



Friends of Wimbledon Park

News update for members, February 2016

Join us to plant 1,000 new trees

Join us for a family-friendly tree planting event on 13 and 14 February, 10am to 1pm. We will be planting 1,000 trees to enhance Horse Close Wood and help screen the Wimbledon Park Road car park. The trees – all native species, including dog rose, wild cherry and blackthorn – are funded by a £3,000 grant from the London Tree and Woodland Community Grant Scheme which FOWP secured last year. The extension of this important fragment of historic woodland is a great thing to be doing in Capability Brown's 300th anniversary year, so don't miss your chance to play a part in this wonderful piece of local heritage. Bring a mid-morning snack and wear suitable clothes; tools will be provided. Meet at the Wimbledon Park Road car park.

Capability Brown Tercentenary – help us celebrate

Plans for our celebration of the 300th anniversary of Capability Brown are now well under way. The big day is Saturday 13 August, with a walk round the 4km Heritage Trail to unveil a series of commemorative plaques which we are commissioning. We are inviting local dignitaries and MPs to take part, and we hope as many local people as possible will be able to join in. So do please save the date!

Freedom of Information request nets lake pollution statistics

We recently made a successful Freedom of Information request to the Environment Agency to find out about pollution incidents in the lake. There have been 17 notified incidents since 2001, six of which killed fish. The worst was 14 years ago, when an unauthorised discharge of alkalis (probably cement washings) killed 7,000 roach and bream. The most recent was in November last year, when an unidentified pollutant killed 500 roach. We are concerned that many more incidents go unrecorded and, together with Wimbledon Park Angling Club, are currently trying to arrange a meeting with Thames Water to discuss preventative measures. We believe that more sensitive planting on the golf course would help, since marginal water plants can help filter out harmful substances.

Threatened pochard makes a comeback

The 13 pochards feeding on the lake recently were the third highest count in the last 30 years, as recorded by our resident ecologist Dr Dave Dawson. This species is red-listed because of declining breeding numbers, so the increase is encouraging. The recent arrival of colder weather after a long mild wet spell has halted most flowers, but the dog's mercury in Horse Close Wood, purple-leafed cherry plums by the downstream brook and some daffodils are out. A song thrush has been singing in Horse Close Wood, and great-spotted woodpeckers drumming in both woods.

Bowling under threat in Merton

Last autumn, Merton Council announced that, due to cost cutting, it would not be maintaining either Morden or Merton Bowls Greens from 2016, and Mitcham is likely to close at the end of the year. The Wimbledon Park Bowls Club, together with those in Merton Park and Raynes Park, has healthier membership numbers, and all three are safe for the moment, although the council is not prepared to say for how long. Wimbledon Park Bowls Club is supporting Merton Bowls Club in its campaign against closure, and a petition has already attracted 800



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online and 1,000 paper signatures. To sign the online version, go to www.change.org and search for 'Save Merton Bowls Club'.

Wimbledon Park on the curriculum

St Cecilia's School is currently discussing how it can incorporate Wimbledon Park into its English, history and geography curricula. We are also discussing whether pupils who are doing their Duke of Edinburgh Award might be able to create and maintain some raised flowerbeds, to mark the Capability Brown anniversary.

It's safe to play again

The small playground at the top end of the park is now back in full use, after the climbing frames were repaired.

Please renew your membership!

Finally, a plea. If your membership is coming up for renewal, or has already lapsed, do please renew it. Subscription fees are our only regular source of funding and we really do rely on your support. To renew your membership, or if you have any queries, please email us on info@friendsofwimbledonpark.org.uk