



## Clissold Park User Group meeting minutes May 2026

**Attendees** (that signed in)

**Officers/Reps:** Alexandra Hamit - Chair, Daphne Steele - Dog Rep, Paul Brenells – Over 60s Rep, Emily Robson – Children and Young Persons Rep, Yvonne Hill and Hilde Oord - Fundraising Reps.

**Park users:** Fliss Premu, Betty Manning, Julie Ibbott, Cyndy Diamond, Pamela, Shelagh Prosser, Chloe Rollscare and Chris Kimber.

1. **Apologies:** Richard Crawford – Biodiversity Rep, Amir Dotan – History Rep and
2. **Minutes of previous meeting:** Circulated and approved.
3. **Chair's Report**

### Café

Group heard that brass plaque displaying incorrect access information has been removed, the Council reported that they are not considering a handrail for the house steps, and disabled access to the dining room, should be via the Rose Garden kiosk. Questions on how widely this is known and if there is any signage to guide users.

**Action: Alexandra to contact Fink's.**

### E-Bike campaign/crossing consultation

Group awaiting confirmation on Road Safety Audit and Traffic Management plan. Plans to meet with new councillors, to go over discussions had with Cllr Sarah Young.

**Action: Alexandra to reach out to new councillors, and the Hackney Parks Forum, to keep group updated.**

### Biodiversity and Tree Damage

Council awaiting quote for new pumps for new river. Group read statement from Council on tree management plan. Trees in parks, along highways and communal housing areas are inspected every 3 years from ground level. Woodland trees are only inspected if they are within falling distance of a path, highway, building or infrastructure. Trees near play areas are inspected every year. The tree which recently fell in 42mph winds and damaged two vehicles, had not showed any visible signs of damage that would've prompted it to be removed. Suggestion that education from the Council on damaged or diseased trees, may help the public spot and report potential disease, risk etc group advised any problems with trees can be reported to [parks@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:parks@hackney.gov.uk) Offer for donation of more water lillies for the New River, and suggestion that CPUG fund more oxygenating plants for the area. Noted that these cannot be introduced until the pump is working. Question on what oxygenating and filtering plantlife is currently in the park water ways.

**Action: Alexandra to get update on pump quote and make an enquiry on educational material on trees. Richard to liaise on water lilies and plantlife.**

### Self Closing Gates

Ongoing concerns about park gates not closing properly and trialed self-closing mechanisms failing. Some gates are difficult or impossible to open due to poor-fitting mechanisms and ageing infrastructure. Discussion that gates may need replacing entirely to support modern self-closing systems. Playground fencing redesign is expected to include standard self-closing gates. Questions asked on need for self closing gates. Concerns raised about children being able to run out of enclosed areas, entering dog-free spaces and certain gates remaining permanently open, especially near the toilets/café delivery area. "No dogs" signs have reportedly been moved to railings for better visibility, and new, more eye-catching signs being designed by the Council. Suggestion made for café operators Fink's to display signage stating the downstairs kiosk/rose garden area is dog-free. Café representatives reportedly declined responsibility, stating signage is a council matter. Group expressed frustration at inconsistent dog policies between indoor café spaces and outdoor kiosk areas. Budget concerns noted, group informed that fencing and railings are reviewed within a 3-year Hackney parks budget cycle, and arranged into a traffic light system, by order of importance/risk.

**Action: Alexandra to chase next steps.**

### Park Animals

Update received regarding plans to improve the aviary. Park officer to meet with head gardener, CPUG Park Animals Rep Sally Hall and campaign lead Abi, to discuss next steps. Clarified that aviary birds are rescues and cannot simply be released. Suggestions included educational/information signage explaining the birds' backgrounds.

**Action: Council to update. Group to explore creating informational signage.**

### Defibrillator

Defibrillator purchased through community fundraising. Original installation site (tennis pavilion) unsuitable due to existing internal unit. Proposed new location: splash pad area. Delay caused by council approvals and waiting for electrician quote.

**Action: Yvonne to chase quote.**

### Playground Renovations

Awaiting results from February consultation sessions. Public feedback is being used to develop a draft redesign for further consultation. No confirmed timeline given.

**Action: Emily to follow up with Council for progress update.**

### Rose Garden

Corporate volunteer day completed which included Rose Garden maintenance, installation of five bird boxes. Questions asked on location of bird boxes. Concerns raised about dead saplings in the Tiny Forest area. Watering requires Council-operated equipment.

