



Friends of Broomfield Park

www.friendsofbroomfieldpark.org

FoBP Committee Annual Report, 16 May 2016

The past year has been a very productive one with teams of volunteers working tirelessly to preserve and enhance our beautiful park. We would like to take this occasion to thank them all; without them our committee would be without purpose.

The Friends continue to have on-going support from the Borough and we would like to mention in particular Graham Deal and James Downing. We thank them in particular this year for ensuring that the park has been made ready for the Green Flag inspection which happened on 12 May. The outcome of this will be made known shortly but we can report that verbal feedback was positive. We now have a Bird Board and increased signage in the park. Monthly bird reports written by Derek Honnor, are placed on the park noticeboards.

We have continued to work closely with ward councillors, especially Councillor Daniel Anderson, Cabinet member for the Environment, which includes "parks". We will be working closely in future with Councillor Bambos Charalambous, West Area Associate Cabinet member. His role will be explored more fully in agenda item 9.

Most importantly, we would like to thank our park staff team, Bob and Rob, who have worked tirelessly to keep the park in good order and who have often worked in difficult conditions. Rob retired a little time ago and Bob is to retire at the end of this month. We wish them well for the future. We welcome Steve and Bernadette to our park; they will work part-time to keep the grounds as attractive as possible.

Activities and Progress made between May 2015 and May 2016

The Palmers Greenery Community cafe (PGCC) opened in the early summer 2014 and has supplied high quality (and reasonably priced) beverages and cakes three times weekly ever since. It is staffed entirely by a growing group of volunteers, led by Sarah Cotton and Ema Mortimer, who bake cakes and serve drinks on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays. The intention is to extend opening hours and possibly to open on additional days. This will depend, in the main, on the number of extra volunteers who step forward to support.

The cafe continues to be well-received and well-used, especially on Saturday mornings when there is a netball tournament. In agreement with Enfield Council, the PGCC allocates surplus funds back into projects in the park twice yearly. Bids are invited from groups in the park and a committee has been set up to consider these. 2 applications have been received for the first allocation of funds this year - £2.5k. These are to provide a small scaffolding stage in the north-west corner of the bowling green and for a sound system. Both these items will help maximise potential for increasing events in the park - music, film and theatre. Two open air cinema screenings are planned for August 12th and September 2nd. The expectation is that there will be a surplus this year of £5k paid into the park. The committee will be taking bids again on 30 June.

The Broomfield Park Conservatory

This has been another good year for the conservatory. Our team of over 30 volunteers have maintained twice a week opening to the public through out the year –we had 6135 visitors who

contributed £1990 --via donations and fundraising events --for the continued development of the plant collection.

The principal project in 2016 was the installation of the refurbished railings which had for 70 years been on the Triangle in Palmers Green . We are grateful for financial and other support from The Enfield Society and from the Residents Priority Fund of Enfield Council to carry this out . The result has been much admired by our visitors .

We continue to add to our plant collection – in part with a grant from the Palmers Greenery Community Cafe – and now have six specialist collections – as well as a desert and more lush area in the central bed .

A programme of events began with a plant swap in April and included musical afternoons , visits from schools and tomato and chilli sales . A new development is our current Artist in Residence – ceramicist Cathy Taylor - who is displaying work each month and running well attended workshops.

Broomfield Community Orchard 2015/2016

We have had a busy year, with a number of well attended events including Wassailing, Blossom Day, Bee Fun Day, Edible Open Gardens Day, Summer Picnic and Apple Day. Thanks to everyone who make these events possible.

There are a number of new volunteers, including six Duke of Edinburgh Award volunteers, who also helped out at other events in the park such as at the Talkies Open Air screening of Ghostbusters on the bowling green, the Palmers Scream and the Palmers Green Festival.

Our bees have been busy and thanks to our apiarists Paul Stiles, Ivor Evans and Kim Lumley, produced over 100lbs of tasty honey.

This year the orchard won two awards: the Community Tree Award of the 2015 London Tree and Woodland Awards; and the Enfield in Bloom gold award for Exceptional Horticultural Contribution for the Local Community. We are really pleased that the orchard has been recognised with these awards, which have been made possible by all the hard work, fun and imagination of volunteers, spurred on by people who enjoy visiting the orchard.

Community Growing Space and Wildlife Pond

We have started to create the new wildlife pond and the community growing space between the orchard and the tennis courts and would like to hear from people who would like to get involved in these projects.

Wildflower meadow and planting

The two areas were very successful and well-received last year. This year one area has been rotivated and replanted, with the addition of more poppies, and the other area of perennials has self-seeded.

Dipali and Sensory Gardens

Volunteer work continues in these areas of the park, primarily as “labours of love” by Mark Shenker and June Dawes and their helpers. The Conservatory Sub-Committee takes a general interest in their work, and Mark and June liaise directly with the professional park staff as required.

Parkland

50 new lime trees have been planted to replace those devastated by Dutch Elm disease. This has been done under Enfield’s Gateways/Greenways programme and includes a three year after-care package covering all aspects.

