

## Minutes, Millfields User Group Meeting

Wednesday 7 September 2021, Zoom session

1. Present: Christine Kings (Chair); Harry Hewat; Bettina Maidment; Clare Taylor; Celia Coram; Wendy Reid; Gill Harris; Alex Watson; Bernard Simon.
2. Apologies: Bhavesh Hindocha; Tim Evans, Lailuma Sakhidad; Cllr Ian Rathbone, Merle White; Adrian Weidmann.
3. Minutes of the MUG Meeting 7 July 2021

The minutes were agreed with one amendment: to record the apologies of Cllr Ian Rathbone.

4. Matters arising not covered later on the agenda

It was noted that we had agreed at the last meeting that we would have a discussion on activities in the park for older users of the park. The agenda was amended to include this item (see below).

5. Updates on the Park

- a. The parks staff have changed their mowing regime this year and have left more areas of the park with long grass and wild flowers, particularly around the edges. The grass was mown this morning as it has now seeded.
- b. The netting on the new grass should be removed by the end of the month.
- c. Tree watering will be coming to an end this month. It has been done in two sessions (North Millfields and South Millfields) since the early spring. Trees are looking healthy apart from two mature trees which have bare branches; watered trees this morning as a couple of the young trees looked like they needed it.
- d. Wendy's neighbour has seen hedgehogs in the lodge back yard, and they've been there a while. They also have snakes. This needs to be brought to the attention of the Council, who are thinking about connecting the tennis courts to the lodge and giving Hackney Tennis Club access to it.
  - There was discussion about the possibility of switching where the tennis courts and the basket ball pitch are. We agreed to add this. and the issues around it, to the agenda for a future meeting.
  - Perhaps invite someone from the tennis club to a meeting. Perhaps look at making the basket ball court a multi-use games area (muga).
  - At Clissold Park the tennis club wanted to use the lodge as a club house; they are a powerful lobby; need to learn from this.
  - We need to start monitoring hedgehogs; trying to create habitat for hedgehogs to encourage more; consider when planning the new planting.
- e. The Council will be doing some crown raising to trees in North Millfields in the

next few weeks. This is in preparation for the new walking/cycling path that is due to be installed this autumn (see next item).

#### 6. Play Area

All of our feedback on the latest revision of the Millfields Estate play area was sent to the Council in the middle of August. Bettina and Wendy looked into S106 monies, some of which have been paid to the council; Bettina looked at the planning to see what 'transport' means but it was redacted; she emailed the council but they didn't respond. Celia suggested a mobile café could perhaps come under transport. Wendy said that you can download everything apart from the actual agreement. Bettina agreed to follow up to find out more and Wendy offered to chase Southern Housing again if needed.

#### 7. New TFL cycle route along Lea Bridge Road

Harry contacted Ryan with comments from the last meeting but hasn't heard back; there is now funding for the project so it will be going ahead. Harry will follow up with Ryan to see how the detailed drawings are going and ask what his timeline is.

Celia asked about whether LBH will switch the track to keep it the same side as Waltham Forest to avoid confusion (the position of the cycle track in relation to the pedestrian track).

#### 8. Tree circle cinema

Bhavesh put in a really good submission for funding and it was successful. Unfortunately Hackney Council then said they were not issuing any licences for events in the park yet (Covid caused massive uncertainty and delay). With a bit of chasing by Bhavesh and Christine the parks department did give the go-ahead for the event but by then it was felt to be too late to organise. Bhavesh has gone back to the funders to ask if he can keep the money for next year; still waiting to hear back.

#### 9. Tree planning

A tree trail has been advertised: 14.00 on Saturday 18 September in the arboretum of South Millfields Park. It will be led by Marcelo and Eugene from the Tree Musketeers.

In November a Millfields Park work day on trees is being organised to fix or remove guards, mulching, checking health etc;

Planting behind the sub-station: this is taking longer to sort out than it should - parks officers are behind with tree planting plans and the Council has not yet said where we can plant. There is worry that it could all end up in a rush - so inviting those interested to have a meeting with Tree Musketeers and send a plan to the council - aiming to plant in December; Harry offered to draw something up in a CAD package once positions are plotted - he's not around w/e of 18th but otherwise flexible. Christine agreed to co-ordinate a meeting.

#### 10. Activities for Older Users of the Park

Wendy said that she was delighted that Adrian was so supportive at the last meeting. She said that we need to sort out table tennis tables; other parks have them so why not ours -

we keep raising it and keep getting fobbed off. There are two tables in Clissold Park, one in London Fields and one on Hackney Downs. She would like to see table tennis in S. Millfields as N. Millfields has lots of stuff already - perhaps in the village green - where the forest kids are. Celia suggested the old paddling pool area in N Millfields as there is already concrete there so no problem with grass compacting. Harry suggested on the road by Hilstowe Street; Alex suggested where the big puddle is by the substation as there is a big area there (if puddle resolved); the discussion on where was adjourned for now.

Alex told the meeting that the English Table Tennis Association (ETTA) can lobby councils if there is enough interest, so that could help. A hand raise poll of those present indicated that everyone wanted to follow this up. Alex will contact ETTA and say there is lots of support and get them involved. They also help set up clubs in the park, so users can find people to play with.

Wendy - other interests for older people - exercise facilities for older people - there is one nearby sponsored by a sporting company - looked interesting

Christine said more seating was needed for everyone, and more picnic tables. Harry suggested something more versatile than straight seats - boxes that can be jumped on and off or as tables - he will dig out some pictures as examples for the next meeting. He said it's not a big deal to do a PINS application (to put park furniture permanently onto common land - so no reason not to try. Benches were moved from the new playground to common land very quickly so it can be done.

Adrian had previously suggested boules - Wendy suggested sand in the old pond to use for boules. There is a boules area in London Fields. Alex will look to see if there is a boules association who might help. Wendy suggested looking at Connect Hackney for support in games activities for older people - she will join Christine to have a look.

Alex said the surface of the basket ball courts is not good and coming to the end of its life. People tend to go to courts elsewhere for games - at Hackney Downs the surface quality is much better. The S. Millfields courts are underused and need resurfacing. Apparently it was originally donated by National Grid (NG) - perhaps they might be interested in resurfacing it? It could be good PR for them and a CSR win... and they are a part of the park. Save Lea Marshes (SLM) tried to get them resurfaced a few years ago, but couldn't get matched-funding from the Council. Wendy said that NG might still be paying rent for the road - Ian Rathbone would know.

Need to get more information about tennis court proposal, basket ball court surface upgrade then have - another discussion - LBH won't accept a long list, but would want just one wish - perhaps (Harry) a proposal around a multi-use games area on a resurfaced court, with a table tennis area included and seating around it and perhaps boules included - generally thought a good idea. Celia says council should think of their policies of health for all, whereas tennis has a younger profile. Fewer people can use a tennis court.

We need to make really, really clear (Harry) that a tennis court, with the big fence around it, in the centre of the park is no go. He will do some drawings and annotate them for the next meeting.

Alex asked if we need to do a case study for petanque. Look at Sports England re MUGA? Wendy wants to know why has London Fields got one when we haven't.

It was agreed that this item should be a main discussion point for our next meeting in November. If anyone finds anything out before then, do circulate details.

11. Dates of future 2021 meetings

It was agreed that the next meeting dates will be:

Monday 1 November  
Tuesday 21 December

12. Any other business

There was no other business.