



Friends of Wimbledon Park

News update for members, February 2014

Nature walk

Come along to the park on Sunday 27 April for a free nature walk, led by local expert Dr David Dawson. The two-and-a-half-hour walk will give you an enjoyable and informative introduction to the park's spring wildflowers and nesting birds. Meet at the Home Park Road entrance at 10am. Bring binoculars.

Removal of car park extension delayed by rain

The recent heavy rain and drainage problems have delayed the removal of the rubble surface of the car park extension. Merton had begun work last autumn, and will complete the task once weather conditions permit.

Come to our AGM

FOWP's annual general meeting will be held on Thursday 20 March 2014 at 8pm in the hall at St. Barnabas Church. Last year's AGM was a great success, with the chance to meet other members and reflect on the year's achievements as well as looking ahead. All FOWP members and other interested parties are invited to attend.

Consultation on a vision for the park

FOWP has drawn up a project plan and a conservation management plan to help steer the future development of Wimbledon Park. A copy of the plans has been sent to FOWP members, and is available to view in the 'projects' section of our website, at www.friendsofwimbledonpark.org.uk The plans have many facets, covering issues from sports facilities to tree protection. Regarding the upgrading of the athletics stadium and installation of a hockey pitch, an architect has now submitted terms of engagement to the Wimbledon Club and FOWP is consulting with local schools that use the facilities: St Cecilia's, Southfields Academy and Ricards Lodge. We had an excellent response to our survey of Revelstoke Road residents regarding improvements to the park entrance, including a 20mph speed limit, pavement changes and redesigned pathways into the park; the full results are on our website, in the 'news' section. Recent tree works in the golf course and public park suggest that Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are needed for the whole 60 ha park. This will help place nature conservation and landscape more firmly on the agenda and will involve all three owners of the park as well as officers in Merton and Wandsworth.

British Military Fitness

Members of the outdoor exercise group British Military Fitness have been photographed using children's playground equipment, which could cause damage and prevents children from playing freely and safely. FOWP is seeking a meeting with a BMF representative to discuss the issue. Fitness training is also taking place in the dark and on the footpaths, which raises questions about liability in the event of an accident.

Collaborating with other organisations

Under the FOWP constitution, we can co-operate with other charities with similar purposes. The organisations we intend to approach are: English Heritage (which is



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involved in planning celebrations for the 300th anniversary of Capability Brown in 2016), the London Wildlife Trust, the Wildlife and Wetlands Trust, the RSPB, and London Historic Parks and Gardens. We have already joined the London Green Spaces Friends Groups Network (LFGN) but have deferred a decision on whether to join the Wandle Valley Trust.

Green spaces hit by austerity cuts

The effect of austerity cuts on green spaces is a cause for concern. Merton Council held a meeting to discuss the issue in December, attended by people who are involved in a voluntary capacity with the borough's parks, mainly through Friends' groups like FOWP. The council explained that the cuts mean there is more pressure on open spaces to generate cash through commercial activities. It emerged that Wimbledon Park generated the most income of all Merton's parks last year, through events such as Wimbledon Fortnight and the Bonfire Night fireworks display, and that this revenue is used to subsidise other locations. The meeting provoked further discussion at our committee meeting, where alternative options for funding were discussed, including subscriptions, donations, precepts, co-operatives and the role of volunteers. Merton plans to hold another meeting, in February, to discuss the issue further.