



**DULWICH
PARK
FRIENDS**

Digest

Summer 2011

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Dear Member

As mentioned before, we now send a monthly electronic newsletter to those on email – do call me on 07967 000546 or email chair@dulwichparkfriends.org.uk if you would prefer to receive updates this way. One major advantage is that we can consult members more regularly on matters affecting the park, as well as notifying them of upcoming events.

A great deal of relevance to the park has happened since our last newsletter.

'Park manager' confirmed

Southwark has now implemented the proposed structural changes to the way in which its parks are managed, in light of the need to make cost savings. Paul Highman, known previously as our park manager, has been appointed as contracts and services manager (CSM) for the Dulwich area (the role which has replaced park managers). Although I expect everyone will continue to refer to Paul as the park manager, his area of responsibility includes many other open spaces in the south of the borough, including Belair – so he is a busy man. Paul awaits the appointment of the contracts and services officer (CSO) who will assist him. A consequence of the restructuring is that Andy Chatterton, formerly the contract standards officer for Dulwich Park, is now CSM for the Southwark area. DPF wishes him well and thanks him for his help over the years.

Dulwich Park Fair



Despite cool and breezy weather, Dulwich Park Fair proved a resounding success on 15 May, with traders in particular reporting far higher levels of interest than in 2010. It may or may not be evidence of 'The Big Society', but proves yet again how the community and the local authority can work successfully together. Huge thanks are due to the park manager Paul Highman and, from our own committee, Emily

Montague, who organised the children's attractions (Punch & Judy, magician, Vauxhall City Farm) as well as the programme of music and dance on the small stage. The birds of prey display took an unexpected turn when a young kestrel sent out on a flight round the park nearly met its end after being attacked by a gaggle of protective crows. Thanks to all who volunteered as stewards for the event.

Annual General Meeting

We had a magnificent turn out for our AGM – thanks to all who attended. In practice, the event is a review of the year, with the formal AGM business taking only a few minutes. So next year we will promote it as such to try and attract an even bigger audience. Our thanks to Edward Mayer of Swift Conservation, who enchanted us with his talk about how to support the swift population. Not only are the swift boxes now in situ on College Lodge, if you listen carefully you can hear the swift calls being broadcast from the building to attract the birds to nest there.

Rosebery Lodge

The project to bring Rosebery Lodge back into use is underway at last. However the scope of the work is limited – the building will not be restored to its full former glory at this stage. The primary benefit will be to the Dulwich Vegetable Garden (DVG) at the rear of the building, which will have access to toilet facilities (including disabled use) and a small kitchen. The DVG is a wildlife-friendly, disability-friendly community fruit and vegetable garden which encourages people to learn how to 'grow their own'. If you would like to see the garden or join the volunteers, the DVG is open every Wednesday and Sunday, 10.30-12.30.

Green Chain Walk

Last year Dulwich Park was officially added as another link in the Green Chain Walk that runs from Erith in the East through to the park in the West (details at www.greenchain.com). Later this year DPF is planning an organised walk of part of the Green Chain. If anyone would like to help with that, please email or call the Chair.

Rose pruning masterclass

Pruning the roses around the bowling green is a time-consuming exercise, so we thought it would be a good idea to turn it into a learning process too. On 2 July Nathan Mills, who until recently was part of the Quadron team of gardeners in the park, showed a fascinated group how to get the best from their hybrids, climbers and floribundas. Take a look at the roses around the bowling green to see the impact. There will be a follow-up session during August if there are enough takers. Please let us know if you are interested and we will send details once they are finalised.



Young Friends of Parks

Some good news, amongst all the cost-cutting: Southwark has re-engaged Groundwork to run the Young Friends of Parks programme, which will be targeting 13-19 year-olds. The programme is borough-wide, with occasional events to be located in Dulwich Park. We will include details in our monthly e-newsletter. If anyone has ideas for youth events in the park which we can promote via YFP, please contact the Chair.

Barley straw sausages, anyone?

No, not the latest from Heston Blumenthal ... Some of you may have already noticed the mysterious giant straw 'sausages' floating in the lake, tethered to the booms that mark the boundary of the boating area. Barley straw releases natural chemicals into the water which inhibit the build up of algae in the lake. The use of this process in recent years has proved a great success, with the added advantage that it is cheap, too. The installation was funded by DPF out of last year's Cleaner Greener Safer grant from Southwark, as one element of work in the lake that also included reed planting and debris clearance. Over two days, a group of volunteers mustered by the Friends worked with a team from the Trust for Urban Ecology (TRUE). When you next walk over the boardwalk, take a look at the improvements to the reed planting and the general layout of other aquatic plants.



Capture the Park photo project

Thanks to the efforts of Denis Hebden, we now have a forum for park-related photos. Take a look at www.capturethepark.co.uk. There is still work to do on the site, but it is well worth a visit. As you will see, Denis has uploaded a number of archive photographs of the park and the local area. We'd like to encourage people to submit their own photographs of the park – it is straightforward to upload to the site. Remember, even an 'ordinary' photo taken today can become the social document of tomorrow. Later in the year we will launch a project ('Then and Now') for people to take pictures of the same locations as in the archive pictures, to give a modern spin on the same subject.

Open air cinema in Dulwich in August x2!

Nomad Cinema returns to the park on Sunday 14 August to screen *The Goonies* (12A), described as "a warm bath of mid-80s nostalgia". Visit www.wheresthenomad.com for details. On Bank Holiday Monday, 29 August, there will be a sing-a-long open air showing of *Grease* (PG) in the grounds of Dulwich Picture Gallery. So hunt down that jar of Brylcreem and visit www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/whats_on for details.

Winter Celebration event

In November this year, Southwark is planning a major event aimed at young people celebrating light – as a welcome counter to traditional firework displays. The aim is to encourage local schools and young people generally to take part, producing illuminated structures as part of a performing arts parade that will terminate in the park. Southwark Events are consulting the Friends as the project develops. External consultants Emergency Exit Arts (EEA) have been engaged by Southwark as consultants – see www.eea.org.uk for examples of their imaginative productions. EEA are keen to involve community groups such as choirs, bands and church groups who might not only make a cultural contribution, but also possibly provide premises for workshops to create the structures to be illuminated for the event. If you have any ideas, or indeed could provide practical help on the night please do contact me.



Talking rubbish again – and this time it's good news

Many of you will be aware that we have been lobbying for improvements to rubbish collection arrangements in the park. Finally, this has paid dividends. Recent weekends have seen the arrival of 'paladin'-style bins at key hotspots around the park. Already the decrease in scattered debris is noticeable, as well as proving that most park users will put their rubbish in a bin on

leaving – as long as there is a receptacle into which to put it. In the coming weeks the paladins will be replaced by more robust, tethered bins; and the smaller bins throughout the park will be replaced with slightly larger ones that also have a lid to discourage pesky scavengers.

Next Dig The Park

There will be no Dig The Park in August. Our next event will be 10am-1pm on Saturday 3 September.

Anyone for tennis?

Well, it can be a long wait. We have received feedback concerning the difficulty at times of getting access to the tennis courts in the park. It seems that some users, once ensconced, are reluctant to finish their games within a reasonable period and make way for others who are waiting to have a game. Please let us know if you have found this a problem – the more evidence we have, the better our chances of persuading Southwark to address the issue.

Finally, there's no age limit on enjoying the outdoor gym!



As always, if there are any park-related issues you would like to discuss, please do call or email me at any time.

Trevor Moore

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