

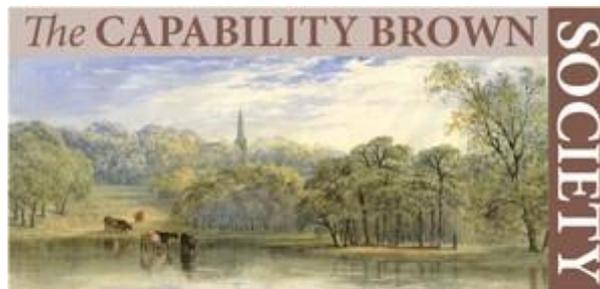


# Friends of Wimbledon Park



**Annual Report 2021**  
(Covering the period March 2020 to February 2021)

**The Grade II\* Heritage Landscape**  
**On the**  
**'At Risk Register'**

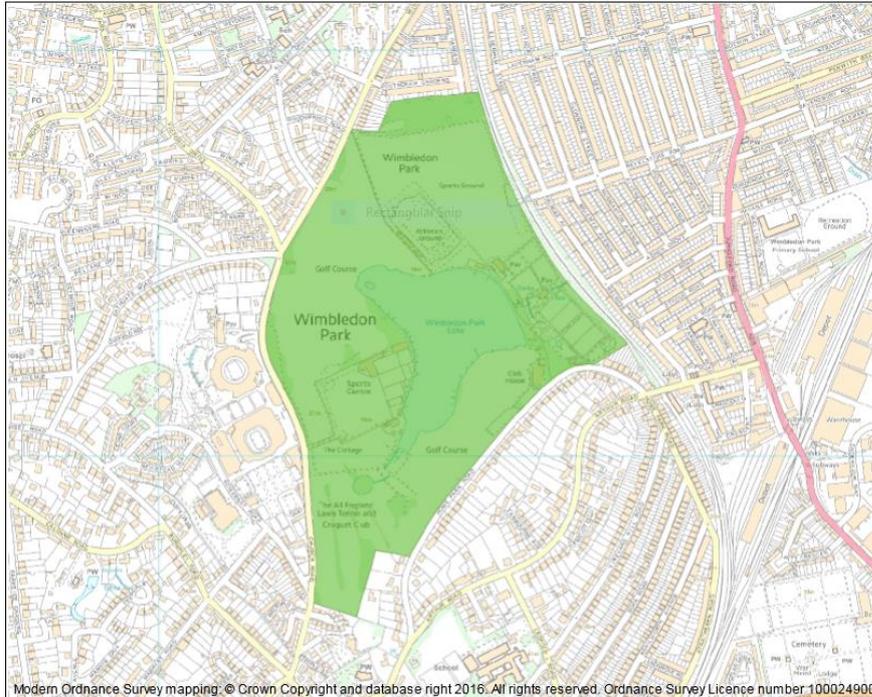


*'Capability Brown's Wimbledon Park'*  
*19th Century Water Colour Circa 1870 by an Unknown Artist*



# Friends of Wimbledon Park

**19 January 2012** Friends of Wimbledon Park constituted  
**Our project is this Grade II\* Heritage Park**



Modern Ordnance Survey mapping. © Crown Copyright and database right 2016. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900. This is an A4 sized map and should be printed full size at A4 with no page scaling set.

