



Friends of Wimbledon Park

News update for members, February 2015

Please come to our AGM

Our third AGM will be held on Thursday 19 March 2015, and all members are welcome to attend. Hear more about our activities over the year, discuss your concerns and ideas about the park, meet committee members and get the chance to chat over light refreshments. The meeting takes place in St Barnabas Church Hall at 8pm. We look forward to seeing you there.

A decision on BBQs

Last summer many people expressed concerns about BBQs in the park causing damage and disruption. FOWP wanted to offer a view on the issue to Merton Council, and so conducted research, including a consultation, in September and October 2014. We have now arrived at the following recommendations: "The risk of injury from fire and unwanted fire damage may be low but the cost implications of legal liabilities and remedial action could be very high. In our view disposable BBQs should not be allowed. The capacity of our park to meet demand is questionable and suggests that charges should be introduced to control demand and defray staff and other costs. Banning BBQs is cost free although there may be enforcement costs. A better approach would be to ban BBQs and provide a nice picnic area with trees and seating such as that in King George's Park. This addresses the principle of replacing a valued facility with a different but equally valued facility." You can read the full document on our website at <http://www.friendsofwimbledonpark.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/BBQs-in-Wimbledon-Park-FOWP-EC-PP-No-11.pdf>

Have your say on events in the park

FOWP has been working hard to get local people's views listened to by Merton Council when it comes to organised events in the park. We have built a good relationship with its event manager, who takes residents' opinions seriously. If you want to give feedback about an event in the park – whether positive or negative – you can fill in a consultation form, which will shortly be available on our website. We will collate the feedback and make sure the council is made aware of it. So far there are three events due to take place in Wimbledon Park in 2015:
Easter children's fair: 28 March to 12 April (proposed)
Food festival: Saturday 29 August to Monday 31 August (proposed)
Bonfire night fireworks display: Thursday 5 November

To spray or not to spray?

You may have noticed that dead patches of grass appear around trees, fences, bins and elsewhere in the park at certain times of year. This is because of herbicide spraying by Merton Council. While we appreciate that many people want to see the park kept tidy, spraying with weedkiller indiscriminately wipes out many wildflowers and other beneficial plants. We would like to get a Green Flag Award for Wimbledon Park, and Green Flag guidance recommends using better alternatives to spraying – such as mowing at the right time. We will be discussing this issue with local parks officers.

Join a guided springtime walk

Spring is on the way and the park will soon be alive with flowers and nesting birds. Find out more about its rich flora and fauna with a guided walk led by Dave Dawson, FOWP's resident



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ecologist. The walk takes place on Saturday 21 March and lasts around two and a half hours. Meet at the Home Park Road entrance at 10am and bring binoculars if you have some.

Our local bat population

Wimbledon Park is home to a surprising number of bat species: six at the last formal count, in 2005. These are: *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, noctule, serotine, Daubenton's and brown long-eared. The author of the survey noted: "The watery, relatively dark and undisturbed nature of the park at its northern aspect creates a foraging haven for at least six species of bat. This is considerably more species than can be found on many local nature reserves in a whole season of recording." The best time to observe the bats is at dusk, particularly around the lake and near to the trees surrounding the athletics stadium.

Tercentenary of Capability Brown

We now have evidence of wide community support for celebrating the tercentenary of landscape designer Capability Brown in 2016. Getting such backing was a condition of Merton Council's support for an event or project to mark the occasion, and we hope this will now be forthcoming. As a next step, we will be setting up a sub-committee; do contact us if you would like to get involved.

Trees get a spruce up

Tree works will be carried out in Wimbledon Park in the next few weeks. This will involve safety pruning around play areas, pruning of ash near the Wimbledon Park Road entrance and felling of various dead trees.