

newsletter

Friern Barnet & Whetstone Residents' Association



in this issue -

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <i>1. Summer in the City</i> | <i>2. Friends of Friary Park</i> | <i>4. Coppetts Wood Annual Festival</i> |
| <i>5. Finchley Leisure Park Redevelopment and North Finchley Town Centre Regeneration</i> | <i>6. Borough Wide Public Spaces Protection Order</i> | |
| <i>7. An Update on Pinkham Way and the North London Waste Plan</i> | <i>8. The Power of FBWRA</i> | |

SUMMER IN THE CITY.....OR AT LEAST IN THIS DELIGHTFUL PART OF LONDON

Watching many parts of Europe, especially southern Europe, boil and burn in the record temperatures experienced this Summer, it's a delight to be in this part of the world to enjoy our lovely outside spaces and amenities. See the other articles in this issue. The impact of climate change is all around us and has brought a profusion of blossom in the Spring, massive roses and hydrangea heads this Summer and, with a bit of luck, will bring good sized fruit this Autumn..... And probably too much rain all at once. Members are invited to the annual Summer Splash on 20th August at a new outside venue for the Association to enjoy a Cream Tea and Pimms before Autumn arrives. Details are in the box below.

MJ



Summer Splash 2023

Come along and join other members for Cream Tea and Pimms Sunday, 20th August
between 3 and 5pm in the garden of

St Mary Magdalen Church, 6 Athenaeum Road, Whetstone N20 9AE

FRIENDS OF FRIARY PARK

New flowerbed adopted!

It's been lovely to see green-fingered Plamena getting stuck in to planting a new flowerbed in the Secret Garden at the top of Friary Park park this month.

Plamena signed up to the council's Adopt a Flowerbedscheme in June and after receiving donated plants and tools she has already transformed the tired bed with a range of brightly coloured perennials.

Not only is adopting a flowerbed a great way to contribute to the community, it gets you outdoors and helps the butterflies and the bees.

If you're interested in adopting a bed, please email:
Friendsoffriarypark@gmail.com



FRIARY PARK RIVER RESTORATION	
11:00	River dipping
11:30	Meet here for guided walk of the river & discussion of river restoration
12:00	Water quality testing
12:45	River dipping
13:45	Meet here for guided walk of the river & discussion of river restoration
14:15	Water quality testing
15:00	End of event
EVERYONE WELCOME!	

A river runs through it

We had a great turn out to the Friary Park River Restoration event on 25th March.

The event, organised by Thames 21, was an opportunity for residents to learn about the council's plans to restore Blacketts Brook in Friary Park which has been prone to flooding in recent years.

The project's aims are to reduce flood risk, improve water quality and to create a wildlife habitat.

We are waiting for further details & are looking forward to working with Thames 21 to support them with this important scheme.

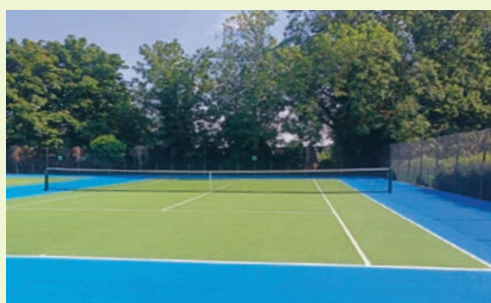
Pls visit our website www.friendsoffriarypark.org for updates.

Wild about Friary Park

It's been so nice to see children from Northside School playing in the wooded area of the park as part of a new Forest School programme run by Wild About Our Woods.

The new programme gives children a chance to connect with nature and to enjoy playing outdoors.

The programme will be running weekly during term time until February half term, so if you see them please wave hello!



Game, Set & Match!

The new tennis courts are up and being enjoyed by residents young and old in time for Wimbledon.

The court refurbishment, which was funded by the LawnTennis Association, is a real transformation.

The courts are currently free to use and can be booked by visiting:
<https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/FriaryPark>

FRIENDS OF FRIARY PARK



Cafe Update

We are disappointed by the lack of progress with the cafe in Friary House.

The council has appointed new lessees for the cafe who are very experienced cafe owners and are committed to making it a success.

Unfortunately, they cannot begin renovating the premises until the building is properly assessed for subsidence and some remedial works are undertaken. They are in talks with the council to find a mobile cafe as an interim solution.