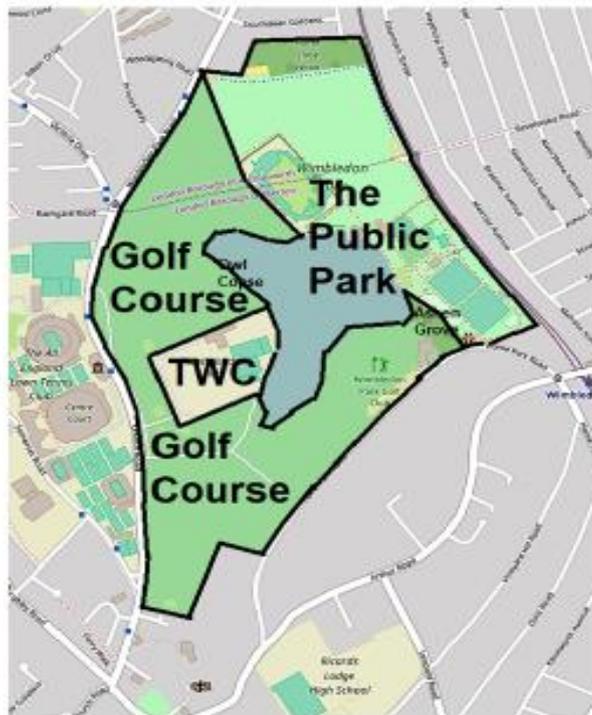
Name: WIMBLEDON PARK

<b>Heritage Category:</b>	Park and Garden
<b>List Entry No :</b>	1000852
<b>Grade:</b>	II*
<b>County:</b>	Greater London Authority
<b>District:</b>	Merton, Wandsworth
<b>Parish:</b>	Non Civil Parish, Non Civil Parish

Each official record of a registered garden or other land contains a map. The map here has been translated from the official map and that process may have introduced inaccuracies. Copies of maps that form part of the official record can be obtained from Historic England.

This map was delivered electronically and when printed may not be to scale and may be subject to distortions. The map and grid references are for identification purposes only and must be read in conjunction with other information in the record.

<b>List Entry NGR:</b>	TQ 24703 72394
<b>Map Scale:</b>	1:10000
<b>Print Date:</b>	11 November 2016



The Golf course is owned by the All England Lawn Tennis Club (30ha)

The Wimbledon Club own the area marked TWC (4ha)

Capability Brown's Wimbledon Park (Only 61ha of the original 374ha remain) now in three ownerships.

The Public park is owned by the LB Merton (27ha including 9ha lake)

Dave Dawson



# Friends of Wimbledon Park

Dear Members and Associates,

## Comment

Covid19 has been and continues to be a great disruptor of lives and improvements to the park. Visitors to our park have increased during this period indicating the importance of greenspaces to society. Care of these valuable spaces matter. Recent reports highlight some important issues such as monetising their wellbeing value, increased usage by visitors and the state of nature. It is also good to see another report advising on close collaboration on work to be done in the greenspace with the Community. Our experience has been different but, hopefully, liaison will improve.

### Relevant reports with brief extracts are:

- 1) *The role of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in London's green and fair recovery' by London Sustainable Development Commission July 2020<sup>1</sup>.*
- 2) *The COVID-19 pandemic is the greatest public health and socio-economic crisis of our time. It has highlighted London's pre-existing inequalities – whilst making them worse.*
- 3) *Urban green space in London has huge value for people's physical and mental health, creating £950m savings for the National Health Service.*
- 4) *Green space has value to health and wellbeing.*
  - i) *Parks have been hugely important during the lockdown, and their use has increased 160%. 62% of Londoners think protecting and enhancing green spaces should be a higher priority after the lockdown.*
- 5) *Environmental benefits*
  - i) *Enhancing London's green spaces would have several environmental co-benefits. It would help ameliorate the urban heat island effect (both via tree shading and the cooling effect of water evaporating from plants), enhancing the city's resilience to the effects of climate change.*
- 6) *Participatory design*
  - i) *This work should be done in close collaboration with the communities who use the spaces. Local residents should be empowered (formally and informally) to take ownership of these plots – initially through helping to design them, and subsequently via volunteering roles in stewardship and light maintenance. This would ensure that spaces are not generic but tailored to their particular communities (including cultural needs and age ranges), designing-in inclusion. The London Friends of Green Spaces Network has also advocated this approach.*
- 7) *Investing in green spaces*
  - i) *Despite the social and financial benefits of better green spaces, it has been extremely challenging to attract the necessary public funding for improvements.*