Remembrance Garden

Summary of events and progress since May 2015

On the 15th September there was a Battle of Britain 75th Commemoration Service held in the Garden organised by the RAF Association and led by Rev. Chrichton Limbert, vicar of Christ Church, Southgate.

On the 11th November the Friends held their annual Service of Remembrance in the Garden which was attended by over 150 members of the public. This year the service was conducted by Rev. Chrichton Limbert and attended by the Mayor of Enfield with local schoolchildren taking part. Pupils from Broomfield and Bowes School recited poems and spoke about local heroes from World War 1 while Year 6 pupils from Hazelwood School sang a medley of songs popular at the time of the war. As in previous years the Greenery cafe in the park provided some delicious cakes using wartime recipes.

On 16th March 2016 groups of children from Year 2 in Hazelwood School were shown round the Remembrance Garden and given information about its history as part of their visit to Broomfield Park.

War Memorial Trust application

At the end of June 2015 a detailed application for the restoration of the Garden was sent in to the War Memorial Trust(WMT) but it was rejected in November because the conservation architect obtained by Enfield Council was not properly accredited. This has caused considerable delay in the application process but now Enfield is in the process of receiving estimates for the work from suitably accredited architects and it is hoped that a new application will be sent in very soon. The Friends were advised by the WMT that the application should be in Enfield's name to reduce the costs.

During the last few weeks a new sign has been put up outside the internal gates to the Remembrance Garden. There is also a new signpost near Broomfield House which will make it easier for visitors to find their way to the Garden.

Other Public Events in the park

Many of you will have attended the first "Proms in the Park" on Sundays in July and the "Bandstand Blues" concerts on Sundays last August, and another very successful Palmers Green Festival in early September. Those events are due to be repeated this year. Also a "pop-up" cinema screening, organised by Talkies in co-operation with Friends of Broomfield Park, in September of Ghostbusters was extremely well received. Palmers Scream and an exciting and innovative new event at Hallowe'en!

We also held a successful "Floating Lanterns" event at the boating pond in February; many thanks to Henrietta and Tim Burton and Duke of Edinburgh volunteers for their efforts in this connection. As mentioned earlier, the park was visited by all the Year 2 students from Hazelwood School, who were informed by Friends' volunteers about the park's history, and also shown around the conservatory, Remembrance Garden and community orchard. This has become an annual event.

Broomfield House

Once the jewel in the crown, the fight continues to restore the building.

Enfield Council is following advice from Historic England and the Heritage Lottery Fund and examining the possibility of applying for a Heritage Enterprise grant to assist with the rebuilding of Broomfield House and Stableyard. It has established a Partnership Board to oversee this on which The Broomfield House Trust and the Friends are represented.

Over the past year in preparation for a possible bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, a team of consultants has carried out a major set of surveys and studies which has produced a wealth of up to date information on all aspects of the House, Stableyard and Park. The core document, the Conservation Management Plan, is still in late draft, but a short summary of it was made available online to inform the first phase of public consultation, which closed on 30 November 2015. The consultation addressed two main issues, what should happen to the House and Stable Block, and how should it be funded. What follows is our own interim view of the results.

What should happen to the House and Stable Block?

There was a fairly even split between those who favoured use as a heritage, arts and cultural centre (38%) and those who supported the idea of a "community hub" (34%). The next group, who

supported commercial development, totalled less than 10%. In practice some degree of "commercial" activity is likely to be necessary in any outcome in order to fund restoration and running costs. 9% favoured demolition or retention as a ruin. Residential development was supported by only 5%.

How should it be funded?

There were four questions under this heading.

1 Almost 90% strongly agreed or tended to agree that the Council should seek grants to part fund the restoration of the House and Stable Block.

2 74% strongly agreed or tended to agree with the idea that that the Council should part fund the restoration from Council money.

3 Almost 60% strongly agreed or tended to agree that the Council should work with a business/commercial interest to fund or part fund the restoration and running costs of the House and Stable Block. However only 26% strongly agreed with this and almost 27% strongly disagreed or tended to disagree.

4 52% agreed that the Council should look at development within the Stableyard to help fund any restoration. However only about 20% strongly supported this and 27% strongly disagreed or tended to disagree.

The studies noted above make a number of recommendations about how the historic aspects of the park, particularly the Baroque water gardens, might be restored, but this is a longer term issue not addressed by this consultation.

The Partnership Board is currently looking at working up a number of options for use of the House and Stableyard to be put to a further round of public consultation. This will probably begin around Easter 2016. This will take into account the likely viability of possible options. It seems likely that the Stableyard will be included in the options for the House, which has always been our favoured position. As always the conflict will be between our objectives to maximise public/community use and the need to generate capital for rebuilding and cover any running costs.

If none of the options are judged to be practical, and funding fails to cover capital and running costs then very regrettably demolition of Broomfield House may be unavoidable.