



# Friends of Wimbledon Park

Registered charity 1211838

## Wimbledon Park Volunteers 02f

### 1) Introduction

- a. Capability Brown's Wimbledon Park (only 61ha of the original 374ha remain) is now in four ownerships.
  - i. The All England Lawn Tennis Club (30ha)
  - ii. The Wimbledon Club (4ha)
  - iii. The LB Merton (27ha including 9ha lake)
  - iv. TfL own the area under Revelstoke Road bridge.
  - v. This Grade II\* Registered Park and Garden (RPG) has been included in Historic England's Heritage at Risk (HAR) Register.

### 2) The Friends' Conservation Management Plan for Heritage Wimbledon Park examines the priorities:

- a. Landscape, Biodiversity & Habitat are our responsibility.
- b. Bearing our accountability above in mind: 'What are the Capabilities for People in our Heritage Park?' and 'What matters and Why?'

### 3) Volunteering

- a. Volunteering in the park benefits the community and the volunteer. It can build self-esteem and confidence, develop skills and interests and even be a pathway into work.
- b. It can provide healthy activity and be a route to meet new people and so broaden social circles.
- c. It allows people to support causes they feel strongly about and to put something back into society.
- d. Volunteers come from the community and their experience means they can help manage and run open spaces with community needs in mind.
- e. Given the opportunity, volunteers can transform the way things are done in an economical and timely fashion.
- f. The volunteer's skills, knowledge and co-operative actions provide a greatly enhanced outcome for the benefit of the community.

### 4) Wimbledon Park Volunteers (WPV)

- a. Park maintenance is carried out by paid staff so volunteer tasks add value to their work.
- b. This group would oversee all volunteer related tasks planned and undertaken thus ensuring a joined-up approach.
- c. Provide an agreed risk assessment for the tasks in hand that is shown to participants.
- d. The Community Payback Team (CPT) carry out unpaid work because of court awards for Community Service. This ranges from erecting the fence around the veteran tree, watering, mulching and litter picking.
- e. Liaison between the three groups is important and each group has a clearly defined role which is understood and respected by all.
- f. Offers to assist from Corporate Volunteers (CV) are occasionally received. Generally, they are looking for full day work (1000-1200 and 1300-1500). If available, then a Team Leader will need to be provided to advise the participants.



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## 5) Social prescription

- a. Social prescribing enables GPs, nurses and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services.
- b. An example of this is gardening.
- c. A visit to Thrive in Battersea Park<sup>1</sup> was made to see how their gardening social prescription operation worked. This might be a model that could be considered in Wimbledon Park.

## 6) History of the Friends volunteer's activities:

- a. Tree & bulb planting have been running successfully for over 5 years. Over 3000 trees have been planted since 2016 and many hundreds of bulbs.
- b. A Duke of Edinburgh Award & Citizen Science was run from 2016-2017 with planting and maintaining the raised beds at Revelstoke Road & Wimbledon Park Road as entrances as a main task. But due to lack of DBS check certified<sup>2</sup> volunteer availability had to be suspended.
- c. Litter picking was carried out monthly for a few years but has recently moved to a spring & autumn event focussing on Horse Close Wood and the Railway Hedges.
- d. A Citizen Science bat survey project was undertaken in Wimbledon Park in 2017.
- e. Investigations of lake pollution have been undertaken with Environmental Agency, Thames Water and South East Rivers Trust.
- f. Dave Dawson (Environmental adviser to the Friends) has been monitoring birds in the park on a monthly visit since 1986 on a standard walking route that includes the waterside promenade and water sampling.
  - i. He wrote the management plan for Horse Close Wood.
  - ii. He also has a Blog which can be found via
    - iii. <https://www.friendsofwimbledonpark.org/>
- g. The Capability Brown Society has been developing programmes for school children to perform music and display artwork in the park.

## 7) Administration

- a. Volunteer activities will be published via website and social media
- b. Volunteers can offer to help for an hour or more but 2 hours minimum for tree planting. Numbers and hours required for each task will vary.
- c. Volunteer details will be kept on computer solely for legitimate interests and these include updates and information on the Heritage Park.
  - i. Volunteers can ask for their details to be deleted at any time - see our website for more details of our Privacy Policy:  
<https://www.friendsofwimbledonpark.org/privacy-policy>
- d. *The intention is for sightings and observations to be reported on a website form. These will then be sorted and ratified into a database of sightings and observations.*
- e. *To manage activities in accordance with the Friends' Conservation Management Plan*
- f. *To identify and implement additional future activities.*

## 8) Citizen Science

- a. Citizen science may be performed by individuals, teams, or networks of volunteers. Citizen scientists often partner with professional scientists to achieve common goals. Large volunteer networks often allow scientists to



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accomplish tasks that would be too expensive or time consuming to accomplish through other means.