### **The State of Nature 2019 - a summary for England<sup>2</sup>**

- 1) *'Prior to the 1970 baseline used by the State of Nature 2019, we know there was widespread loss and degradation of habitats across England, dating back many centuries, from which the country's wildlife has not recovered.*
- 2) *In recent decades, pressure on England's diverse landscapes caused by human activity has resulted in both losses and gains for biodiversity. The rate of this change appears to be increasing: our statistics indicate that over the last decade nearly half of the species for which we have data have shown strong changes in abundance, and nearly half have shown strong changes in distribution.*

### **Insect declines and why they matter<sup>3</sup> by Professor Dave Goulson, FRES**

- 1) *In the last fifty years, we have reduced the abundance of wildlife on Earth dramatically. Many species that were once common are now scarce. Much attention focusses on declines of large, charismatic animals, but recent evidence suggests that abundance of insects may have fallen by 50% or more since 1970.*
- 2) *The bulk of all animal life, whether measured by biomass, numerical abundance or numbers of species, is comprised of invertebrates such as insects, spiders, worms and so on. These innumerable little creatures are far more important for the functioning of ecosystems than the large animals that tend to attract most of our attention. Insects are food for numerous larger animals including birds, bats, reptiles, amphibians and fish, and they perform vital roles such as pollination of crops and wildflowers, pest control and nutrient recycling.*

The articles above confirm our experience on health and wellbeing as our park becomes very crowded at times and the recent rain has waterlogged the Great Field. Walking remains the most popular activity by a long way. Future projects need to take this into account. The refusal of LBM to open the southern section of Stadium



# Friends of Wimbledon Park

Lane, a wide pleasant walk to the lakeside is regrettable. Putting this in financial terms would allow cost benefit analyses to guide the planners.

We intend to continue to plant trees, better manage the water from the upstream brooks, in the reservoir and in the downstream brook. Also the water flow from the waterlogged Great Field following persistent heavy rainfall.

Participating in the design of the park is an objective we have sought from our beginnings with writing of the Conservation Management Plan and subsequent study of all aspects relating to the park. This is an ongoing exercise, and we keep in touch with the 3 owners and report back to the Community through the FOWP Forum. Increasingly social media helps this feedback.

Covid-19 incurred a massive financial cost and limited funds prior to the outbreak are further depleted. Projects will need to be drawn up, costed, circulated for approval and the funding sources sought.

Loss and degradation of habitats is a major concern. The loss of habitat in 2017 from Owl Copse was a salutary lesson. Some species are doing well (Canada Geese<sup>4</sup>) and others are declining (starlings<sup>5</sup>). Seven species of bat need roosts and insects require breeding locations. This leads to the provision of water margin plants, long grass, soil biodiversity and space for nature to thrive.

## **Opportunity**

Golf ceases to be played in the northern section of the golf course in January 2022. AELTC will bring their Qualifying Rounds into the park and they are consulting widely on this with the Community. By working together the 3 owners (LBM, TWC, AELTC) can resolve the issues that have placed the park on the 'At Risk Register' and improve things for nature and visitors.

Examples are:

- 1) The blots on the landscape around the lake. These are, the sports hall, the tennis dome, the greenspaces depot, the watersports building and the boat store.
- 2) Proper management of Ashen Grove Wood (ancient woodland split between the public park and golf course).
- 3) Bringing back the water lilies



**Water lilies in 1980**

## **General information**

National Grid removed all their equipment from the park leaving the Glade in Horse Close Wood to regenerate from its seedbed. It was also thought that we may be able to coordinate these works with improving the Revelstoke Road entrance and car park. Unfortunately, we could not get planning permission from Wandsworth Planning in time. However the application is still with Wandsworth planning and if successful an application



# Friends of Wimbledon Park

will be made to Merton planning. Then permission from the owners (LBM & TfL) and finally obtaining funding.

Dam safety works are expected to start in August and complete in January next year.

