

Autumn '21 Friends of Wimbledon Park (FOWP) News

Autumn has arrived and the park landscape colours are changing into hues of amber, auburn and crimson. We have been busily finishing off work in the park in preparation for winter and spring.

Our thanks to members/volunteers who did sterling work in the meadow in Horse Close Wood recently. Armed with shears, secateurs, forks and a scythe they cut and strimmed parts of the glade as the bramble 'invasion' was becoming a little overwhelming! They collected two crane bags of brambles and tree branches which were moved to the log area to deter anti social gatherings in the wood at night. The work has now been completed – lets see what grows there next year!



Tackling the overgrowth!

Our hardy volunteers also planted daffodil bulbs 'round the ole oak tree'. They did a great job despite the rain! The bulbs were gifted to us by Idverde via Councillor Ed Gretton so many thanks to them too. Bulbs were planted around the outside of the fencing which surrounds and protects our veteran oak tree. Hopefully, the bulbs will prosper/ bloom and enchant park visitors with their cheerful beauty and vibrant colour come springtime. With thanks to our dedicated gardening team.

Response to AELTC plans

We, like many other local organisations, submitted our response to the AELTC Wimbledon Park Project. This was sent to both Wandsworth and

Merton councils on 30 September 2021. Here is the link if you would like to read it.

<https://www.friendsofwimbledonpark.org/fowp-response-to...>

We have been contacted by a number of journalists since submitting our response to the AELTC plans and our concerns re the show court and 38 new grass courts etc., were highlighted in a 'My London' article by Ertan Karpazli. Both Nick Steiner, our Chair, and Dave Dawson, our environmental adviser, are quoted. Please see link

<https://www.mylondon.news/.../1000-objections-wimbledon...>

Meeting up with Councillor Natasha Irons

It was lovely to meet up with Councillor Natasha Irons (Cabinet Member for Local Environment and Green Spaces in Merton) on 15, October. We were able to air our views and concerns with the AELTC planning application and offer other ideas for improving the park. We were also able to give her the petition, with 909 signatures, to open Wimbledon Park earlier - at 7 am daily.



Councillor Natasha Irons with Nick Steiner, Chair of FOWP

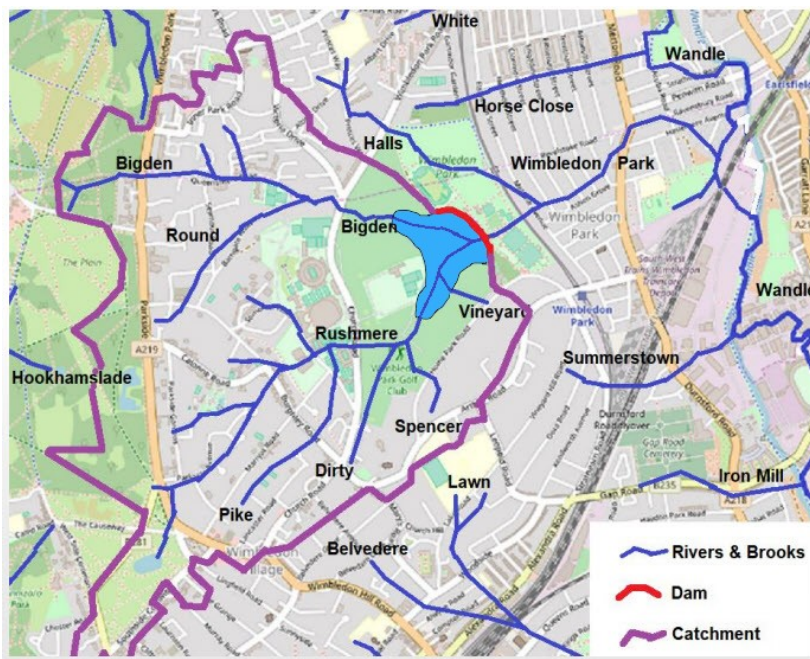
Earlier opening time

Good news - it appears that our request and petition for an earlier opening time for the park was successful! Idverde have said they will be opening the park between 7am and 7.30 am on a daily basis. It takes a

bit of time to open all the gates so some will be opened sooner than others. This should now be happening in practice. If you are an early park user please can you let us know if the park is being opened from 7am onwards. Your feedback would be really helpful, thank you.

Water in the park

Heavy downpours and overtopping of the dam resulted in more flooding in the park recently. Here is a map showing the rivers and brooks in the park. The brooks are mostly in culverts (underground water drains). Some of the brooks will be deculverted (more commonly known as daylighting) as part of the Lake's Dam Safety works. This means that some culverts will be removed and the watercourses restored to a more natural state and open to general view. Daylighting can create new habitats for both plants and animals, improve water quality and, potentially, reduce flood risks. The Dam Safety project was given the go ahead by Merton's Planning Committee on 23 September. Work is expected to begin this November, not October, as previously stated. It is likely that there will be some disruption to lakeside walks whilst these works take place.



Map showing the rivers and brooks in the park.

Toilet upgrades

The improvements to the main toilet block began in September. We're not sure how long this renovation project will take but we are told that work is progressing well. Even the colour scheme has been chosen! Unfortunately, the remaining toilets in the water sports' building have

experienced various difficulties and the men's toilets have been closed periodically. We have asked if portable toilets could be set up in the interim period but we have had no response. We look forward to having better, upgraded toilet facilities in the near future.

Pines and Needles have arrived

We have had a number of conversations with Merton officers over the year about the use of alternative sites for Pines and Needles e.g. using the Wimbledon Park Road car park or other hard standing areas.

However, it seems that Pines and Needles have already started setting up their site on the grass again and boarded it over with plastic boards which will damage/ kill off the grass. Grass friendly matting which allows some light through would have been preferable albeit more costly.

This is very disappointing 😞 given that the grass was had only just recovered from the tennis and hadn't been too badly affected after the fireworks display/funfair.

We have been told by Merton that the contract is up for renewal from next year and that they will mandate use of hard standing rather than grass. Merton also say that this year the grass will be repaired by Idverde as soon as Pines and Needles have vacated the site, weather permitting.

Our new website is here!

We are delighted to announce that we have a new website! It underwent 'refurbishment' and we now have a much improved, sleeker and more attractive website. You will find lots of details about us, as an organisation, what we do, our plans for the future as well as information relating to the park and the lake. We had a fabulous response from the public when we asked for photos of Wimbledon Park and many of these can be found in our new Gallery section. Do have a look at our new website and let us know what you think - feedback is welcomed.

Find us at

friendsofwimbledonpark.org

And finally, an image of autumnal days in the park.



We hope you have enjoyed reading our updates in 2021. If you would like to be more involved in helping us in our efforts to improve our local park please contact us at

<https://www.friendsofwimbledonpark.org/contact>

The FOWP would very much welcome your support and input. We love welcoming new faces!

Do follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)
(FriendsoWP@FoWimbledonPark)

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and festive season.
2022 here we come!