads, frogs, beetles and insects that provide food for creatures higher up the food chain such as hedgehogs. He suggested that we should test the water quality of the ponds and the New River to make sure that they have a healthy ecosystem. Grassland areas need careful management to encourage plants to seed and insects to thrive. Hedges should be planted along the park's borders, comprised of mixed species of shrub to encourage butterflies. Both bees and butterflies would benefit from more wild flower planting.

An attendee suggested that we could start a 'sponsor a meter of wildflowers' scheme to raise funds to help progress this last suggestion.

3) A general discussion was held on how we could take Nature Recovery in Clissold Park further:

Quinten (area manager Hackney parks and green spaces and former Clissold Park manager ) told us that the butterfly dome was now being used to propagate wild flower seeds and cuttings before being planted out in the Park. He also promised to look again at putting up interpretative boards that give park users information about species of birds using the bottom ponds. It was suggested that other boards could be designed by local schools. Another suggestion was to look for commercial sponsorship of information boards. CPUG could consider a small donation towards costs.

We discussed some of the problems that threaten biodiversity, such as vermin, e.g. rats and terrapins, and litter. It was agreed that everyone could help remove litter from the park. It was also noted that the park café was using non-recyclable cups and no longer sold bird food that it had previously sold. Leaf blowing came under criticism not only for being noisy but also for removing leaf litter that could be used as compost around trees.

We discussed the possibility of carrying out another Bioblitz in the old paddling

pond area. Someone suggested that this area would make a good 'quiet' space for older people if it was planted with wild flowers and flowering shrubs to make a 'scented garden'. We must also be aware of nocturnal species (like bats) that use the park when we do the next bioblitz.

It was felt that we need to engage more with other groups of park users, such as organized sports groups, about managing the park ecology better. CPUG Chair Sophie Cameron said she would be happy to write to the groups identified asking for a contribution towards CPUG.

A number of people put their names down for a group that would meet in the near future to take this discussion forward (marked with \* in the attendance list).

Richard Crawford  
26<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024