- b. Many citizen-science projects serve education and outreach goals. These projects may be designed for a formal classroom environment or an informal education environment such as museums.
- 9) Duke of Edinburgh Award
  - a. The Heritage Wimbledon Park (WP) offers the opportunity for pupils under supervision by a DBS check certified<sup>3</sup> volunteer to:
    - i. Volunteer and develop skills using the Citizen Science model to help secure the preservation, protection, and improvement of WP as a place of historic and ecological interest and beauty.
    - ii. to help educate the public in the history, natural history, and other aspects of WP.
    - iii. Carry out approved tasks.
- 10) Tree planting
  - a. Tree watering during dry spells and recently planted standards.
    - i. Regular watering of newly planted trees for the first 3 years
  - b. Weeding around tree bases when needed.
  - c. Mulching trees in autumn and spring.
  - d. Planting trees generally in February and early March.
- 11) Horse Close Wood
  - a. There is a management plan for Horse Close Wood.
  - b. The Glade is split into Eastern and Western sections by the main path and requires regular maintenance.
  - c. Scything parties will cut back the meadow growth in spring and autumn.
  - d. Bramble to be removed
  - e. A record of species will be maintained. Some species maybe managed.
- 12) Hornbeams replace black poplars
  - a. The black poplars along the perimeter path are reaching end of life. When this happens, the trunk is left nearby for the enjoyment of children, adults and nature.
  - b. A line of hornbeams mostly standard but also whips have been planted to takeover in the years ahead.
  - c. A hornbeam meadow alongside the perimeter path and including the hornbeams is being created.
- 13) Car park bed
  - a. This has been created as part of the Revelstoke Road entrance improvements.
  - b. Hawthorns and roses have been planted.
- 14) Veteran tree
  - a. This fenced off area has been allowed to develop from the seed bed. An exception to this was the planting of daffodils.
  - b. Area to be cut back in autumn and spring and allowed to grow from the seedbank in the ground.
  - c. Bramble to be removed.
  - d. Buddleias to be pruned in spring.
  - e. Some oaks planted by squirrels may be allowed to grow and be relocated elsewhere in the park when ready to be moved.
  - f. A record of species will be maintained. Some species maybe managed.



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## 15) Central Railway Hedge

- a. This was prepared and planted in 2023.

## 16) The Copse.

- a. A memorial oak tree with cornus growing around it. The Cornus will need pruning. Late winter (February) or early spring (March), before the leaves begin to appear on the stems, is traditionally considered the best time to prune.
- b. *Plant roots and shoots are in balance, and, after hard pruning, plants will regrow to re-establish this balance. It is important to prune in the dormant season as the plant resources are largely in the roots and can be used for the required vigorous regrowth. If pruned in summer, plant resources - which, by this time, are predominantly found in the leaves - will be removed, and regrowth will be less strong.*

## 17) Southern meadow

- a. A meadow is being created from the Southern Railway Hedge to a metre short of the perimeter path.

## 18) Raised beds

- a. One at Revelstoke Road entrance
- b. One by Wimbledon Park Road entrance.

## 19) Salvia bed

- a. Located by the western door of the Bowling Pavilion.
- b. This was planted with daffodils in about 2019.
- c. Salvias were planted in 2024, hence its name.

## 20) Bulb planting

- a. This is likely to consist of spring bulb planting in autumn.

## 21) Litter picking

- a. Litter picking is part of idverde's workload.
- b. The Community Payback Team regularly litter pick.
- c. Volunteers could also assist with deep litter picking in Horse Close Wood and the Railway Hedges twice a year.

## 22) Glyphosate use

- a. It is still legal to use currently in the UK and a vital part in idverde's efforts to keep on top of weeds, couch grass and unwanted vegetation in areas mentioned below.
- b. Glyphosate is used in areas around fence lines, benches, lampposts, noticeboards, play equipment, car parks, pavilions, buildings, running track, pathways, rose-beds, shrub beds etc,
- c. Glyphosate use should cease as unwanted vegetation can be removed and controlled by hoeing and cutting. A task for WPV and CPT.

## 23) Records of species

- a. Dave Dawson has kept records for many years.
- b. More volunteers could get involved.

## 24) Water sampling

- a. Dave Dawson has kept records for many years.
- b. More volunteers could get involved.

## 25) Risk assessments

- a. The Friends prepare these and are necessary for health and safety and to conform with the agreement with LBM over insurance cover.

## 26) Other



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- a. Other voluntary activities such as the 'Junior Park Run' and 'Walk and Talk' are not included in this paper.

## 27) New projects

- a. Trees to be identified by labels and QR codes.
- b. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) are being considered including swales and scrapes.
- c. Revelstoke Road entrance improvements will provide new areas for gardening.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.thrive.org.uk/thrive-battersea.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record>