

Minutes of Millfields User Group AGM 20th March 2013

Present

Carrie Rutherford (Chair)
Michael Row (minutes)
Bruce Irving (LBH parks development)
William Smith
David Brunetti
Anne Thesenvitz
Harry Hewat
Claire Kelly
Gill Harris
Barnaby Thomas
Vivienne Foxley
Helen Morris
Matthew Webber
Kevin O'Dwyer
Tim Evans
Michael Murnane
Wendy Reid

Appologies

Emma Jack, Councillor Saddiqui, Pinny Gryllis, Christine King, Louisa Ziane, Silvara Williams (Hackney Parks project manager), Barry Buitekant.

Chairs Report

Carrie read this out in Emma's absence through illness:

"The 2012/13 committee was voted in last March and the members who chose to take up committee positions were:

Emma Jack (chair), Tim Evans (secretary), Barry Buitekant, Ruth Smyth, Diane Bernhardt, Carrie Rutherford, Sabbir Lunat / Cleo Williams (seat-share), Harry Hewat, Vivienne Foxley, Claire Kelly (treasurer), Michael Rowe.

I would like to thank all these members for their commitment to the Park over the last year.

2012 was always going to be an exciting year with our proximity to the Olympics. We attempted to keep the ODA aware of Users feelings both in connection with our Park and how increased use of the park would affect regular users (litter etc) and the surrounding area - we fully supported the resistance to building a temporary basketball practice facility on Walthamstow Marshes. We were also concerned to secure ODA legacy commitments to our park.

Following the Olympics we were contacted by local basketball players who let us know about the failings of the courts on Millfields. They are incorrectly marked up, have substandard hoops and the surface is poor. The ODA came to look at the courts and seemed keen to help so we were surprised and disappointed to hear from them recently that they are only prepared to match fund a council contribution. This is not a priority for the council so at the moment we are continuing to negotiate with the ODA in the hope we can get them to fund the entire refurbishment.

Also in the summer of 2012 we joined with park user Bhavesh Hindocha to put on an open air cinema evening. It was a wonderful event with possibly 200 users enjoying *The Gruffalo* and *Where the Wild Things Are*. Bhavesh was absolutely essential to this event and worked incredibly hard to both raise the funds and organise the evening - we all owe him our thanks and we feel encouraged to make it an annual event.

We have also been delighted to have both Eco-Active and the Tree Musketeers undertaking projects in the park this year. Eco-Active have been working with Rushmore School and Mandeville school - taking groups of under 10's into the park and showing them how to care for the orchard, making insect hotels and playing nature inspired games amongst other things. The Tree Musketeers undertook a project with Happitimes Nursery and locals to plant some new Trees on the South Side. Happitimes nursery children and parents will provide the aftercare for the new trees.

We were sad to see our very keen bio-diversity officer Kate Mitchell leave at the end of last March but she did leave us with the beginnings of very good bio-diversity plans for the whole of Hackney. In particular with relation to Millfields she was keen to produce a management map to ensure that anyone working on Millfields would be aware of exactly how each area of the Park should be managed. We are still very keen to see this go ahead. She also introduced a more relaxed mowing pattern which we were happy to support as it is a key factor in widening biodiversity on a site like Millfields. In the Autumn Gary King was appointed as temporary Bio-diversity Officer and he has been very determined to carry on Kate's good work. He is particularly keen to plant more wildflowers on Millfields and we have been happy to support this - we will keep users up to date with any new areas that are created and also opportunities to help plant.

We began the year knowing that our Capitol projects (Casimir Road entrance, Northside Play and Southside Play) were given a number 2 rating, which means definitely going to happen when 1 rated projects are completed. We are delighted to let users know that just last week myself and Harry met our new project officer Sylvera who is going to be dedicating 2 days a week of his time to Millfields. This means that our projects can begin to go ahead starting with consultation and development of a brief. I will let Harry say more about this process later.

We have also discussed more recently with Bruce Irving, general park improvements that have been noted by Michael Dixon the park's maintenance

manager. Michael has developed a list of repairs to paths, entrance ways and railings that he regards as essential with regard to health and safety. We are keen to include in this list the removal of the NG railings and the reinstatement of the grassed area, repairs to the orchard path and the removal of the dog free area railings. We will let users know the full list of repairs ASAP.

