

# *The Friends of Croydon Road Recreation Ground*

[www.becrec.net](http://www.becrec.net)

## *Newsletter No.5 – September 2005*

### **View from the Park Bench:**

Patrick Philips, the Council's Head of Parks, attended our September committee meeting and outlined the finance available to the Friends group this year. There is currently £14,000 income from the decant village and this must be spent before the end of March 2006. We have been asked to suggest improvements that can be made to the park over the next 18 months or so. Your committee are looking at a few improvement schemes that we would like to see. Council officers will work with us to develop those ideas, obtain tenders, and then oversee the work where there is sufficient funding.

Incredibly, it is now two years since the idea of a friends group was first suggested and four of us attended an initial meeting with the council. The attendance at our first AGM (last November) was tremendous and really helped us to develop over this last 12 months. Like all new organisations, we have had our growing pains, but a lot of hard work has gone into overcoming most things. Over that same period, the council officers have helped to set up 14 Friends Groups across the Borough. That's a lot of work to support us all and this has mostly been done by existing staff on top of their 'day jobs.'

Patrick outlined a proposed model whereby Friends Groups would be less reliant on Council Officers and will be able to deal with operational problems themselves by accessing the contractors and other services. The Council are presently recruiting to a new post of Friends Support Officer to help make that a reality and to improve support and communications.

**The 2005 Annual General Meeting will be held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2005 at Balgowan Road School and will start at 7.30pm.** We would urge as many members as possible to attend please and we look forward to seeing you there. At the conclusion of the formal meeting, we will have a social gathering, with a few refreshments. This is for Friends to meet Committee members, Council Officers, and each other and talk about... well, whatever you want to talk about.

David Bays - Chair

### **Membership:**

Committee members have recently been delivering leaflets to local houses, and we have had 6 new membership applications to join in just the first couple of days. (There's the door...make that 7!!) On behalf of all members, we extend a very warm welcome to you. We particularly want to know your views and ideas on the park.

Our growing membership currently stands at 14 families and 18 individuals. That's a lot of people who care about their local park and about what goes on in, and around it.

### **Chair:**

As announced in the last newsletter, I intend to stand down as Chair at the AGM. We need someone with a bit of time and a lot of enthusiasm to help us to continue to develop and to represent the Friends group at the newly formed 'Friends Forum.' You will be well supported by the committee, which meets four times a year, and by me. If you are interested in standing for the position, then please do contact me.

### **Operational Update:**

A far more positive position than last time:

- The axle grease has now been removed from the railings and gates all along Croydon Road and what a real difference it has made!
- The drinking water fountain (by the main entrance) received a new tap and has been switched on for most of the summer – a great improvement enabling visitors to the park to obtain drinking water and a mini shower!
- A new water trough for dogs has been installed by the council. It is located over by the information centre, close to the café.

### **Beckenham Hospital/Clinic:**

The Beckenham Hospital decant village seems to have fitted in well. We have been advised that:

- The construction contractor is going to eradicate the Japanese Knotweed on their site. It is near the old/disused toilet block. The compound fence will need to be moved nearer to the footpath so they can deal with the plant which has slightly encroached into the park. We are told that it's likely to take up to 12 months to beat it though. (We hope the small 'whips' that we planted in 2004 survive the process!)
- The contractor has altered the railings to form a fire escape route from the car park into the park. A temporary path will be laid. This will make the fire escape far safer for the building occupants as they will not stumble into the road. The gates will only be unlocked in the event of an emergency.

### **Park History:**

We have a lot of history in our park but not all of it is written down. A member has asked if we have any recollection or records of an air raid shelter in the park and about some commemorative Oak trees that were planted many years ago. Our preliminary enquiries drew some blank looks. That said, Brian (our indefatigable Treasurer) likes a bit of a challenge and he was last seen charging off in the direction of Beckenham Library whilst looking for the contact number of the Beckenham Historical Society! We've been through the books we have, but do you remember these?

We know that some of our members have lived locally and used the park for generations. Please do let us have your recollections. We will help you write them down if that makes it easier to get the memories flowing. For instance, the father of one member used to have an allotment on the hospital paddock part of the site. How many of you remember that eh? I remember the car park, the little road and the houses before they built Sainsbury's but some of the fine detail escapes me and that's fairly recent.

### **Training Days:**

The council have given us details of days that might interest our members. They include stag beetles, small mammal identification, fungal, mistletoe and moss identification. Please contact us for details.

**Contact us:** with comments, suggestions or contributions for the next newsletter: Please contact David or Val on 020 8289 6989 or email [valeriebays@hotmail.com](mailto:valeriebays@hotmail.com)

Please visit our website: [www.becrec.net](http://www.becrec.net)