- 1) Discussions are quite technical, and these are still under way.
- 2) There is a legal requirement to make the dam safe by January 2022.
- 3) Other issues are the volume of water discharged into the public park after exceptionally heavy rainfall and the resulting flooding, the level of the lake and whether desilting is required.
- 4) A major point concerns attenuation which reduces the volume of water entering the public park in cubic metres per second (cumsecs). Widening the outflow allows increases water flow.
- 5) Unfortunately, the proposal to move the outfall to the waterfall to create a cascade has been shown to be unviable. Accordingly the outfall remains in Ashen Grove Wood which is ancient woodland.
- 6) On a brighter note this culverted section of Wimbledon Park Brook should be deculverted. Whilst improving biodiversity and water management it will also be an attractive additional feature in the park and most children will enjoy this feature.

## The Capability Brown Society (TCBS)

TCBS is now a corporate member of the Friends of Wimbledon Park.

- 1) The Capability Brown Society (TCBS) is an independent not for profit organisation with no agenda other than to stimulate debate to get the very best possible imaginative outcome for the future direction and use of the wider Heritage Wimbledon Park landscape.
- 2) It aims to be proactive and imaginative setting out proposals for the wider parkland, perhaps the most intensively used multi-purpose park in London, at the same time fully providing for the conservation and improvement of the park's natural environment and ecology.
- 3) This sympathetic and constructive approach will be adopted for other Brownian Landscapes in the British Isles.

TCBS is working on a Vision for the park which should soon be ready for circulation.

Brief notes:

- 1) **Table tennis** installed but unfortunately the matting although available has still to be fitted.
- 2) **Open water swimming.** This has reached LBM's cabinet for a decision on whether to permit this activity.
- 3) **Trees and woods:** Covid-19 has prevented further tree planting.
- 4) **Green Flag award:** No progress has been made on this and chasing up is under way.

## Wandle Valley Fortnight Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September to Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

- i. Covid19 prevented our participation.
- ii. No details for this year.

## Community Events 2020

- 1) Covid-19 prevented community events.

## City Nature Challenge 2020 April 24<sup>th</sup> to April 27<sup>th</sup>

- a. Due to Covid19 this did not proceed in Wimbledon Park.
- b. This year it is scheduled for April 30<sup>th</sup> to May 3<sup>rd</sup>. This is being led by the Natural History Museum and we hope to participate if conditions allow.

## Other events attended:

None in 2020 due to Covid-19.

## Crime

Crime report for Heritage Wimbledon Park not yet available.

Note: Wimbledon Park is located in three wards in two London Boroughs, Wandsworth & Merton [West Hill (LB of W): Village (LB of M): Wimbledon Park (LB of M)] and Information extracted from the Crime Maps for West Hill, Village & Wimbledon Park Wards from [www.police.uk](http://www.police.uk)

## Social media



# Friends of Wimbledon Park

## Logo

A new logo for the Friends of Wimbledon Park is being designed with good progress being made.

## Website

Progress has stalled but we hope to restart soon.

## Notice board.

We hope to obtain use of a notice board, possibly Revelstoke Road entrance.

## Facebook & Twitter

Amelia Obertelli-Moriarty reports:

We now have 1,509 followers on Facebook as of 3 March 2021 and 406 followers on Twitter.

- 1) The most 'hits' on Facebook were:
  - 2) Our post about a survey asking people what they felt about commercial activities in the park got over 4,500 hits.
  - 3) The announcement of the tennis table being put in place - over 4,000 views.
  - 4) Requesting extra space for moving around the park during lockdown got nearly 2,000 hits.
  - 5) A lot of interest also expressed in the state of the Big Field, fencing, remediation of damaged grass area etc - approx. 1,400 hits on one post with others reaching 1,000 +.
  - 6) Any post related to BBQ's are also popular with most not in favour of BBQ's in the park. Approx. Just over 1,400 hits.
  - 7) Vandalism in the park - 1,400 hits
  - 8) One post only about the Paddling Pool in 2020 and this was seen by over 1,400 people.
  - 9) The blue green algae in the lake warning received 1,300 hits.
  - 10) The advert for a designer for a new logo got over 1,000 hits.
- There are 406 followers on twitter

## Public Park Management issues

### BBQs

These were suspended due to COVID-19 and many commented how much nicer it was in the park.