Committee member Claire Kelly undertook a review and mapping of the parks bins as we have all begun to notice that in fine weather the current bins are not coping with the volume of litter. Claire has identified the best sort of bin for Millfields and has also indicated to Michael where the broken and badly designed bins are. We are also pushing for more regular emptying in better weather. We have all noticed that Millfields is becoming a more popular park and with that popularity there has been a rise in litter. We don't think this fact has been absorbed by the Parks department and will continue to pressure them to prioritise our needs.

We have recently been informed that the council plan to appoint a mobile catering unit to work in the park over the summer months. They have just advertised the tender. Bruce says the parks department are carrying this out in a number of sites as a research exercise. He assures us that increased litter will be dealt with and that the choice of provider will be biased towards a local business. We will let users know how this progresses and where we can expect it to be sited.

During the year Harry very kindly moved our website/blog along and it is now up and running. We would welcome any submissions suitable for the blog from users - please do feel free to pitch in.

I think that is all my updates for the time being and I am just left to thank all the committee members for all their hard work. We end the year with a few less than we started as Tim, Ruth, Diane and Vivienne stood down during the year. I hope members feel inspired to get involved and maybe stand for the committee at the end of this meeting. It would be great to have a committee member who is keen to run the blog/website and also some more biodiverse interested members.

Here's to a productive 2013 in Millfields Park.

Emma"

Finance Report

From Claire Kelly

AGM 03/03/12	Balance in Bank		£467
27/04/2012	Nye Bevan Hall for March AGM	£35	£432.70
04//09/2012	12 Hi Viz Vests	£94.36	£338.40
11/09/2012	St Johns Ambulance (film	£20	£318.40

	screening)		
05/02/2013	Nye Bevan Hall for Nov GM	£30	£288.40
05/02/2012	Laminator	65.62	£222.80
20/03/2013	Nye Bevan Hall for AGM	35	£187.80
AGM 20/03/2013	Balance in Bank		£187.80

On the 8th November the bank confirmed the new signatories as:
 Claire Kelly, Carrie Rutherford and Emma Jack.

Projects (Harry and Bruce)

Playground facilities and potential play areas

Hackney council has not been able to do anything in the last year because of other priorities. However the Council now has a new project manager who will devote two days a week to Millfields.

Bruce explained that the main priorities are the pathways by Casimir Road, and the adjacent play area. The council will establish a costing and then work with MUG.

Will asked about the timescale and was told that, it should progress quite rapidly.
 Helen – is this just repair or new.

Bruce – we are looking a new playground and paths but need to cost them and find funding.

Helen – Is the playground to be relocated?

Bruce – No the idea is to refurbish the existing one.

Michael – What is the level of funding?

Bruce – there is to be a meeting in two weeks to consider funding, there are several possible pots of money available.

Diane – What about the Orchard path?

Bruce - A vehicle was driven over it (by Waste Services?) and damaged it. We are looking at how much it would cost and who would repair it.

Bruce - A new biodiversity officer is to be appointed in April.

Catering facilities

Tenders have been put out and local businesses contacted for a trial period over the summer for refreshment facilities in the park.

National Grid

Tim asked about removing the fence and regressing the area alongside the new temporary road. Bruce the council is currently waiting for NG to come back with a timescale.

Tim – could NG be asked to remove the gate and try and get them to create a usable hub – resurface and put seating there.

Wendy – asked about removing the railings around the dog free area and reinstate the grass.

Bruce – Casimir Road area needs sorting out first.

Pavements

Helen – The pavements alongside the park in Chatsworth Road are in poor condition, has the Council any plans to improve them?

Bruce is to look into this.

Paddling Pool

Tim - asked what was happening about the paddling pool.

Harry - We are looking at various options along with the landscaping plans for the play area.

Claire – it is too expensive to remove, so any plans would involve keeping the structure. The council consultation has started again and will get baseline estimates of cost for the various options.

Gill – what is the timescale?

Bruce – There is no timescale yet.

South Millfields Playground

Helen – We are looking at a more naturalistic play area, but North Millfields play area has to come first, but a South Millfields play area has been approved by the council in theory.

It was suggested by several people that we should have outdoor table tennis tables and a petanque area.

Thanks were given to the retiring committee and a new committee elected consisting of:

Emma Jack, Louisa Ziane, Harry Hewatt, Pinny Gryllis, Michael Row, Barry Buitekant, Kevin O'Dwyer, William Smith, Claire Kelly, Carrie Rutherford, Gill Harris.