

PARKLIFE



NEWSLETTER THE FRIENDS OF CATOR PARK AND ALEXANDRA RECREATION GROUND – SUMMER 2023
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Dear Friends, can you believe this year marks the 15^{year} anniversary of our Friends group? The group was set up in 2008 by a small group of local volunteers keen to improve and maintain our local parks and make them both lovely places and accessible to everyone in our community. Today there are 8 committee members who help shape all the park events, oversee, and take part in volunteer gardening sessions, improve and build the biodiversity of our parks, engage the local community in park activities and much more! We estimate that over the years we have racked up at least 22,000 volunteer hours – these range from litter picking, gardening sessions, bench refurbishment and special planting projects such as the wonderful willow arch to our very popular park events like Easter, Paws, Music and Pride in the Park. We'd like to say a big thank you to everyone who has volunteered, supported us by donating or coming along to our events over the years – we couldn't do it without you! We look forward to another 15 years of wonderful park activities. To mark this anniversary, we will be having an extra special Music in the Park event this year and you are all invited!



Remembering Chris Richardson. Some of you may know that one of our dear former committee members and prolific local volunteer, Chris Richardson, died of a heart attack at the end of last year. We wanted to mark Chris's huge commitments to volunteering in Penge and to our parks so launched a Go Fund Me page. As a result of this we are delighted that we have raised enough funds for a memorial tree for Alexandra RG, a bench that will be placed in Cator Park and an Automated External Defibrillator. A second defibrillator is being funded by the Kings Hall Road Street Party Planners. We thank everyone who contributed and hope that you agree that it is a fitting memorial for a very special member of our community. RIP Chris, we miss you.



Planting in the parks update & hedgerow news: Thanks to a huge effort from volunteers and park Friends, funding from CPRE London (formerly Campaign for the Protection of Rural England), young tree whips from TCV (The Conservation Volunteers) and year-old saplings from *idverde* we have now planted 300 rowan, oak, birch, hazel and hawthorn plants to create 50m of mixed hedgerow in Alex Rec. The next challenge is keeping it all watered over the summer – if you are able, please do join us on Sunday or Thursday evenings at 6.30pm, when we will water the saplings. And we're not stopping there.... In November we'll begin the final 70m of planting taking it down to Tansfeld Rd. This will ensure a substantial wildlife friendly corridor keeping our biodiversity plans on track and who knows we may even get a Hedgehog or two visiting us! In Cator Park we'll be watering the willow arch and saplings on Mondays at 7pm throughout the summer.

Talking of Hedgehogs...Did you know that since 2000 the UK's population of Hedgehogs has fallen by 33% in urban areas? Bromley is one of the places where there is very little recording of sightings – we'd like to help change that. If you are lucky enough to see a hedgehog in your garden, allotment or park please report it to the Bromley Biodiversity Partnership by E-mailing the date, place (postcode or grid reference) and number seen to bromleybiodiversity@gmail.com. They'll use the information logged to make informed decisions about improvements to make public areas more hedgehog friendly. There

are also plenty of small changes you can make in your own garden to make it a safe and attractive place for hedgehogs. Find out more at www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk.

The theme of improving biodiversity in the parks is also present in Cator Park with an exciting new project “The Butterfly Bank.” You may have noticed the patch of grass opposite the children’s playpark in Cator Park has been scraped. This is part of a special partnership project with the Friends, Idverde, Bromley Council and the RSPB to create a butterfly friendly habitat in the park. The scraped soil will have wildflower seeds sown in it and we hope will produce a wonderful wildflower and plant meadow which will attract butterflies and other insects. It will take some time to get the area established but we hope that by next year we should see some progress.



Have you heard the hoots? One of our committee members who lives opposite Cator Park has often heard owl hoots in the evening so one night decided to do a Cator Park Springwatch-esque reconnaissance and sure enough was rewarded with the sighting of a Tawny Owl. We are not sure if it’s a male or female one but we’re delighted that they have deemed Cator Park a suitable hang out! If you are an owl expert and can tell us more please do get in touch.

And finally, we would like to say a **BIG thank you** to all our wonderful volunteers. Over the 15 years the park group has been going we have had over 100 volunteers. Some have come as a one off, others have joined the committee, some via groups such as Duke of Edinburgh and the Gordon Moody Association Tackling Gambling Addiction. Many have become firm friends through the park activities and meeting likeminded folk. A special mention to GoodGymBromley who have been consistently wonderful – signing up for sessions in the rain and in the dark winter nights. We thank you and salute you all!



Up and Coming Park Events: To help us with our sustainability plan please bring your own cups & plates to events.

- Pride Picnic in the Park**
 - 15th Anniversary Music in the Park**
 - Paws in the Park**
 - AGM (inc. a talk on the Riverfly Project & the River Pool)**
- Sat24th June 12-4pm, Cator Park
 - Sun 23rd July 2-5pm in Alex Rec
 - Sun 10th 12.30 -5.30, Cator Park
 - Weds 15 November, 7pm, Bowls Club

Useful Contacts - Ward Security: 0845 847 6180, Idverde (responsible for grounds maintenance): 020 8313 4438., Fix My Street – the place to report any graffiti, fallen trees etc. at www.fixmystreet.com. If you see a crime taking place, please call the police directly on 999.

Recent Tree Destruction in Cator Park: As you may know over 100 trees, including oaks were destroyed in the area just beyond the children’s play area in Cator Park on the morning of 10th June. We are all in shock at this devastating event. To stay up to date on developments please follow our latest news updates on our social media channels.

Membership for Cator Park & Alexandra Recreation Ground

Our annual subscription supports many activities & helps us to preserve and enhance the park environments. It’s easy to join, simply choose one of the options below:

1. Email us at friends.cator-and-alexandra@live.co.uk with the information below
2. Complete a Bank Transfer: Friends of Cator and Alexandra, A/c No. 61592226 Sort code 60-02-12
3. 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.

Name Address Postcode

Email

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

Five-year Family Membership £22:50 Five- year Ind. Membership £12:50