

PARKLIFE



NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF CATOR PARK AND ALEXANDRA RECREATION GROUND

Winter Issue 2019

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Dear Friends

Welcome to the Winter issue of the newsletter. 2019 has been a very productive year in both our parks with old and new community events and activities taking place as well as some new additions to the parks.

Some of you may have noticed a wonderful new mural spray painted onto the walls of the Beckenham bowls club in Alex Rec. The mural was commissioned in partnership with bowls club members and the Friends of the Park to mark the clubs' centenary.



The artist is James Titchner - a past resident who now lives in Forest Hill. The work depicts scenes in the life of the park, wildlife and local landmarks. We are also happy to announce that we'll be collaborating with Seymour Villas Football Club to continue the painting on the other side of the building next year.



Bulb planting continued in earnest this year – more tulips and daffodils for both parks – let's hope the squirrels don't eat too many of them so we can enjoy these in their full glory on the spring walk next April! Good news for our planting in the new year.....we have been given 30 trees to plant in each park from the Woodland Trust! The trees are due to be with us in March 2020. There will be 10 of each tree: Rowan, Silver birch and Wild Cherry.

Over the summer, we took part and celebrated the launch of London as the first ever National Park City by organising a trio of events over a weekend at the end of July. We started our programme with a very well attended Poetry in the Park evening, held in conjunction with Penge Poets. Prior to the evening we had held a competition with the theme of Nature. The judges had a very difficult task picking the winners, the standard of the entries was so high! Everyone who entered the competition then read their poems on the night and other audience members also participated by either reading poems they had written themselves or those they liked with Nature as the theme. Thanks to the Bowl's club who gave us use of the club house when the weather became inclement!

On the Sunday morning, we continued with Physicality in the Park, where local fitness and health providers Shelley Drury: Bootcamp, Clare Holford: Yoga and Rosie Driscoll: Children's Yoga came along and held some fun taster sessions, we also organised some silly sports for children and the Good Gym runners weeded the sensory garden in the playpark.

In the afternoon we held our popular annual Music in the Park event with the Beckenham Concert Band entertaining over 200 people on a gloriously sunny afternoon. There were refreshment stalls including a Pimm's stall, Himalayan Kitchen goodies, Carnival Coffee, and of course the ever-popular Friends' cake stall.

We also laid on a free picnic for members of the elderly community and had a raffle with prizes generously donated by local businesses: Alexandra Nurseries, Ooh la la Hairdressers, The Alexandra pub, and some by our wonderful members.



Our other very popular event, Paws in the Park, took place this September on another very sunny afternoon. Over 500 people and many adorable and very well-behaved pooches made their way to Cator Park to take part. As well as the central, highly entertaining dog show itself with such categories as “Waggiest Tail”, “Best Trick” and “Dog Most Like It’s Owner” there were stalls galore and enough entertainment to keep everyone busy and happy. This is fast becoming one of our most well attended events – if you haven’t been yet look out for it next year – even if you don’t have a dog there is plenty to do.

Lastly, this summer we bid a fond farewell to Chris O’Shaughnessy who stepped down as Chair of the Friends group. Chris was one of the original founder members of the group and has worked tirelessly to improve and promote our parks over the last ten years or so. We held a leaving ceremony at our AGM to celebrate his long tenure as Chair and to give thanks for all the time and effort he has contributed to the parks - and indeed to our community. It won’t be the last you see of Chris though – he was made an honorary member and will be popping up at future events! We wish Chris all the best for the future.



Up and Coming Park Events & Activities

Park Volunteer Sessions for the new year - Light gardening, tidying & litter picking duties undertaken.

Alex Rec - All session to take place 10-12am on Saturdays – Meet by the water fountain. April 11th & 25th, May 9th & 23rd, June 13th & 20th, July 4th & 18th, August 1st & 15th, September 12th & 16th.

Cator Park – Sessions at 10-12am on varied weekend days. Meet by the central noticeboard. April 4th & 19th, May 2nd, June 7th & 27th, July 25th, Sept 5th & Tues eve 7pm on June May 19th, June 16th, July 7th, Aug 11th Sept 22nd

Santa Paws in the Park - December 14th 2pm Led by Millie Knights. Put on your Christmas jumpers & join us on our Christmas Jumper dog walk Meet at 1:30 by the fountain in Alex Rec to begin the walk then onto Cator park via the Pool riverbank, ending at Kent Coffee and Flowers where walkers can enjoy a discounted treat. A Festive Prize will be awarded to the best dog and owner jumpers worn. We will be collecting cat and dog food for the Living well charity as part of this walk.

Spring Walk - March 22nd Led by Chris O’Shaughnessy. Meet at 1:45 for a 2.00pm start by the central noticeboard in Cator Park, we will visit parts of the park and walk via the Pool riverbank, ending at Alexandra Nurseries where walkers can enjoy a discounted treat. Donations gratefully received towards Friends activities.

Easter in the Park - April 11th 2-3.30pm Alex Rec. Easter fun in the park! Look out for full activity details on posters nearer the time.

Music in the Park - July 2020 Come and enjoy a sunny musical afternoon. Bring a picnic, your friends, family and neighbours and listen to the Beckenham Concert Band play in Alex. Rec.

Paws in the Park -

September 6th
More doggy-focused fun in Cator park. Categories and entry details to follow.



Volunteering & Membership

We are looking for more members to help us engage with all park users and to encourage and promote the use of the parks. If you'd like to volunteer at any of events, get more involved in the committee or our projects, please get in touch.

What would you like to see in your park?

Any ideas welcome, big or small, and they will be discussed at the next committee meeting. We are restricted by the borough on what is allowable, but we want to hear your ideas by February 1st, 2020. Please email us at friends.cator-and-alexandra@live.co.uk



Membership for Friends of Cator Park & Alexandra Recreation Ground

The annual subscription supports many park activities including guided seasonal walks, night bat walks and concerts. It also helps us to preserve and enhance the park environments by liaising with the council, through 'green gym' activities including light gardening, bulb planting and developing and implementing new ideas for the good of the parks. We need your support to continue this work. It's easy to join – email friends.cator-and-alexandra@live.co.uk and we'll send you an application form or complete the details below and return to Friends of Cator and Alexandra, 262, Kent House Road, Beckenham, BR3 1JN. Please make cheques payable to Friends of Cator and Alexandra. Or complete a Bank Transfer: Friends of Cator and Alexandra, A/c No. 61592226 Sort code 60-02-12

Name Address

..... Postcode

Email Date: December 2020 Newsletter

Annual Subscription fees: Individual £3.00, Family £5.00, Organisation £10.00

Five-year Subscription fees: Individual £12.50, Family £22.50

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Useful Contacts - Ward Security, a mobile park security service: 0845 847 6180. Id Verde – responsible for grounds maintenance - 020 8313 4438. Fix My Street – report any graffiti, litter etc. at www.fixmystreet.com.