

The Friends of Bishops Park Members' Newsletter



Spring 2014

A new Historic Information board at Pryors Bank steps, Bishops Park was unveiled by the Mayor Cllr Frances Stainton on Tuesday 8 April. She is seen here studying the detail.



Photo courtesy of Pauline McCormack

The board is the third installed in the borough along the riverside walk, the Thames Path National Trail. Its three dimensional map shows nearby places of interest, there are old pictures and photographs, and the text describes their history.

Fulham Football Club's Planning Application for a New Riverside Stand

The Club has planning permission, but as the stand would be built encroaching into the river, it needs a river works licence from the Port of London Authority. After some delay the PLA has decided to give a licence, but the story does not end there. A licence will depend on the satisfactory negotiation of mitigation measures. Because this huge stand will block the wind on the "Middlesex" side of the river, trees will have to be cut back or felled on the "Surrey" side for boats to sail there instead. These measures still have to be agreed.

Lights in the park

You may have noticed that several of the lamp posts in the park do not work. Sadly this is not just a matter of replacing the bulbs. During the big refurbishment project new wiring to these lamps was installed, but unfortunately it has proved to be faulty. We are pressing the Council to make sure it is repaired before the end of the summer

Water play area. It is planned that the water play area will be switched on in early May.

Hammersmith Park – the following piece has been sent to us by Virginia Ironside, author, journalist and local resident

Our Parks are Under Threat

When PlayFootball, a commercial football company, applied to Hammersmith Council to rent half of our local Hammersmith Park for 35 years, it was agreed on the basis that it would go ahead if PlayFootball were given planning permission to develop a private club with car park and bar, with 12 very small pitches. The concession to local people would be that two of the

five-a-side pitches would be given over to community use, public toilets would be provided and the bar/café could be used by local people.

The development means that literally hundreds of local people who currently play on the somewhat derelict tennis courts, basketball pitch and football pitch would be deprived of their amenities. It also would mean that 24 mature trees would be felled, including numerous bushes and flower gardens, and the now defunct children's playground would vanish.

There was virtually no local consultation on this and the leaflets put out by PlayFootball were misleading along the lines of "Would you like to see improvements to the sports arena in the park?" Only 57 people attended the public meeting. Many local residents groups were not consulted at all.

As a result I instigated a Judicial Review on the grounds that the Council had not done an Environmental Impact Assessment and the Council have agreed to settle and pay my costs (out of OUR money!) A second planning application was made, with an EIA and passed and I am now taking out another Judicial Review on the grounds that it contradicts all the Council's guidelines laid out in the White City Opportunity Area Planning Framework.

In the meantime the Leader of the Council has made an emergency unilateral decision to underwrite all PlayFootball's costs if the development fails to go ahead.

It is not only Hammersmith Park that is under threat.

Virginia Ironside

Boat Race Day in the Park

What is usually seen as an enjoyable day out for many residents of Fulham and the wider community was marred by the over commercialisation and corporate takeover of Fielders' Meadow by the sponsor Mellon. Whilst we are wholly in support of the Boat Race we are not in support of the prime viewing area for spectators being used exclusively for the sponsor's guests.

The Boat Race is a very popular event and the local community enjoys the festivities and the rivalry that goes on but this year there have been a number of complaints about the lack of viewing and the access to the River walk being dramatically reduced for the public. Last year the sponsors used the Walled Garden in Fulham Palace for their guests but it was felt that it was not large enough to accommodate increased numbers. This decision was not communicated to the general public (by the usual methods) or the Friends of Bishops Park (consultation) to gauge support or otherwise for such a large area of the park having restricted access.

The erecting and removal of marques, tents, seating etc commenced on 1st April and was completed on 9th April this is wholly unacceptable for a public park to be out of action for so long. The traffic movements within the park also resulted in some unpleasant words and near incidents during this process which could so easily have been avoided. Time was also then taken to address the extensive damage caused by heavy equipment, marques and fencing by rolling, aerating and hopefully re-seeding the meadow.

We look forward to improved and early consultation with the Council for the 2015 Boat Race.

Amanda Lloyd-Harris

The Skateboard Area Grows



Photo courtesy of Victor Ho

The new ramps and slopes in the foreground are put to good use. Still to come: a new fence at the back, more benches and planting.

Upcoming Events

Thursday 24 April - A Walk in the Park

Meet at the community room by the bowling greens at 6pm.

We will do a tour of the park with Council Officers
to see recent work and discuss intentions for the future.

Sunday 8 June – ABC Picnic in Bishops Park

Fulham Brass Band, dog show, face painting, fun races for all ages plus, much more

Wednesday 22 October 8pm Annual General Meeting of the Friends

This will return to St Etheldreda's Church Hall, Cloncurry Street, as the community room in the park is too small

See also www.fulhampalace.org.uk or www.friendsofbishopspark.com

This Friends Members' Newsletter is published three times a year and is circulated to members electronically. Please make sure we have your up-to-date email address. Hard copies are available to those members who do not have email.

Editor Roger Weston

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Feedback

We're interested in your views on any of the above or anything we've not included. Please contact us through the website www.friendsofbishopspark.com or Amanda 020 7385 5965 or Roger 020 7385 5444