We are continuing to monitor the situation and are engaging with local councillors and the new lessees to find a work around this summer so people can enjoy refreshments in the park.

Friends of Friary Park

We are a group of local people who care about this beautiful park.

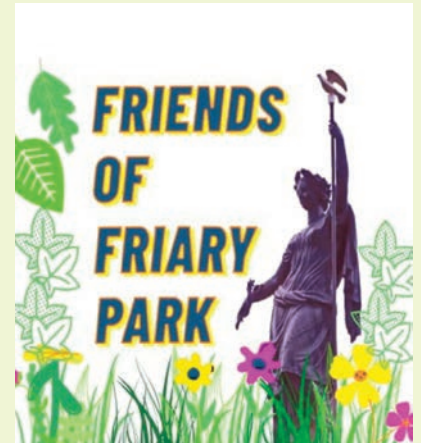
Our aims are:

- to protect and improve the park's environment & biodiversity
- to advance the arts, culture & heritage of the park
- to bring the community together through volunteering and shared goals

We look forward to working together with other community groups, volunteers & residents to make Friary Park a space we can all be proud of.

We'd like to thank the outgoing Friends Group who have worked tirelessly over many years to give their time, experience and knowledge to improve the park.

To find out more please visit www.friendsoffriarypark.org or emailfriendsoffriarypark@gmail.com



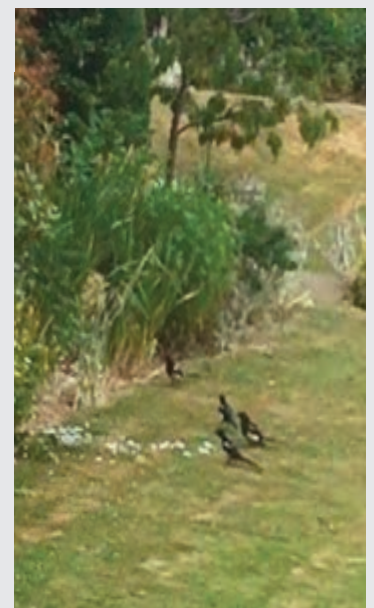
MOURNING IN THE GARDEN

One morning a few weeks ago I went out into my back garden. There was trail of white feathers across the lawn – either a cat or a fox had caught a bird. I checked but could find no trace of a carcass (important as, if there was, I didn't want our dog to find it).

A couple of hours later, back in the kitchen, I glanced out to look at the garden. A group of 4 magpies had gathered around the feathers. They seemed agitated and one of them, bigger than the others, was squawking loudly, the others joining in now and again. This continued for perhaps a quarter of an hour, with the birds slowly moving around the area of the feather trail. Then, one by one, they flew up into a nearby tree and all was quiet. I had never seen anything like this before- it was as though the birds were mourning the loss of one of their own. Whilst I have seen birds try to stir a dead mate, I have never seen what I would liken to a memorial service and I had not thought that birds might exhibit grief in such a communal manner or that they would remember one that had gone. I must admit that I shared in their sadness.

Later research on the internet disclosed that such mourning behaviour is not uncommon amongst birds of the family to which magpies belong, and videos can be found on YouTube (although these generally seem to be cases where there is a carcass). One lives and learns.

DT



COPPETTS WOOD ANNUAL FESTIVAL - FABULOUS AFTERNOON IN JUNE



Very well attended, this year's Coppetts Wood festival proved a splendid success. Held in a large open shaded space provided by large mature trees, on a sunny day in June, it was a perfect place for local residents to gather for a civilized afternoon out.

Organised by the Coppetts Wood Conservationists, the festival shows off their efforts in preserving the nature reserve, as a resource for the whole community.

For the children there was a treasure hunt, facepainting, a puppet show repeated every hour; clay modelling, with one stall led by Julian Wootton and, opposite, another stall led by Ameeta Patel.

Adults could indulge themselves in a little willow weaving, drinking craft beer or listening to some live music.

The Pinkham Way alliance had a stand, as did the Local

History Society and many others. Extinction Rebellion (for adults) had a blanket on the grass.

Local Councillors Barry Rawlings, Pauline Coakley-Webb and Anne Hutton came along. Our M.P. Theresa Villers has attended in recent years but your reporter hadn't seen her by the time he left (he arrived late as well).