**Action: Richard to contact Earth Watch re saplings, liaise with park management on Tiny Forest watering in dry weather and produce map of bird box locations.**

### Prohibited Action Sign Design Flaws

Signs continue breaking due to weak fixing rings, despite thicker zip ties being used. Council previously acknowledged design flaws but no permanent solution implemented. Members requested greater accountability from Council/manufacture, particularly due to use of public funds for faulty signage. Cycle speed roundel markings have also deteriorated quickly.

**Action: Alexandra to follow up.**

### Paddling Pool Area

Fallen and damaged metal fencing around the former paddling pool area has been removed following ongoing concerns that it posed a greater health and safety risk than the open space itself. Members noted that fencing had repeatedly been pushed down or damaged by park users, particularly where the area is used informally for seating and skateboarding. Discussion took place around whether fencing is necessary at all, with some members suggesting the space should remain open for informal public use rather than attempting to restrict access. Issues around liability were discussed. It was confirmed that the paddling pool area has not been formally condemned, but remains unused and without a current redevelopment plan. Previous public consultation indicated support for transforming the space into a combination of outdoor gym facilities and wildflower/re-wilded areas. The council advised that there is currently no budget or timeline allocated for redevelopment of the site, as priority is being given to ongoing refurbishment projects elsewhere in the park, including the playground and depot. Any future plans for the area will require a new public consultation process. Concerns raised on Council consultation processes, and wildflower meadow planting, which took the space away from local schools and users without consultation. Hackney Council deems monthly updates sufficient. Group heard that the Hackney Parks Forum for user group, along with Hackney Council, are currently looking at the constitution and protocol, with a view to bring it up-to-date with more realistic expectations from both sides.

**Action: Alexandra to update group.**

### Park Keepers Lodge

Group heard tours are available by emailing: [info@clissoldpark.com](mailto:info@clissoldpark.com). Group discussed One O'Clock Club timetable, and getting previously public but currently unused spaces within the park, back into public use. Suggestion to involve the new councillors and mayor.

**Action: To be kept on agenda until a use for the lodge once staff vacate, has been decided upon.**

### Rough Sleeper

A rough sleeper had been occupying a tent in the wooded area of the park for several weeks. The council and StreetLink were aware of the situation and had been supporting the individual. During park volunteering, it was confirmed by the head gardener, Ash, that the camp was being removed. Concerns raised included increasing rubbish, rats, human waste, barbecuing in a dry area of the park, and reports of drug use and groups gathering at the site. It was noted that while there is sympathy for homeless individuals and recognition of the wider housing issue, public

cannot become permanent encampment areas. Discussion highlighted differing public opinions on whether areas of public parks should need to be avoided due to encampments.

**Action: No further action.**

### Quote for Noticeboard

The notice board key has been lost for several years despite repeated requests to the council for access. At one stage, one side of the notice board was left unlocked, allowing community notices and park information to be displayed, but a third party subsequently placed material inside and locked the board, leaving no current access. The council has stated it is unwilling to fund repairs to the notice board, so the group offered to cover repair costs themselves, which include new locks and replacement of the plastic front, the backing fabric and cork, which is damaged and prevents notices from being pinned properly. A repair quote of approximately £440 was obtained and discussed at the previous meeting, and a separate quote for replacing or repairing the lock/key has now been requested by the council. Members expressed frustration at the lack of progress, there was also discussion about the possibility of the group taking primary control of the notice board once repaired.

**Action: Alexandra to update group once quote is received.**

### Leaf Blowers

Following complaints from local residents about petrol leaf blowers being used regularly from approximately 7:30–8:00AM, an email was sent from a resident to the former mayor and, clarification was received that electric leaf blowers should be used wherever possible and that leaf blowers should not be operated before 9:00AM. Park staff were reminded of the guidance regarding operating times and the preference for electric equipment. It was noted that the park initially did not have electric leaf blowers, but these were later ordered following requests. Staff reported operational challenges with the electric equipment, including limited battery life of around 40 minutes, requiring frequent recharging and making them difficult to use within existing work schedules. The parks representative explained that staff work to strict schedules, including deadlines for waste collection by council vehicles, which affects equipment choices and working practices. Alternatives such as using rakes instead of blowers were discussed, although it was acknowledged that staff time pressures and operational requirements currently take priority.

**No further action.**

### Duck Ramps

CPUG funded and installed duck ramps, which have now been repaired and are reportedly being used by ducklings and other waterfowl. Members noted that the ramps work well when water levels are high, but become more difficult to use as water levels drop. Suggestions were made to install additional ramps, as some larger birds, including Canada geese, can block access points and prevent smaller birds from using them. Members acknowledged the considerable effort already made to improve accessibility, including the use of ropes, nails, and flotation methods. There was discussion about adding improved flotation devices to help ramps rise and fall more effectively with changing water levels. Concerns were raised about the increasing number of herons in the ponds and the impact on ducklings and goslings. Members reflected on the natural balance of the ecosystem, acknowledging that while predation is upsetting to witness, it is part of the natural food chain. A suggestion was made that increasing fish stocks in the ponds could provide an alternative food source for herons.

