



Friends of Wimbledon Park

News update for members, November 2015

£3,000 grant for tree planting

We are delighted to announce that FOWP has been offered a grant of £3,000 from the London Tree and Woodland Community Grant Scheme, to fund the planting of trees in Horse Close Wood. Merton Council has given permission and is to match the funding. The planting will take place before spring, and will be a great opportunity for local people including schoolchildren to get involved.

Golf club votes to reject offer from AELTC

In June 2014, the All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC) announced it would not be renewing the lease of Wimbledon Park Golf Club, which is due to expire in 2041. It has now approached the golf club with an offer to buy it out of the lease ahead of time, presumably to facilitate its own development plans for the site. However, we understand that 60% of members have voted to reject the offer. The AELTC bought the freehold of the golf club from Merton Council in 1993 for £5.3m.

National Grid works

The recent works in the park, to repair electricity cabling, have been completed but unfortunately the contractors discovered corrosion to an underground tank in Horse Close Wood, meaning further works are necessary. An oak tree, a lime and two ashes will have to be removed, in addition to the lime tree that has already been felled. The area will be cordoned off again and heavy machinery will be coming into park. Works are expected to last until the New Year. The positive aspect to all this is that we hope the removal of the trees will give us the chance to restore a glade there, allowing other plant species to come through.

Litter picking makes a real difference

Our litter-picking group, set up in August, now meets regularly on the second Sunday of the month. We work together to clear up the litter in the woods and hedgerows of the park, which the Council team don't have time to tackle. Our most recent session on 8 November removed six bin bags of rubbish. Gloves and litter pickers are provided, so if you fancy lending a hand we'll be delighted to see you. Just turn up at 10am at the tennis kiosk by the café. Next meeting Sunday 13 December 2015.

New 20mph zone introduced

The new 20mph zone, supported by local residents, is now in force on the Southfields Grid and Revelstoke Road, and we hope this will encourage drivers to approach the park more carefully.

Green shoots in former bowling area

The lawn in the old bowling area, where the Food Festival and children's fair were held earlier in the year, was reseeded by Merton Council and now looks in better condition than it has been for some years. Hopefully people will soon be allowed back in to enjoy it.

Goldfinches thriving

You may have seen in the news recently that goldfinches are one of the few British songbird species whose numbers are on the increase – nearly doubling between 2002 and 2012,



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according to the British Trust for Ornithology. This finding is borne out by our resident ecologist Dave Dawson's research: his counts in Wimbledon Park show four times the number of goldfinches nowadays compared with 30 years ago. The wildflower patch by the lower brook may be playing a small part in this – it had a fine showing of creeping □ thistles, which attracted flocks of goldfinches in August. The thistles have now been cleared for the winter. To find out more about goldfinches visit <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-34703580>

Children's play area

One of the climbing frames in the upper children's play area has been repaired and is now back in use, but a second one is still fenced off due to concerns about rotting timbers. We hope it too will be fixed or replaced in the near future.

New members help us hit new high

FOWP had a stall at the Southfields Harvest event at St Barnabas Church in September, where we chatted with people about our work and had maps and other information on display. If you came to say hello, then thank you! We had lots of interesting conversations and signed up six new members, taking FOWP membership to a new high of 166.

FOWP Committee becomes FOWP Forum

At our last meeting, we voted to change the name of our main committee to FOWP Forum.