The nature reserve is threatened by a proposal to build an unsuitable 7-storey block, adjacent to the site. Our M.P., who opposes the proposed development, visited the site a few days before the festival. The final decision on the proposed development rests with London mayor's office.

Sad news, your reporter was told that the Association's former Secretary and local activist, Lizi Gray, died last November.

HG

FINCHLEY LEISURE PARK REDEVELOPMENT and NORTH FINCHLEY TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

Since our Spring edition we, together with representatives of The Finchley Society and representatives of other local Residents' Associations, have met with Cllr. Ross Houston (Council Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Homes & Regeneration) who is the "lead" Councillor for this and also the proposed "Regeneration" of North Finchley Town Centre and also with directors of the developer, Regal London. Regal held a public consultation to explain their plans for the property and the Council held a consultation on requirements for the new Lido. FBWRA has also been in contact with Cllr. Ammar Naqvi (Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure, and Arts & Sports). The picture that emerges is unclear- shrouded in fog one might say, but –



FINCHLEY LEISURE PARK REDEVELOPMENT

- Regal are looking to build 5 blocks of flats (no houses) providing upwards of 1000 homes, but this has not been confirmed and could change; some retail units in the blocks which could include retail and café/restaurant provision.
- There will be direct access to the Glebelands (given up in some way) the Council enjoys as landowner, by virtue of the rigid restrictions in the current lease against residential use, and which exist entirely outside and in addition to the Council's powers under the Town & Country Planning Acts (which the Council tells us are seen as the main lever at their disposal).
- FBWRA and others with whom we are working also have concerns that the Council in not satisfactorily coordinating itself internally of this matter - this was apparent from the proceedings of the Policy & Resources Committee in April and including the report presented to the Committee on re-provision of the Lido, which signally failed to deal with the wider (non-financial) issues (including the potential loss of the Borough's only ten pin bowling and multiplex facilities). We have been told that Cllr Houston has suggested an internal round table - with relevant Cabinet Members and council officers - to discuss the Administration's aspirations for the North Finchley regeneration in broader terms - which would include the GNLP site, so perhaps Cllr Houston is also concerned on this point.

NORTH FINCHLEY TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION



- The Master Plan for the scheme has been delayed due to failure to resolve significant issues that affect the whole development. Chiefly transport and engagement with TfL. This has been poor, but has recently much improved post intervention by Cllr Barry Rawlings with Sadiqi Khan. Discussions around removal of current bus depot, pedestrianisation of Ballards Lane, dispersal of bus halts, provision of rest rooms (!) ...
- First planning application put back, now due June 2024 with a backstop of December 2024;
- Proposals will include demolition of the artsdepot and the bus depot, which will be replaced by a high block of flats next to the existing block at 100 Kingsway, and construction of a replacement for the artsdepot on a new site. Location currently uncertain.
- First site to be redeveloped likely to be Lodge Lane car park.

DT

BOROUGH WIDE PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER

I doubt very much that many of you reading this know that the borough of Barnet is now under the above order. It has been since the middle of December and will be so for the next 3 years. This order will apply to EVERY public space in the borough, (streets, parks, woods, playgrounds), and has the power to make offenders be given a fixed penalty.

Offenders?? What constitutes being an offender under this act?

Drinking alcohol and not surrendering it when asked.
Use of abusive, offensive or threatening language. A dog owner who allows their dog to defecate and leaves the evidence on the ground. A dog walker who exercises more than 6 dogs at once, whether or not they are on leads. Anyone who spits, urinates or defecates in a public space. Anyone who aggressively begs on streets or roadways and particularly in front of cash points. Anyone who drives a motorised vehicle in a park or green space without permission from the council and those who fail to stop once asked.



Any person who lights a firework in a public place without a licence. Anyone who lights a fire or a BBQ in a public space unless they have been given written permission in advance from the council.

Anyone who attempts to publicise a music event in any way or is involved in an unlicensed music event.

Anyone who uses, supplies, gives or shares psychoactive substances; has drug paraphernalia on their person unless they have a medical exemption.

So who will maintain this public order over the whole of our large and sprawling borough???

