

CHAIRMAN'S GENERAL REPORT - SPRING 2010 - Jennie Randall

1	<p>Many thanks to all of you who have renewed your annual membership to our Friends' Group and also for the generous donations which have accompanied many of these renewals. If you have not sent in your subscription for 2010, we would be grateful if you could do so as soon as possible. If you have mislaid or lost your re-subscription letter, you can use the enclosed yellow flyer as a substitute. If you have already rejoined, perhaps you would like to pass on the yellow flyer to a friend or neighbour who might like to join us too!</p>
2	<p>An application for a Grassroots Grant of £3,267 from the Capital Community Foundation has been submitted by the Friends for a Wetland Habitat Board at Jubilee Country Park. If successful, this will probably be installed near Ray's Pond.</p>
3	<p>The Notice Board at Thornet Wood has been moved, at the Friends' request, (and expense!), to a more convenient location alongside the path nearby. This will enable it to be accessible to those in wheelchairs and mobility vehicles, and to those with pushchairs. This much more prominent position will also hopefully raise awareness of the many activities promoted on the Board throughout the year.</p>
4	<p>As you may be aware, the '100% fireproof' Bin on the Cycle Track opposite the Picnic Area was partially destroyed (by fire!) some months ago. After a lengthy discussion about this, the manufacturers have now supplied, free of charge, a replacement bin which (at the time of writing) is awaiting installation.</p>
5	<p>The Friends are keen to improve access for those with disabilities to the Park. We are currently investigating the possibility of installing 'kissing gates' suitable for large mobility vehicles at the boundary of Tent Peg Wood and the Gun Site (to replace the existing barway) and on the Cycle Track beside the gate.</p>

6	<p>We have requested to Jenny Price, our Countryside officer, that two matters be urgently prioritised by Bromley Council as soon as funding is available. These are firstly, the widening of the footpath from Blackbrook Lane Car Park across Bob's Land to the corner of Bromley High School. Encroaching vegetation has narrowed it to less than a foot wide in places which is obviously not sufficient. Secondly, on the path leading from the railway bridge towards the Gun Site, there is a tree whose roots have broken through and distorted the tarmac, this makes negotiating it with a wheelchair or pushchair very difficult. It is also a major trip hazard for the 700+ runners who participate in the Petts Wood 10k run along this route annually. Should one runner stumble, it could have a 'domino effect' on those behind, which would be very unfortunate! Work by contractors to make this safe is essential.</p>
7	<p>If you have not yet seen it, do go into Thornet Wood and look out for our new circular dead hedge around what was known as 'Dog Pond'. At popular request, it has been decided to change the name of this pond to 'Holly Pond'.</p>
8	<p>From time to time, Bromley Council issues our Group with a small number of tickets to social events at locations such as the Civic Centre or High Elms. If you would like to attend one of these events in the future, please give your name to me and you will be contacted as and when such an invitation appears. Priority will be given to those who have not attended such occasions before.</p>
9	<p>We are very grateful to Margaret Rusbridge who has kindly agreed to assist Bob Land with recording bird sightings at Jubilee Country Park.</p>
10	<p>Our 2 % year battle to get correct signage on the Cycle Track in and around Thornet Wood Car Park has at last been won! Two 'pedestrians in the road' signs are in place and the speed humps have been repainted. A sign showing the shared pedestrian and cycle track has also been installed alongside a bollard to prevent vehicles attempting to reach Petts Wood from Bickley when following inaccurate advice from their sat-navs! Particular thanks go to Cllr Catherine Rideout and Jo Goddard (Bromley High PTA) for their assistance with this issue. It is good to know that commonsense, with a great deal of perseverance, can be victorious in the end</p>

11	<p>2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity. The Friends of Jubilee have contributed two activities (a Butterfly Walk and a Tree Identification Walk) to a programme of Borough-wide events which aims to raise the profile of biodiversity this year. Do pick up a copy of the International year of Biodiversity leaflet which will be available in all Bromley Libraries shortly, or check out: www.bromleybiodiversity.co.uk</p>
12	<p>A planning application has been submitted to Bromley Council by the London Quadrant Housing Association to construct 96 houses and Oats (with 144 parking spaces) on Green Belt Land between Thornet Wood Road and Bromley High School, on Blackbrook Lane. Letters expressing our objections to this proposal have been sent to Bob Neill M.P., Catherine Rideout, Cllr for Bickley, and to the Chief Planner at Bromley Council.</p>
13	<p>It has been under consideration for some time to enlarge, and possibly line, the Loosestrife Pond.</p> <p>We are currently investigating how this may be achieved in a way sensitive to the habitats it supports. This has to be done in consultation with experts in various environmental areas and also with contractors who would undertake such work. As Great Crested Newts are found in this pond, any proposed work has to be undertaken in a narrow 'window of opportunity' when they are not in or near the Pond and therefore will not be disturbed. We are hoping to fund such work largely through donations received, but this will very much depend on the ultimate costs. It may be necessary to seek additional external funding. We will let you know what happens!</p>

14	<p>There have been proposals to close the Public Toilets in Station Square, Petts Wood and replace them with Community Toilets in local shops and restaurants. The Friends have written to Bromley Council and to CDr Tony Owen (petts Wood Ward) objecting to this. For users of Jubilee Country Park and for members of our Work Parties, these are the nearest available public facilities. Petts Wood is also the start/finish point for 2 sections of the London Loop. Those involved in either working or walking may well be muddy and dirty and are unlikely to be welcomed by the owners of Community Toilets. The Public Lavatories at Petts Wood have a least flooring which is robust enough to cope with muddy boots! Cllr Owen informs me that, for the time being, this proposal is unlikely to go ahead as insufficient local premises have offered their toilet facilities. Let us hope things stay this way!</p>
15	<p>An extra item for your diary, Heronwatch - will be taking place this year on Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th March between 11 am - 4 pm. Join in the fun beside the main lake at Kelsey Park, Beckenham, to watch grey herons and their chicks nesting on the island. There will be a chance to look through the telescopes to get a good view of the action. A great family activity. Heronwatch is run as a joint event between the RSPB, Bromley Countryside Service, the Friends of Kelsey Park, and the Friends of Jubilee Country Park. I hope to see lots of you there!</p>
16	<p>And finally - if you have any good ideas about the Park, subjects, or speakers you would like to hear at meetings etc., do get in touch - it would be great to hear from you!</p>