

# Parklife



The Friends of Kennington Park Newsletter Working together to create a better park

Issue 11 • Spring 2014

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## A Blooming Success – lottery win for Friends!

The Friends and Lambeth Council have won their Heritage Lottery Fund bid to restore the Flower Garden in Kennington Park.

The award will bring in nearly £375,000. Counting in a contribution of £82,500 from Lambeth, and the Friends' volunteer time, it comes to £500,000. In a time of austerity, this is a wonderful opportunity to reshape a much loved area of the Park.

Entitled **Blooming Together**, the project will do up the Flower Garden by April 2015 and fund an eighteen-month programme of activities to ensure everyone knows the heritage of the Garden and gets to visit and enjoy its delights.

### What we're planning

Last summer we asked for your ideas about the future layout and use of the Garden. Over 300 people contributed in surveys and focus groups. A big thanks to all – especially the enthusiastic Friends volunteers and our six Met Police Graduates.

**Blooming Together** will restore the Garden to a high standard.

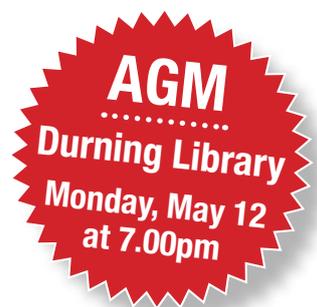


We'll relay paving, pep up the pergolas, and restore the lily pond. There'll be new planting and lots of features for everyone – even new olive trees, from the Chelsea Flower Show. They're donated from the Gold Award winning Roots & Shoots 2013 exhibit, and will highlight the Mediterranean heritage of many in South London. We'll create hidden walks for family fun and, for those wishing to sit and take in the scents and sounds in the garden, there'll be new custom-built seating.

If you live in St Agnes Place or use the new One O'clock Club, a new gate between the Park extension and the Garden will give you direct access and make it easier to enjoy the Garden.

Our landscape architects, Land Use Consultants, will lead the work. They have worked on many projects including the restoration of Brockwell Park and even the Eden Project in Cornwall.

There'll be lots of **Blooming Together** activities running across the seasons; ... *continued on p6*



It was a grand day out (left) at our consultation event in July. The kids got on with the serious business of having fun while the grown-ups told our volunteers what they wanted in the revamped Flower Garden

© Photos by Suzanne Jansen

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[www.kenningtonpark.org](http://www.kenningtonpark.org)

The-Friends-of-Kennington-Park

@KenParkFriends

## Northern Line Extension decision due

The outcome of the public inquiry into the proposed extension to the Northern Line is expected in the autumn, with the Government's decision on it soon after.

Under the proposal, TfL plan to demolish the park keeper's lodge on the corner of St Agnes Place and Kennington Park Place and replace it with a ventilation shaft for the new line.

There would be no permanent loss of green space – the park keeper's lodge has never been part of the publicly-accessed park.

The dog walking area will be used by contractors during the construction, so another dog area will be set up at the other end of the park. Bee Urban, who currently occupy

the gardens of the lodge, have been offered an alternative site within the park.

We think the proceeds from the sale of the lodge – around £800,000 – should be spent on priorities in the Park's management plan: new toilets with wheelchair access, improved paths and drainage. And Lambeth Council acknowledges that money should be spent to mitigate the impact of the NLE on the Park. We've responded by reminding Lambeth about the priority projects identified in the public consultation on the masterplan.

The Friends' committee urge local councillors, and candidates from all parties in the council election, to support them in getting this money spent on Kennington Park. There's still time to add your voice: details in the green box, left.



You can support the committee's view by sending an e-mail direct to your local councillor:

- **Ishbel Brown**  
CllrIshbel Brown@LambethLibDems.org.uk
- **Jane Edbrooke**  
jedbrooke@lambeth.gov.uk
- **Jack Hopkins**  
jhopskins@lambeth.gov.uk
- **Sally Prentice**  
(Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure):  
SPrentice@lambeth.gov.uk

## £50,000 for cricket and football in the park

The extension to the east of the main park has always been a magnet for football and cricket teams – so much so that often the designated cricket pitch has been used by footballers instead. Needless to say, this has taken its toll on the cricket surface.

Surrey County Cricket Club donated £25,000 to Lambeth last year to restore the designated football pitch. This year, work began in April on the cricket pitch: Surrey will spend a further £25,000 on bringing it back up to scratch. Lambeth have installed a water point to make maintenance easier, and will draw up plans to make sure the pitch is used only by cricketers.

Once the work has been completed, the cricket pitch will once again be fit to host the home matches of local cricket clubs.



© Photo courtesy of the Kia Oval

## Friends' projects: latest improvements

### Table tennis a hit!

There's a new addition to the many sounds you'll hear on a trip to the Park – the tap of table tennis bats and balls on the new tables.

