

The Friends of Bishops Park Members' Newsletter



Winter 2014

The future of the Fulham Palace Garden Centre

Readers will be aware that the Fulham Palace Garden Centre on Fulham Palace Road ceased trading on 31st August and the site is now derelict. Unknown to anyone, and without it seems any public consultation, the Council had sold the site to the Prince's Trust who had previously leased the site, and who had operated the garden centre. The Prince's Trust were in discussion with 'Pet's at Home' to run their business from this site in a residential area, due to adverse publicity in the Telegraph and locals residents writing to the Trust it was withdrawn.

As the land was part of Bishops Park and was given to the Council by the Church, there are covenants which set out clearly what the site can be used for: briefly these are for a garden centre which includes an educational commitment.

There has been considerable public concern at the loss of the garden centre and a strongly expressed wish that a garden centre be re-opened. Your chairman and members of the committee have been very active in trying to find out exactly what has happened, and expressing strong views as to the site's future use.

A committee of local residents has set up and is working on a community bid to ensure that this much loved site and garden centre remains in use and serving the local community. Representatives of the group have had meetings with the Prince's Trust and the Council in order to ensure that they are aware that there is an organised group working to put together a proposal which will be delivered shortly. Support from the local community is essential if we are to be successful; after all it is the people's garden centre.

Annual General Meeting

The Friends held their AGM on Wednesday 22 October at St Etheldreda's Church Hall.

The guest speaker was Virginia Ironside who spoke of her concerns about proposals for Hammersmith Park. These include allowing a commercial organisation PlayFootball to redevelop half of the park for use as football pitches.

There was also lively discussion on issues in Bishops Park, including the future of the garden centre, Fulham FC's plans for a new riverside stand (no start date but a proposal to have more turnstiles at riverside entrances), the proposal to



AGM guest speaker Virginia Ironside speaking of her concerns about proposals for Hammersmith Park

extend the Farmers Market to every Sunday, improving sightlines along paths used by cyclists to avoid collisions with pedestrians, and the level of policing in the park.

The committee were re-elected for another term. After a number of years on the committee Andrew Zoltowski decided to stand down and his position has been filled by Alex Laird. With much regret your committee has decided to increase the annual subscription from £5 to £10 per year. We've also found it necessary to change banks. We are very grateful to those members who have completed new standing orders – if you haven't got around to it please contact Rowena, the membership secretary, on rowena126@tiscali.co.uk or 7385 6009 and she will provide the necessary form.

Members Newsletter Winter 2014

Your new committee:

Chair	Amanda Lloyd-Harris	General Member	Vivien Heilbron
Deputy-Chair	Roger Weston	General Member	Howard Palmer QC
Treasurer	Keith Mallinson	General Member	Victor Ho
Membership	Rowena Vaughan	General Member	Christopher Round
		General Member	Alex Laird

Vandalism in the park

We were shocked to see that several of the statues in the park have been vandalised. Two of the statues in the Pryor's Bank garden were knocked off their pedestals and attempts were made to damage others. We understand similar damage has been done to memorials and statues in the grounds of All Saints Church, Margravine and Fulham cemeteries.

Police and Parks Constabulary have been studying CCTV records making other investigations as they have a description of a person after the initial damage. This seems to have been a one-off incident, but nevertheless is very unpleasant and sad. The Friends are in touch with Council officials and they have confirmed that they are seeking quotes to repair the damage and have the statues returned to their plinths cleaned and more securely attached.



Proposed new Riverside stand at Craven Cottage

Fulham FC has submitted a planning application which would alter the proposed stand. For the most part these appear to be minor changes, but with one exception. You will remember the proposal is to build a big new stand encroaching into the river. When matches are not being played, the public will be able to use a new Riverside walk running under the stand. When matches are being played new gates at each end of the path will be used as entrances to, and exits from, the ground.

While the Friends were very pleased to see a riverside path, we objected strongly to it being used for entrances. The Club has always used the Stevenage Road frontage to entrance and exit. We fear that people will be using the parks at both ends of the ground to queue up to enter the ground – this will result in extensive wear and tear on the park's fabric.

The Club now wants to increase the number of turnstiles on the riverside entrances from ten to sixteen. This clearly will make the situation worse and bring more damage to the park. The Friends, and several other local groups, have protested. We hope the Council will refuse this new application. The Council's Planning Department's reference is 2014/04974/NMAT.

Upcoming Events

Date	Event
Saturday 11th April	BNY Mellon Boat Race – Women's 16:50 (first time Women's race as well) " " Men's 17:50
Thursday 23rd April	Walkabout in Park , meet at Community Rooms at 5.45pm
Early June (tba)	ABC Picnic – Fielders Meadow

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

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, December 2014

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 / email: bishopsparkinfo@gmail.com or Amanda 020 7385 5965 or Roger 020 7385 5444