**Action: To be monitored and faults reported.**

### Hackney Mosaic

An email was sent several months ago to Hackney Mosaic enquiring about commissioning mosaic artwork for Clissold Park, but no response was received to the initial enquiry, or follow up messages sent via Instagram. Members noted that Hackney Mosaic is currently dealing with significant disruption, including being moved out of its existing premises, which may explain the lack of communication. It was agreed that the group should continue trying to make contact rather than abandoning the idea at this stage.

**Action: Alexandra to follow up.**

### CPUG Officer and Representative Openings

Group informed CPUG have a new volunteer to stand for Treasurer and a new Website Rep, but are still looking for a Cycling Rep, Café Rep and a Secretary.

**Action: Alexandra to continue to advertise positions.**

### Fountains and Drains

The memorial fountain has experienced repeated issues over a number of years, including sticking taps and water waste. It was noted that specialist contractors, including fountain repair specialists, have previously been consulted, and the fountain has been adjusted again and the water supply restored. The Council hopes this will provide a permanent fix. Replacing the taps was identified as a possible long-term solution, although there has been reluctance to remove the original fittings due to the fountain's age and heritage value. Members were asked to report any further problems directly to the council or park email address, and it was agreed that if the current repair fails again, replacement of the taps or a more substantial refurbishment may need to be considered. Members discussed the possibility of applying for grant funding in future if larger restoration works become necessary.

**Action: Sticking and leaking taps to be reported to the group and Council.**

### Growing Communities Update

Growing Communities welcomed two new food-growing trainees to the site. The traineeship programme runs one day a week over a seven-month period, and both trainees are progressing well. Existing and new volunteers continue to participate regularly and are enjoying the spring season at the site. Volunteers have nearly completed planting the bean, cucumber, and tomato beds in the polytunnel, as well as two outdoor salad polytunnels. Significant wildlife activity has been observed on the site, including approximately 10 frogs and toads, as well as several newts found feeding on slugs beneath tarpaulin in the polytunnel area. Additional wildlife sightings included a male and female duck near the pond, a mouse in the compost heap, and increasing numbers of ladybirds and hoverfly larvae. Growing Communities has welcomed approximately 100 visitors over the past couple of months, excluding informal nursery visits. Members also reported seeing frogspawn in the small pond, reflecting the increasing biodiversity at the site. Members noted that the Growing Communities plot is believed to be one of the few areas in the park where newts are regularly found.

**No further action.**

### Hackney Parks Rep Georgie Brown

Members discussed inviting Hackney Parks representative Georgie Brown to attend a future meeting, and it was noted that the current protocol states that a council representative should attend three meetings per year. Members acknowledged that the protocol is being updated to reflect current working arrangements. Georgie Brown currently works limited days within the Hackney area, which do not include weekends, making attendance at Saturday meetings difficult. Members discussed the possibility of arranging a

weekday meeting or scheduling a dedicated session specifically to enable council attendance.

**Action: Alexandra to make enquiries.**

### **AOB**

### AGM Date Change

Group informed that due to an event booking at Clissold House, the AGM has been moved to the 18th of July.

### **4. Key dates**

#### **Breeding Bird Survey**

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 7:15am  
Meet at Queen Elizabeth's Walk gate

#### **Bat Walk**

Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May 7:30pm – 8:30pm  
Meet at Fink's Pump House

#### **Clissold Park Litter Pick**

Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> May 10am  
Meet at Clissold House near drinking fountain

#### **CPUG Public Meeting Dates 2026**

**AGM** Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July  
Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September  
Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> November  
11am in the New River Room – Clissold House

### **Contacts**

#### **Park Keepers**

020 8356 6834

This connects to a mobile so please leave a message.

#### **Café Management**

info@finks.co.uk

#### **Clissold House Venues and Events Officer**

[venuehire@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:venuehire@hackney.gov.uk) or call 020 8356 5505

#### **Head of Leisure and Green Spaces:**

[lan.Holland@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:lan.Holland@hackney.gov.uk)

#### **Hackney Council Cabinet Member for Parks**

[caroline.woodley@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.woodley@hackney.gov.uk)

#### **Police**

020 8721 2923 or 07879 603 106

[Clissold.snt@met.police.uk](mailto:Clissold.snt@met.police.uk)

#### **Clissold Safer Neighbourhood Team**

020 8721 2923

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