Installed by the Friends with funds from Sport England in August 2013, the tables were a big hit from the word go. Players can borrow bats and balls from the café but many people now bring their own.

The tables are in constant use – some play in the morning soon after the Park opens, others late into the dusk, taking advantage of the lights along the midnight path. And, in good weather, there

is often an informal queue of people waiting to play.

The tables attract players of all ages and abilities, and families in particular have found them a fun addition to the Park's facilities.



### Can you Dig it?

Last October, the Friends' volunteer gardening group planted 25 kilos of daffodil bulbs – kindly donated by Veolia – which survived the squirrels and the storms, and produced a host of golden daffodils (left) this spring,



alongside the midnight path.

You may have spotted us at work in the Park, with our Dig It! notice explaining what we do. We meet once a month on Sunday morning (or sometimes mid-week) to plant, prune and weed. It's very relaxed, you don't need to be experienced and we provide the tools and gloves. Email [friends@kenningtonpark.org](mailto:friends@kenningtonpark.org) to get on the mailing list, or look out for posters on the park noticeboards – everyone is welcome.

### Ready for the centenary

As part of our efforts to enhance the Park's assets, the war memorial was cleaned up in 2012. Last year, the inscriptions were recarved to make them more legible. They detail the local battalions of the Queen's Royal Regiment who fought in the Second World War and the battles they took part in.

The war memorial will be the focus for an event this year commemorating the centenary of the outbreak

of the First World War. Details will be publicised on the Friends' website, Facebook and Twitter as well as the park noticeboards.



## Events damage in the Park

From time to time you might see A4 blue notices tied to the park railings. Please have a look at them. They are Lambeth Council's way – under the Licensing Act 2003 – of consulting on events to be held in the Park. Recently, Kennington Park hosted two major events: Benson's Funfair and the Oktoberfest Beer Festival, held in a circus big top.

The Friends' view is that our park, with its conservation status, is not suitable for large commercial events: events should be appropriate and not damage the Park or overwhelm it. We know the budget challenges the Council faces and the need to generate income, but the Friends believe that the Park is for the open air enjoyment of local people living in a densely populated area of inner London. And any

income raised by an event in Kennington Park should go back into the Park.

In 2012, the Friends surveyed local people. The majority of those responding did not oppose events in the Park, but they felt attendance should be limited to 5,000 people. No event should last more than three days and should finish at dusk. Then the Park should be given sufficient time to recover. The Friends will reply to any licensing blue notices, but we hope that if you have views or comments, you will reply to the Council yourself. You can find out what's coming up at [www.lambeth.gov.uk/eventsinparks](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/eventsinparks)



© Photos by Suzanne Jansen

Intrepid table tennis teams from Archbishop Tenison's and Lilian Baylis battled it out in the rain on the new tables. Lilian Baylis won, and the team helped MP Kate Hoey hoist the Green Flag (top), and received their prize

## Three times a winner

Kennington Park was awarded a Green Flag in 2013 for the third year running. The flag recognises excellence in a public open space. It's only awarded to parks that meet stringent standards.

The Park first won the award in 2011 after a rigorous inspection by the Green Flag judges. The success was the result of major improvements to the Park's facilities and maintenance, something that has continued ever since. The Friends have a dedicated group of volunteer gardeners who meet regularly to weed, prune and plant, providing valuable back-up to Veolia's expert park maintenance team.

These efforts were acknowledged by Kate Hoey MP, who hoisted the Green Flag in the Park on Friday, 13th September. With a nod to the date it did, of course, rain but that didn't

deter a large group of supporters turning up to celebrate the occasion. There was a table tennis match between teams from Archbishop Tenison's and Lilian Baylis Schools, using the tables installed recently in the Park by FoKP, which have proved very popular. The team from Lilian Baylis emerged victorious and were awarded a prize.

Kennington Park has been entered for a Green Flag in 2014. We need more volunteers to help with the gardening. So if you're interested, send an email to [friends@kenningtonpark.org](mailto:friends@kenningtonpark.org). It's very sociable, and a really good way to play a hands-on part in your park.



## Parent power in the playground

Most parents are used to cleaning up after their children, but Kennington parents took it to a new level when they gathered to clean up

the children's playground recently. They cleared away piles of rubbish, and thoroughly raked the sandpit to get rid of lots of sharp objects, stones and bits of plastic.

Area Parks Manager, Lara Mifsud-Bonici said: 'This area is very heavily used and litter can build up quite quickly ... it seems there are others using this area who perhaps shouldn't be in there – this could be contributing to the items found.'

You may also have noticed a number of repairs in the playground over last summer. Both the big slide and

the ever-popular bus were taken out of service whilst council contractors carried out essential maintenance.

