



**DULWICH
PARK
FRIENDS**

Newsletter

Late Autumn 2008

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'Do One Thing for Nature' – so we did!

Dulwich Park Friends organised a very successful Dig the Park event on 24 October as part of BBC's Autumnwatch, under the banner of Breathing Places - Do One Thing for Nature.

We planted lots of spring bulbs in the park's nature conservation area, and more than 50 volunteers, plus many children, came to do their bit. Nature worksheets were provided by the BBC, but the children seemed to prefer dropping bulbs into the holes dutifully dug by the adults. At one stage we had so many helping hands that we ran out of bulbs, and more had to be brought out from storage.



We were lucky with the weather, and everyone enjoyed themselves - especially the hot chocolate kindly provided by the Pavilion Café. The event was an ideal opportunity to showcase the park and increase people's awareness of the work done by Dulwich Park Friends. Our special thanks go to Rosie Thornton, the park manager; Ursula Allison, community outreach officer and her daughter Lily, and especially to Ric Glenn, the head gardener, who arranged everything and cheerfully helped out throughout the session.

Local schools programme

For some time, DPF has been pressing the council to make use of the Francis Peek Centre for natural history education and conservation projects for local schools. However, the council requires a professional partner to manage such a scheme. The idea is that schools will take part in activities that tie in with the different key stages of the national curriculum, and DPF will provide equipment such as pond-dipping nets, magnifying glasses, pens and paper and so on. The council is actively looking for a partner and some progress has been made - we will let you know when there's news.

Dulwich in Bloom

Britain in Bloom is part of the largest horticultural campaign in Europe and involves thousands of people in towns and cities across the UK who take an active interest in caring for their local environment. In 2009, it is proposed that Dulwich (based mainly on Village Ward, including the park) will independently enter the UK national competition in the Urban Community category, separately from Southwark's entry. Dulwich will be judged on horticultural achievement and practices, environmental responsibility and community participation. Watch this space!

College Lodge update

Dulwich Park Friends and the Dulwich Society, together with the council, interviewed the prospective tenant for College Lodge early in December. The proposals were generally acceptable, bar a few points to sort out before going public, and the tenancy agreement is expected to be signed within the next three months. Considerable work will be necessary before the building can be occupied, but hopefully it can be completed within a year.

Winter Garden tour, 31 January

There will be a tour of the park's beautiful Winter Garden on Saturday 31 January at 11am-12.30pm, led by Ric Glenn, the head gardener; meet outside the Pavilion Café. The garden has many unusual specimens, and many winter-fragrant plants will be in bloom in late January. Look out for posters in the park, or contact Ursula Allison at ursula.allison@southwark.gov.uk (020 7525 0707) to confirm details.

Model allotment in Dulwich Park?

Dulwich Going Greener, the local organisation working for a more sustainable, lower-carbon Dulwich, is hoping to create a model allotment in the park, a project which is supported by DPF and the park authorities. At the moment there is a pressing need to put together a volunteer workforce to look after such an allotment – a committed team of at least 20 people is required before the project can go any further. If you would like to help, please contact David Smart at smart194@btinternet.com; tel. 020 7733 8335. David has a great deal of experience growing fruit and vegetables, having converted waste ground near his home into a wonderful kitchen garden, which he is always happy to show people around.

More members

We're very pleased that membership of Dulwich Park Friends is growing, with over 300 families and individuals now part of the organisation. More members means more clout with the council to ensure the future of the park and enhance its facilities, and to use our influence to get things done. Please encourage your friends and neighbours to join; there's a membership form on our website.

A 'playground' for adults and young people?

DPF is looking at the possibility of providing outdoor fitness equipment in the park for grown-ups and teenagers. We're investigating what's on the market and we will talk to parks that already have this equipment, as well as identifying funding, for instance from the government, to encourage health and fitness within the wider community.

Kingfisher bank and floating islands

The kingfisher bank kindly funded by the Dulwich Society is now complete (you can see it on the island from the boardwalk) – let's hope the kingfishers notice when they're looking for nest sites. DPF is now thinking about purchasing 'floating islands' (right) made from old cable reels, which encourage water fowl to nest on the lake.



What's on in the park?

For activities in Dulwich Park, check the events calendar on the noticeboards and advertisements inside the Francis Peek Centre. British Military Fitness is about to start training sessions in the park. Contact simon@britmilfit.com for details.

Pumping at last!

The pump in the lake has had its problems, but is at last working properly. With the help of the pump and the oxygenating plants, the water should be much clearer and better for aquatic wildlife.

Boats on the lake

DPF is still chasing the council to get boating on the lake next summer. DPF can offer half of the money necessary to build a boathouse if a suitable boat operator can be found.

Dig the Park

Dig the Park community events are generally held the first Saturday each month, 10am-1pm (except please note 10 January; then 7 February, 7 March, 4 April 2009 etc) to support the park's head gardener and his team's efforts to maintain the park by helping with planting, tidying up, dead-heading and similar activities. Equipment and refreshments are provided. Follow the green Dig the Park signs to get to the area of the park we're working on. Everyone is welcome.



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