Obviously, our SNT ward police will be the only people with powers of arrest for miscreants but our PSCO's plus the Barnet Community Safety Team will be on patrol all over the borough and will have cameras on their Hi-Viz jackets. Unless a serious offence is being committed, the various officers will speak and advise anyone they consider is breaching the order.

I look forward to seeing evidence of this measure having positive effects and would be delighted if anyone reading this article could send in comments if they have noticed the order being used in a public place.

KS

AN UPDATE ON PINKHAM WAY AND THE NORTH LONDON WASTE PLAN

Whilst the Pinkham Way (PW) issue might recently appear to have fallen away, plenty is happening in the background. In October 2021 the most important development of the whole campaign was the Planning Inspector's Report for the N London Waste Plan. This set out in black and white the raft of planning constraints and conditions detailed in PWA's extensive evidence. Since 2011, Haringey and the other Councils had ignored this, whilst never rebutting a single word.

How things have changed - Haringey officers now describe PW as enjoying 'multi-layered protection', protection which they credit entirely to PWA.



So where now? For the N London Waste Authority, all logic says it's hit a brick wall. Since it discovered its original project was not required, the 2011 purchase has been a strategic and financial shambles. It has no planning permission, no long term plans, plus the added obstacle of the Inspector's Report. So - a hefty write-down in value? Er - no. An INCREASE of c 35%! Answers on a postcard please

And Barnet, which still owns c 2 ha? Barnet and Haringey are having regular and constructive discussions at officer level. The Council considers that its best option would be to restore its land's nature conservation value, creating a site of benefit and pride to both Councils and to local residents.

The national planning / environmental background is very favourable for this. Later this year the principle of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) will become law - setting out that all developments must show a 10% gain for biodiversity, either onsite or at another specified site.

Another major development is Nature Recovery Strategy, which is self-explanatory. Heaven knows the UK desperately needs this - our 'green and pleasant land' is in the bottom 10% in the world for nature depletion.

PW is a classic example of a rich but neglected existing site that proper long-term management could enhance hugely, and whose resulting improvement net gain would have a beneficial ripple effect on the surrounding area.

In terms of nature conservation, Haringey considers the site suitable for upgrading from Borough to

London-wide Importance, which the London Plan states requires 'the highest level of protection'. It also fulfils the criteria for designation as Metropolitan Open Land.

So, not much apparent on the surface, but vigorous paddling under water!

In a few months, PWA will be responding to an important Haringey Local Plan consultation. As usual, we'll be asking for your signature in support of our submission.

Stephen Brice, Pinkham Way Alliance (PWA)

THE POWER OF FBWRA

At the most recent meeting of the FBWRA Committee we discussed the car park serving Bethune Recreation Ground. Located at one end of Bethune Avenue, at night this ill-lit facility has for years been a place for anti-social behaviour of various types, including, it is thought, drug-dealing. The Committee decided that it was time for FBWRA to act, and to ask the Council to install a gate across the entrance to the car park, and to keep it locked shut during the hours of darkness.

Two days after the meeting the Council installed a gate. Such is the power of FBWRA!

Whilst this is a nice little tale, we have to be honest - sadly we cannot claim the credit - we hadn't even got round to contacting the Council. Having discounted the possibility that the Council had bugged our meeting room we discovered that others had already complained to the Council.

There is a sequel - the gate remains locked - not just at night but all day and every day. We asked the Council when they would be opening it and posting a notice of hours of use. Others asked



similar questions. It emerged that the closure is for the foreseeable future "until the anti-social behaviour has stopped or can be dealt with by the police" (probably little prospect of the latter). It appears the closure will be reviewed later in the year.

FBWRA has told the Council that, whilst we are pleased action has been taken to curb anti-social behaviour in the car park, we think complete and indefinite closure of the facility goes too far. It is wrong for lawful use by the majority to be stopped because of the actions of a minority.

DT

Friern Barnet & Whetstone Residents' Association.

- We are non-political
- We work for all residents in the area
- We discuss issues with Local Councillors and Council Officials
- We are associated with the following bodies:
 - The Federation of Residents' Associations in Barnet
 - The London Green Belt Council
 - The Finchley Society
 - Love Whetstone
 - Friends of Friary Park
 - Open Spaces Society
 - The Friern Barnet & District Local History Society