

Clissold Park User Group Newsletter

March/April 2011

With the fantastic news of a successful outcome to the Clissold Park Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid, and £8.9 million coming to Clissold Park, YOUR views are needed more than ever! Consultation will continue throughout the redevelopment.

The meetings of this group are the main forum for airing public concerns about the way the Park is funded, managed and developed in the future. Whatever your main interest in the Park (playground, children, trees, wildlife, fun, football, tennis, running...) you can influence future developments.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, 7th May 2011, 7pm, St Mary's New Church Rooms

Future meeting dates are yet to be set but we expect all future meetings to be in the newly restored house. We are hoping to organise a tour of the house in the summer before the official opening.

Meeting Minutes of 12th March 2011

Apologies

Ken Worpole (CPUG Chair); John Wade and Michael Dixon (Council)

Attendance:

36 Park users. From Hackney Council: Kim Wright, Corporate Director of Community Services. Councillors Jonathon McShane, Linda Smith, Wendy Mitchell.

Welfare of the Deer and the other Animals

CPUG reps expressed their extreme concern for the safety of the animals after three deer and the rabbits died during the refurbishment work because of failures in the security fencing.

CPUG had called for the relocation of the deer and for staff training in animal welfare and protection. The Council has yet to respond to this.

During a very considered and detailed discussion some park users expressed grave concerns about the deer being kept in the park any longer. They also fear that when the building works are complete the needs of the animals will not be met. There is concern that the physical environment will continue to be inadequate and the level of trained staff to care for the animals will be insufficient. They asked if consultation had been sought from experts on the new design

of the deer enclosure and if it would meet the standards required for keeping the deer. They felt that although the staff do care about the animals there had not been enough vigilance by those who are charged with the animals' care and that all the animals should be re-homed to sanctuaries where the animals' various needs could be met.

The question of the animals' safety and protection after dark was raised. Are the incidents only a recent problem linked to the building works?

Others said that it would be drastic and a shame to remove the animals from the park. They have been there so long and have an enlightening effect, particularly on the young.

CPUG reps emphasised their concern that this was part of a larger issue about the strategic management of the park. CPUG has been pressing for some time for one manager to be responsible for all park functions, including the animals and their safety.

Councillor McShane responded by saying that during this transitional stage of the works mistakes had been made which had led to the tragic death of the animals.

A leading veterinary expert on deer, Peter Green, has been consulted about the recent failures and on the plans for the new deer enclosure. He is confident that once the work has ended the new enclosure will fully meet the deer's needs.

The Councillor said that the Clissold Park staff cared deeply about the animals. They are being trained in animal husbandry to ensure that high levels of care are maintained. There are currently three checks a day on the security of the deer enclosure – two by park staff and one by the contractors. There are also additional security patrols at night. There will be a public path running between the deer paddock and other enclosures, but not through the deer paddock. A refuge and planted screening will give the animals seclusion when they need it.

There was confusion as to where the goats were and if they had been relocated to Hackney City Farm. Kim Wright said that the goats were still in the park, in a screened enclosure. The only animals that had been relocated were the chickens, which are at Hackney City Farm. The Manager of Hackney City Farm said that he had met the park staff and had been impressed with their commitment and diligence. They will be shadowing staff at the farm and given training in emergency care. Formal training will start in September. The park's chickens were at the farm and were doing well.

Park Manager's Report: from Kim Wright

Kim Wright said that sadly some birds in the aviary had died over the past months, but the losses were at mortality rates normally experienced for birds of their ages and breeds. She confirmed that the size of the new deer enclosure was 6,000 square metres, 2,000 sq. metres larger than the old one.

The work on the animal enclosures has been delayed because of problems with the steel fencing contractor, who has run into financial difficulties. A new contractor has been appointed and the enclosure fencing will now be complete by the end of April.

There is a revised timetable for tendering for the House café contract. There will be a single contract for the house and the kiosk. The process will be completed by June and will include a CPUG rep.

Kim Wright said that someone from the Council will come to the next CPUG meeting to present the Council's strategy for the Parks' Interpretation and Learning programme, including that for the animals.

The position of House Manager has not yet been advertised. CPUG called for a single and powerful strategic manager for the whole park and house. Or to look to combining the role with the Events Manager of SN Town Hall to complement these with the many other local event and leisure locations' activities. The Rector of St Mary's said that he had tried a number of times to contact someone at the Council to discuss how these resources could be combined to complement and support each other but had not had a response. CPUG reps asked how the new Park Events Strategy is progressing as this is vital if the resources in the park are to be well used by the public after the works are finished.

A request was made for the out-of-date update posters in the park to be replaced. Users should be kept informed of when each renewed part of the park is planned to reopen, and how these will be marked.

Tree Care

Concerns were raised that the Borough's tree care work will be hit by the budget cuts and this will reduce the care of trees in the park. Damage has already been caused to trees by the carelessness of the contractors. Kim Wright replied that the Council's commitment to tree care remained. The new budget has two posts to continue to care for Hackney's trees.

There have been regrettable contractor failures and the Council had amended work protocols to ensure the safety of trees during work in the park. It continued to work in partnership with the Tree Musketeers.

Security in the park

It was asked if the Council has considered using CCTV to ensure that the newly finished buildings and the animals will be safeguarded, especially at night. Kim Wright replied that cost was an issue, as was the practicability of responding to what may be observed. CCTV is not part of the security plans for the park. The Council was urged to look at innovative and cheaper ways of implementing CCTV and other security measures.

CPUG Annual General Meeting

The Annual Report written by retiring Chair, Ken Worpole, was read out in his absence. It can be read on the CPUG website and will be circulated to those on the email mailing list.

John Hudson said that the CPUG's constitution was being updated. This will be discussed at the May meeting. One particular addition will be the post of Honorary President and he was pleased to report that Ken Worpole has agreed to be nominated for this role.

Election of CPUG Representatives

Caroline Millar as **Chair**

Richard Logan as **Vice Chair**

Anna Gualtieri as **Treasurer**

John Hudson as **Secretary**

Matthew Jeary as **Minutes Secretary**

All were elected unanimously.

The following agreed to continue as **Representatives for Special Interests** and were unanimously approved by the meeting:

Older People – Sylvia Anderson

Sport – Georgina Ward

Dog Owners – Mark Forsyth

People with disabilities – Carolyn Scott and Anthony Larvin

Children, young people and families – Lisa Gormley

Contacts

For HLF Project issues contact: **Hyder.Ajmi@hackney.gov.uk**

For Park Management issues contact: **michael.dixon@hackney.gov.uk**

For Council issues contact: **jonathan.mcshane@hackney.gov.uk**

To join Clissold Park Users Group

Contact **clissoldpug@googlemail.com** and browse this website – or join our Facebook Group – or just come to the meetings!

Previous newsletters

Newsletters in PDF format – a new window will open.

- March/April 2011
- Jan/Feb 2011
- Nov/Dec 2010
- Sept/Oct 2010

- July/August 2010
- May/June 2010
- March/April 2010
- Jan/Feb 2010
- Nov/Dec 2009
- Sept/Oct 2009
- July/August 2009
- May/June 2009
- March/April 2009
- Jan/Feb 2009
- Accounts 2009/10

Looking through back copies of the Newsletters will give you a good idea of the issues which concern Clissold Park users in recent years: children's play facilities, events, the condition of the trees and ornamental planting, safety, organised and informal sports, bikes, dogs, opening times of the cafe, and so on.

There is no doubt that Clissold Park has improved in recent years, and some of this is due to pressure and dialogue with Hackney Council created by park users.