

## Minutes, Millfields User Group Meeting

Monday 1 November 2021, Zoom session

1. Present: Christine Kings (Chair); Bettina Maidment; Clare Taylor; Wendy Reid; Gill Harris; Adrian Weidmann, Iain Jones.
2. Apologies: Bhavesh Hindocha; Tim Evans, Lailuma Sakhidad; Cllr Ian Rathbone.
3. Minutes of the MUG Meeting 7 September 2021: The minutes were agreed.
4. Matters arising not covered later on the agenda: None.

### 5. Park Updates

The meeting noted the park updates on:

- a. the lack of feedback on Millfields Estate play area;
- b. the orchard maintenance sessions in South Millfields;
- c. the new walking/cycling path in North Millfields;
- d. the next phase of the UKPN cabling project in South Millfields.

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

Christine reported back from her discussions<sup>1</sup>. She understands that the person to speak to about seating and activities in the park is Cllr Yvonne Maxwell who has responsibility for older people and for setting up an ageing-well strategy. Christine will make contact with her.

Christine followed up with the Council, their suggestion to swap around the basketball and tennis courts and allow the tennis people to use the Lodge. She learned that there hasn't been any discussion on this since it was mentioned earlier in the year as the Council has been focused on completing other projects and play area refurbishments. It has been confirmed however that moving the tennis courts is not now likely to happen - a combination of funding and practicalities - and before anything has been decided on the future of the Lodge the Council will come and discuss it with MUG. The Council is now expecting that they will end up realigning/ resurfacing the basketball courts (when money becomes available) and perhaps creating space for another use such as roller-skating which has become extremely popular in recent years.

The meeting welcomed the news that the Council are not still thinking about moving the tennis courts to the basketball site. Wendy suggested that there is already plenty of space for roller skating - they're roller-skating along the footpaths - so we don't need more. A multi-user space would be better; older people could use it for badminton etc. Iain agreed, and said skateboarders also use the paths and the larger area in N Millfields. Gill thought that roller skating at one end would be fine. Adrian said that on Hackney Downs there is respect between skaters and basketball players - a good way to co-exist. There is however, only one area where you can only play basketball.

With regard to table tennis Adrian suggested that perhaps it is worth talking to

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<sup>1</sup> ... and forgot to mention that Cllr Rathbone had said that National Grid gave all they were going to give when we negotiated the funding for the playground with them. However, they told us they may have a further project starting in 2022 and we should come back then.

GroundWork. There was a discussion as to whether a table tennis table had to be on concrete, whether gravel could be used, and whether it is possible to avoid asphaltting. Gill reported that Cllr Woodley had said that the Stoke Newington Common table doesn't have asphaltting, instead they move it around so that the ground doesn't get too damaged - although she also said that this isn't the Council's preferred way of doing it.

It was agreed to go back to the Council with some proposals and give them an opportunity to respond. If that doesn't work then we'll try and get support from ETTA. Anne Donoghue will follow this up if necessary, though Christine will speak to Councillor Maxwell (both about the table tennis table and boules). Adrian will put a small document together about them - space requirements, photos, what it could be like etc. It was suggested that Adrian and Alex could work on this project together - Bettina will put them in touch with each other by email.

Bettina suggested siting the boules where the woodchip is to be moved from by the front wall of the electricity sub-station. With some planting to make it look nice everyone agreed that this could be a good place.

## 7. Tree circle cinema: Saturday 25 June 2022

The meeting felt that Bhavesh had done a great job in getting the funding for the cinema event. There was also unanimous support for the idea of a local film festival as Bhavesh had suggested and for getting children at Millfields School involved in a film. Christine suggested Ian Phillips' film about our section of the River Lea could be included.

Iain said that he has a neighbour who plays acoustic music and could be worth putting forward. Iain doesn't have time to volunteer on project management but will speak to his partner who may have time. As Bhavesh is the point man, Iain can feed into him with contacts - film-makers, musicians etc. Iain agreed to contact Bhavesh directly.

Everyone present agreed it would be a good idea to organise a community fun day. The Playbus has been in the park on previous park days. Bettina will ask her children for ideas for older children - the Playbus is more for toddlers. Anne and Wendy suggested Claire Kelly may have the contacts for organising it from previous events.

Things to try - juggling, slack lining etc - could be interesting. Adrian could do a happy sack-making workshop. Christine suggested unusual bikes to try, and face painting. It would be good to invite local organisations and traders but we may need a licence - Christine to ask the Council. Gill suggested giant boardgames.

Who could be responsible for organising and making everything mesh together - space, times, etc.?

Agreed that everyone would follow up by thinking about what contacts we have, and by speaking to various organisations to find who would be prepared to come along for no or minimal charge? Report back in December. Everyone to try and come back with at least one contact or proposal.

Wendy - there are so many schools around, but they don't seem to be involved in all this - why not? Bettina said that they all use the park a lot, but have no time for organising anything.

## 8. Winter Tree planting

Christine said that the memorial plantings will mainly be done by the families with support from the Tree Musketeers.

The planting behind the electricity station will be end of January/ early February. The meeting agreed that the planting plan looked good - along the lines we had wanted.

Some sessions are being organised with schools and there will be at least one community volunteer day.

There was a discussion on how to engage the community? Iain asked about how we communicate. Christine said that we have a mailing list of those interested in joining meetings, and a longer mailing list with over 100 contacts who get updates on events and activities. We have a Twitter account (@MillfieldsUG) and a website ([www.millfieldsusers.org.uk](http://www.millfieldsusers.org.uk)) and we post events in the Hackney Parks and Green Spaces Newsletter (Sign up: <https://hackney.us13.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=867d7386c9f2ba3da3e3139ce&id=89276f09f1>). Wendy added that there is also [millfieldspark.blogspot.com](http://millfieldspark.blogspot.com). Wendy said we should use the park notice boards more. Iain suggested distributing info via the shops in Chatsworth Road - asking them to put posters in their windows. Adrian said we could contact Hackney School of Food? They are neighbours to the park and are very active, and they also have a network. Perhaps we could then share their space, as the school of food have indoor facilities. Wendy asked whether we could perhaps let them use space in Millfields for growing?

It was agreed that we would aim to utilise as many of these channels to publicise the community planting days as we can to get a good turnout.

#### 9. Dates of future 2021/22 meetings

It was agreed that the next meeting should be brought forward to Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> December because people will be busy in the week leading up to Christmas. The proposed dates for meetings up to July 2022 were provisionally agreed.

#### 10. Any other business

Christine wanted to make sure that MUG knows about the terrible state of the River Lea with huge amounts of raw sewage being discharged into it and plastic and other waste littering the water, riverside, and trees. She suggested that everyone watches the new film made by Ian Phillips <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oARMNJrwkJg> about this. It's just less than 12 minutes long, it's about our stretch of the river, and Celia is in it!

Clare is involved in this issue and agreed that we should all watch it. She has recently attended a Thames 21 River Lea Catchment Partnership meeting and made contact with someone from Dagenham Brook and the Conservation Officer of Lea Valley Parks. She can report back at a future meeting.

There was no other business.