

# Friends Of Wimbledon Park

## Annual Report 2013

In 2011 in response to complaints from a number of unhappy residents three resident's associations<sup>1</sup> determined to set up a Friends of Wimbledon Park (FOWP). The groundwork was prepared and the first meeting of FOWP took place on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2012. Recognition soon followed and the Friends of Wimbledon Park Committee (FOWP Committee) was formed by the Executive Committee (EC) so that the various interests of park users, the 3 park owners' leaseholders and park officers could be represented. This hybrid umbrella committee is separate from the EC which manages FOWP. We're committed to reporting back regularly to our members and associates either directly or through our corporate members and our website. Your views are important to us.

We've been guided by the Glasspoole Thompson report commissioned by the LBM in 1998. As a result we have taken great care in drawing up our constitution which has evolved so that there are clear objects, defined powers and good management by the Executive Committee. This is to be agreed at our AGM. This constitution may seem over detailed but our ambitions include the saving of the lake and other large scale improvements to the park. These are likely to cost between £4 and £12 million and needs to be supported by a trusted organisation. It is a 'can do' project since Burgess Park in Southwark and Bishop's Park in Hammersmith & Fulham both had similar amounts spent on them and the results are there to see.

The estimates for the lake to become a swamp range from 10 to 50 years so it needs attention. Since LBM own the lake we met with the Leader Cllr Stephen Alambritis to invite a joint approach to saving the lake. All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club own most of the land around the lake so we met Richard Lewis (Chief Executive) and Martin Guntrip (Club Secretary) inviting them to also join the 'save the lake' project. The Wimbledon Club, the Wimbledon Park Golf Club and the Wimbledon Park Angling Club are corporate members of ours. The border between Merton and Wandsworth runs roughly through the middle of the park so we've kept LBW leader Cllr Ravi Govindia abreast of developments.

We plan to undertake smaller projects and the one immediately to hand is an area in Horse Close Wood where the National Grid disturbed the area some years ago. The seed bank here threw up a different range of plants due to the wetter nature of the soil. The plan is to allow these plants to prosper but they will need regular help to keep out stronger plants nearby. This requires a working party. Once this procedure is established other projects can be undertaken.

We're gradually making contact with other groups who use the park facilities such as athletics and martial arts. There is a proposal from the Wimbledon Club to sponsor a hockey pitch in the stadium. Whilst there are clear problems the financial and potential advantages make it worthwhile overcoming these problems.

There is a great opportunity for schools to become involved in nature and sporting activities and invitations are being sent to school heads.

Last year a number of flower beds appeared in the fields and the beneficial effect on park users shouldn't be underestimated. They uplifted ones spirits and reminded everyone about the meaning and value of a park! More tender loving care could work wonders for future park users.

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There are four wards surrounding the park. To provide further free flow of information the 12 councillors were invited to be Ex Officio members of the FOWP Committee. I'm pleased to say that 8 have accepted. We hope the other 4 will join in due course. Cllr Richard Tracey GLA member for Merton and Wandsworth has also joined as Ex Officio member.

We're pleased that Rt Hon Justine Greening (MP Putney) and Stephen Hammond (MP Merton) agreed to be an Honorary Friend. Their help will be needed in saving the lake.

We communicate directly with our members and through the corporate member or website to associates. Our website <http://www.friendsofwimbledonpark.org.uk> should soon be up and running and this provides the opportunity to join as members or associates.

A lot has been achieved in the last year and thanks to many who got stuck in and made us what we are. We now need to build on this and as a priority get agreement from the 3 owners to save the lake and move on from there.

Nick Steiner  
Chairman FOWP

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<sup>i</sup> The 3 Resident's Associations are Southfields Grid Resident's Association (SGRA); Wimbledon House Resident's Association (WHRA) and Wimbledon Park Resident's Association (WPRA).