

**FRIENDS OF HURST PARK  
WORKING GROUP MEETING,  
Garrick's Ait, 28 April 2014  
MINUTES**

Present: John Inglis (Chair), John Fitzpatrick, Alison Frawley, Addy Johnson, Jill Sanders (Secretary)

**1. Apologies**

Hilary Powell

**2. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising.**

These were **agreed** as a correct record.

Nothing had been heard on the commons registration application; Alison **agreed** to follow this up with Helen Gilbert at Surrey County Council; John F also offered to be another name in following up this long-delayed matter.

As well as the Great Burnet, it seemed that the very rare Autumn Squill had been reported in the Hurst Park estate. This wild plant had been recorded in the late 1800s, before the race course, so could well be somewhere on the site (flowers July/August, very small and modest blue-ish spire of flowers).

John F reported that the tree suckers were growing aggressively and spreading from the copses into the meadows.

Jill was concerned about intolerable noise levels from some of the events last year, and would try to pre-empt this problem in a communication to remind Ian Gayton.

**3. Management of the Meadows and copses**

With the admission from Elmbridge's officers that they did not have staff, and would not be in a position to have someone in place before the end of the year, it was **agreed** that there was little the Friends could do in a pro-active or productive way. In effect, for now at least, there would be no management of the park with the future in mind. Concerns were expressed about this current strategy for doing nothing more than urgent remediation works and low-level planned management, such as grass cutting. There was also concern expressed about the imminent departure of a member of the contractors' staff who went a long way to keep the Hurst clear of litter. It was feared that users of the park might begin to see a deterioration in its maintenance.

**4. Relationships with EBC officers**

From Ian Gayton, sent on 16 April 2014:

We are currently down in staff by 50% and were extremely busy in the two months following Christmas dealing with the flooding in various parts of the Borough, as you will be very aware, living on the island, which was effected.

We have advertised for staff, with a closing date this Thursday 18 April. If we find a suitable candidate, it usually takes a further two months before they can start and then a minimum probationary period of 3 months before they can fully contribute to the service. All being well, the new member of staff will have responsibility for Hurst Park

as part of their geographical area to manage. They will be able to pick up the reins in late autumn/early winter and liaise with you on the future management plan of Hurst Park. Until then, we will have to put on hold the development and delivery of a management plan until the new dedicated member of staff is in place and able to contribute fully.

In the meantime, please contact Philip Robinson, Senior Green Spaces Development Officer on any day to day issues.

Regards,

Ian Gayton  
Green Spaces Manager  
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It was **agreed** that at this stage the Friends could do little more than keep a watching brief and communicate with the senior officer, Ian Gayton, who had said there was no dedicated parks officer assigned to Hurst Park. It was also agreed to contact Ian Burrows, head of the leisure and cultural services department to highlight concerns. The following points should be made: somebody has to be responsible for Hurst Park, which is the most popular and best used in the borough; it is unique in that it adjoins the Thames. It was **agreed** to copy this letter to councillors: Mike Axton, Alan Hopkins and Liz Robertson, to alert them to the local concerns. It was **agreed** the issue needed to be escalated in this way because of problems that might ensue with no responsible officer. We should also seek an update from Ian Gayton on how recruitment was proceeding and when an appointment might be made, in order to liaise with any new officer and inform them about Hurst Park. It was also essential to have an emergency contact during the summer, particularly for events, where there had been serious problems in the past with portable toilets and food waste, as well as noise.

#### **5. Updates and matters for action:**

John I agreed to continue as acting Chair for a further year, but a permanent Chair should be sought. It was **agreed** to defer holding an AGM as there was little point with nothing to report and no opportunities for planning ahead. This information should be circulated to the database of Wider Friends and included on the website.

#### **6. Any other business**

**Petanque:** a suggestion had been made to keep the surfacing in the EA compound and use it for petanque (three or four pitches). There were mixed feelings about this and the general consensus was:

this was not a use that had been planned for the site, which may not be the right place for it;

there were already agreements in place for the EA to do remedial and other works at Hurst Park to compensate for its use of the compound;

there had not been sufficient thought about how the pitches would be maintained and who might use them;

as this was council property, the process of approval would have to be followed with opportunities for consultation at that stage.

**Dog poo and dog warden** It was **agreed** the Friends should make laminated notices to reinforce message to the recalcitrant dog owners to pick up, and use some of the many posts around Hurst Park. Something like: *“Allowing your dog to foul is a punishable offence with fines up to £1,000; it also spreads disease. Help keep our park clean - pick up after your dog.”*

It was **agreed** to ask Cllr Mallett whether SCC had a dog warden, or some officer with that remit in the portfolio. This information could then be included on notices. One of the worst areas for excrement was close to the children’s playground and this was an important health issue, which councillors should be concerned about.

John F **agreed** to raise this issue with the Neighbourhood Watch group.

**Noticeboards** A public notice board for the Hurst Park carpark had been promised for the Friends for some years, and although the Friends were informed one had been made, it had not been installed. A request for a key to the Graburn Way board should be included in the letter to Ian Gayton because at present the Friends still had no facility for notices.

**Open Spaces Society:** It was **agreed** the Friends should continue to be signed up with this organisation, which offered legal guidance on commons registration applications through our local representative. This was very helpful.

**Hurst Park events:** it was agreed under the circumstances not to run stalls, etc., at local events this season; this would be kept under review.

**Donations:** There was £120 in the account, which was sufficient for the moment. It was **agreed** to appeal for a small donation from the Wider Friends, which could be transferred electronically or through a cheque, but not until there was a good reason for a request.

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#### Action points from the meeting

Item	Action	Who	When
2.	Follow up with Helen Gilbert at SCC re commons reg.	AF/JF	asap
4.	Letter to IG, IB and ward councillors to cover all points of concern	Sec/all	asap
5.	Inform Wider Friends of deferral of AGM and current situation	Sec	asap
6.	Laminated notices to reinforce pick up dogpoo messages Ask Cllr Mallett re SCC position on county dog warden Request key for Graburn Way noticeboard in letter to IG	Sec/all Sec Sec	Asap asap asap