### Commercial events

- These were disrupted by COVID-19, but some went ahead including the Street Eat, Summer Kidz Fair and Luna Cinema.
- Wimbledon Fortnight Queue and Fireworks were cancelled.
- Large areas of damaged grass from commercial events remained fenced off for most of 2020. The last fencing being removed in February this year.
- Subject to weather re-grassing should start on the Pines and Needles site in mid-March and the Old Bowling Green after the Easter Kidz fair.

## FOWP Forum

The rationale for the FOWP Forum is to draw in all the park related expertise and interests in an open and transparent way. This provides the FOWP Executive Committee members with valuable feedback on their undertakings to improve Heritage Wimbledon Park for public benefit.

Communication is based on legitimate interests so facilitating working together in a transparent manner and furthers networking on a continuous basis.

Widening membership so that more in the Community have access to this Forum is an aspiration and invitations are being sent to groups that may wish to participate. Attendance will be as a guest and they will have the option to join in based on legitimate interests.

### Key points:

- The Executive Committee (EC) continued to improve its knowledge and expertise. Karen Gregory joined during the year.



# Friends of Wimbledon Park

- There are four London Borough Council wards surrounding the park. To provide further free flow of information 11 of the 12 councillors are ex officio members of the FOWP Forum.
- Leonie Cooper, GLA member for Merton and Wandsworth is an ex officio member.
- Dave Dawson (our environment and ecology adviser) is an ex officio member.
- Sarah Gould (Service Manager (Heritage & Local Studies) an important link with LBM is an ex officio member.
- Gerard Sebastian handles our membership and is an ex officio member.
- John Berkoski is overseeing our website and an ex officio member.
- Johnny Perkins is our main contact with AELTC is an ex officio member.
- We are pleased that the Rt Hon Fleur Anderson (MP for Putney) and Stephen Hammond (MP for Merton) have agreed to be Honorary Friends of FOWP.
- We continue to liaise with park officers (LBM & idverde) both formally and informally. These interactions will become more important as community involvement in the park increases.

Special thanks to Gerard Sebastian who tendered his resignation but continues in post until we can find a replacement. This has been advertised but no takers so far which is disappointing.

## **A word on associate membership**

Under our constitution, we have a membership category called 'associates'. This includes individuals in an organisation which joins as a corporate member; park officers; and members of the three local residents' associations (Southfields Grid, Wimbledon Park and Wimbledon House, the founding members of the Friends of Wimbledon Park).

Wimbledon Park is remarkable for the number of assets it contains, and our job is to ensure that these are not lost or wasted but are enhanced. This requires the owners and community to work together on implementing the Conservation Management Plan.

Finally if you support our volunteer work, we would appreciate it if more in the community became members. Demand on our funds are low but whilst keeping expenditure controlled more income would be welcome.

<http://www.friendsofwimbledonpark.org.uk>

Nick Steiner  
Chairman FOWP March 2021

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/lcdc\\_-\\_sdgs\\_and\\_londons\\_green\\_fair\\_recovery\\_1.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/lcdc_-_sdgs_and_londons_green_fair_recovery_1.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.rspb.org.uk/globalassets/images/campaigning-and-positions/let-nature-sing/birdsong-takeover/pdf/sonr/rspb\\_state-of-nature\\_summary-report\\_england.pdf](https://www.rspb.org.uk/globalassets/images/campaigning-and-positions/let-nature-sing/birdsong-takeover/pdf/sonr/rspb_state-of-nature_summary-report_england.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.somersetwildlife.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/FULL%20AFI%20REPORT%20WEB1\\_1.pdf](https://www.somersetwildlife.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/FULL%20AFI%20REPORT%20WEB1_1.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> RSPB: An introduced species from North America, it has successfully spread to cover most of the UK. It forms noisy flocks and is often regarded as a nuisance in areas where large numbers occur on amenity grassland and parks.

<sup>5</sup> RSPB: Still one of the commonest of garden birds, its decline elsewhere makes it a Red List species.