

# PARKLIFE

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF CATOR PARK AND ALEXANDRA RECREATION GROUND – WINTER 2022

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Dear Friends, wow how quickly has this year gone. It's flown by and as usual we have a lot of activities to report back on for you as it's been another busy few months in our parks.

**Events...** Our annual autumn Bat Walk took place in October. It's always an interesting night discovering facts about, and listening out for, our local bat population. As usual we used our very cool set of bat detectors that pick up on the echolocation of the bats which sent out the magical sound of the bats clicking through the night air – a great evening was had by all who came along.

**Paws in the Park 2022** was another resounding success. More cute and cuddly pooches than ever entered. Best in Show was the graceful Otto the Saluki with his carer Betsy Smith. Big thanks to everyone who entered or sponsored us with a stall and to all our pawsome volunteers. First time events for Cator this year – our first 2 **ParkBathe** walks led by Millie Knights were held this week, this is a gentle and mindful experience which really concentrates the senses and helps us relax whilst appreciating all that nature offers us in the park. For more information and dates of walks click here - <https://linktr.ee/parkbathe>. This was followed on the same day by a traditional Celtic tree dressing ceremony where decorations were pinned onto one of the trees in thanks for all the park has and continues to give us!



**Millennium Mile Posts** - Did you know that a trail of cast iron sculptures known as Millennium Mileposts were launched in 2000 as celebration of the freedom and diversity of the National Cycle Network? Over 1,000 mileposts were installed, stretching to all corners of the UK, some as far north as the Shetland Islands and... there's one in our very own in Cator Park! You may not have noticed this piece of art in our midst as it has been a little neglected over the years. This has now changed with advice from Sustrans and some talented local volunteers, who have taken on the job of refurbishing it and giving it some love - and it now looks its very best again. Our Cator Park milepost was designed by the Scottish sculptor Iain McColl and this design he called The Cockerel. Find out more at [Sustrans.org](http://Sustrans.org).

**Planting in the parks update...** If you can remember back to the summer when it seemed like rain had forgotten us, the saplings we planted in both parks were really affected by the lack of water and there were a few casualties however, our adopt-a-tree scheme made sure that these were minimal. Adoptees were charged with watering their very own tree with the aim of keeping them going through the hot weather. If you walk round at the moment, you can see how healthy they are looking – which is all thanks to the watering crews.

**Bulb planting 2022:** Last month we bought new stocks of bulbs for both parks with funds raised – the varieties were mainly tulips, daffodils and bluebells. Bulb planting happened in the day and, as this pic here shows, even in the dark at a very fun evening session! Squirrel foraging permitting these lovely flowers will be popping out for us all to enjoy in the spring.



In Alex this year, in an aim to reactivate the use of the **paddling pool area** as a dog free space for play and picnics, we made a few planters with plants kindly donated by Designer Drapes and neighbours. We hope to add to these in the new year. And even more planting is coming to ARG... We're thrilled to report that we've been given the go-ahead to start the planting of a new hedgerow along the west side of Alex Rec. We have been growing on, in our

Chairs' back garden, a variety of saplings which we plan to install over December/January. We are doing the hedgerow planting in stages, to give it the best possible chance of survival over another dry summer and our limited watering capacity, starting firstly with a 25-metre area. We'd love some help to dig out the trench so please contact us if you are able to help. Our future vision is a healthy and bushy hedgerow all the way down the side of the Rec, providing a "green corridor" for insects, butterflies, bees & birds and maybe even a hedgehog if we're lucky.

**AGM:** to find out who's been re-elected, our finances and the council decision on our paddling pool water feature proposal please click on the link here <http://www.friendsofcatorandalexandra.com/governance>.

A new midweek gardening group has begun in Cator Park this year led by our lovely committee member Gill. With a mission to prune, weed, manage the overgrown shrubs, plant, mulch, paint, tidy and chat, this group has already clocked up 90 hours of volunteer work between them and are looking forward to Spring with longer daylight hours and bright sunny days to continue their work and to enjoy the parks filled with flowers from all the bulbs they've helped to plant.

**Community Impact Day** – Alex Rec. On a gloriously hot day in the park in August, Millie led a group from the Friends Committee, members and the idverde team who dismantled, sanded and re-oiled the two memorial benches in the children's area, painted the frames and weeded the bases. They looked very inviting when finished. The area, which is surrounded by railings and a pair of ornate gates also got a makeover. It was thoroughly cleaned, prepped and painted in black then the top twiddly bits painted in gold. We hope you agree that they have really smartened up the entrance to the playground. As part of the day the ground maintenance team from idverde cleared old bushes and woodchipped the area, Penny Read helped us immensely by bringing out the idverde team and supplying a lot of the supplies needed for the work. Big thanks also to the London Fire Brigade and the MOPAC team (Mayor's officer for community and crime) who came along to show their support and makes some little (and not so little people) very happy to have their fire engine there!



**Park Benches** We are often asked about private sponsoring of benches in memory of a loved one, we are happy to help alternatively you can contact idverde directly by emailing [shannon.mcevoy@idverde.co.uk](mailto:shannon.mcevoy@idverde.co.uk) Utilising the remainder of our crowd funding & other donations we will be installing a new bench in ARG in 2023.

**Reporting crime in our parks:** we have experienced an increase in low level antisocial behaviour this year including theft of plants, obelisks and bulbs, ripping down notices, graffiti and motorbikes riding through the parks. We recommend that if you see anything that doesn't look right in the park you call Ward Security (number below) in the first instance. They are a mobile park security service contracted to look after the security of all London Borough of Bromley Parks and operate with patrol dogs. If you see a crime taking place, please call the police directly on 999 or report non emergencies on 101.

**Please** report all incidents to our Safer neighborhood team on 0208 649 3541 or [SNMailbox-PengeandCatorSNT@met.police.uk](mailto:SNMailbox-PengeandCatorSNT@met.police.uk) so they can track the trends.

**Useful Contacts** - Ward Security: 0845 847 6180, idverde (responsible for grounds maintenance): 020 8313 4438., Fix My Street – the place to report any graffiti, litter, fallen trees, broken playground equipment etc. at [www.fixmystreet.com](http://www.fixmystreet.com).



**Volunteering:** A BIG thank you as usual to all our lovely volunteers including the Good Gym, DofE students, committee members, stall holders, sculpture painters, bulb planters, cake makers and more.. we could not do any of this without you.

Want to feel great about improving your local environment? Please join us – we'll be posting new gardening dates in the spring.

### **Membership for Cator Park & Alexandra Recreation Ground**

Have you renewed your membership? – please check your emails, inc. junk box. Our annual subscription supports many activities & helps us to preserve and enhance the park environments. It's easy to join, simply

email us at [friends.cator-and-alexandra@live.co.uk](mailto:friends.cator-and-alexandra@live.co.uk) **Annual Subscription fees:** Individual £3.00. Family £5.00 Or Five-year Family Membership £22:50 and Five- year Ind. Membership £12:50.