In fact, the bus is due for a new paint job. So if your children use the playground and you'd like to be involved in the repaint, please contact the Friends: [friends@kenningtonpark.org](mailto:friends@kenningtonpark.org)

And if you see any broken equipment or misuse of the play area, please report it to Lara Mifsud-Bonici: 07958 028275 or [LMifsud-Bonici@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:LMifsud-Bonici@lambeth.gov.uk)



© Photos courtesy of Abigail Alexander/Drake



A group of concerned parents found several sharp objects (top) in the sandpit when they gathered to give the playground a good clean-up last summer – well done, team!

## St Agnes Place is on the way up

For many years, after its demolition by the Council, the area around St Agnes Place was a boarded-up wilderness. There was a long delay whilst the road was re-aligned. But at last, that's all changing. Housing association, L&Q, are building 58 houses and apartments along St Agnes Place with views over the Park and its extension. Some will be for sale, some for target rent and the remainder for shared ownership.

Prior to the housing development, the Adventure Playground and One O'clock Club will move from their current position to a new site in the heart of the Park, by the 'Green Link' which leads off St Agnes Place to the

Flower Garden. A state of the art new building will be home for lots of new facilities, both inside and out. Users of the old Adventure Playground helped design some of the new play equipment. Lambeth Council say the new facilities will be up and running this summer.

The Friends have been pressing the Council to make the new One O'clock Club building capable of developing into a Community Hub; to include facilities for meetings and functions as well as changing rooms. We've also campaigned for it to include a disabled toilet that can be accessed from the Park.



## Park shorts ...

### Stormy weather

It's been one of the stormiest winters on record and the Park was closed for a couple of days after the worst storm while Lambeth Parks' team checked all their parks to make sure there was no danger from weakened trees or branches. Closures like this are inconvenient for park users but they are, ultimately, for our own safety.

We lost a couple of trees

next to the skatebowl: one fell on the war memorial railings, just recently restored. And the Friends' noticeboard was damaged by a falling branch.

Parts of the pathways have always been prone to flooding after prolonged rainfall. The drains around the Park need to be repaired or replaced – a major job and expense, included in the Friends' long term management plan for the Park.

### By the book

*The Second Life of Amy Archer*, the debut novel of FoKP co-founder Rob Pate-man, was launched in July at Durning Library. Rob read from his novel and told us about what had inspired it. The Park has a starring role: 10-year-old Amy disappears from the playground on millennium eve. A decade later a girl arrives, claiming to be Amy. She looks just like the lost girl and knows things

## Your thoughts – about *your* park

Over the years, we've had some lovely feedback from Park visitors arriving in our mailbox. We thought it was about time we shared some of those stories.

### Things we like

Year One students at Keyworth Primary School are enthusiastic about the Park. The Friends heard from them after a recent visit.

'We liked the flower garden because the flowers are beautiful. And the playground, especially the big slide. And the football pitch, because it keeps people fit and healthy'. The children had great ideas for new additions to the Park, including bumper cars, a pirate ship and a real life castle!

### A song for the park

The Year One class at Archbishop Sumner Primary are great Park fans – their excitement prompted musician Heather Joyce to capture their enthusiasm in a catchy song.

The five-year-olds learned it in both English and Spanish. If you type this link into your browser: <http://soundcloud.com/songfish-ing/year-i-s-el-parque-kennington> you'll hear the children singing with great gusto about the green



space, the big red bus, and having a brilliant time!

### Joyce remembers

Joyce Perry remembers her childhood in the Park. Born in 1921, she

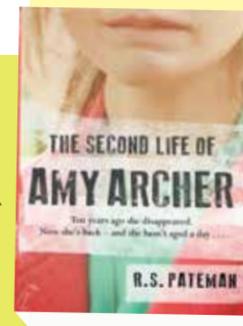
lived in New Street (now Braganza) in Kennington until she was six. Joyce (left) and daughter-in-law Frances visited the Park on her 92nd birthday. She remembers cycling around the Park on her Colson Fairy bicycle, between the beds of 'tulips and red flowers'.

### Our twins love the park

We were delighted to hear from the grandparents of young twins who visit the Park every week.

'We love the vibrancy of the Park' they said. 'Families & friends playing and picnicking on the grass; the brightly coloured flowers in the flower garden; the marvellous variety of things to see and do'. And they appreciate 'the friendly, welcoming café, and the picnic garden, with its large trees ...' It's great to hear how the Park is used and enjoyed by different generations. If you have park experiences you'd like to share, please email us at [friends@kenningtonpark.org](mailto:friends@kenningtonpark.org) – after all, it's *your* park!

© Cover courtesy of Orion Books



only she could know. Trouble is, she hasn't aged a day.

The psychological thriller is the first of Rob's two books to be published by Orion. The second novel, *The Prophecy of Bees*, will be published later in 2014.

## The future of parks' management?

Lambeth have named twelve parks as 'pioneers' of changes in the way parks are managed.

The council wanted to give local people more say in the running of parks and, in consultation last year, offered three possible options:

- a) a formal Management Board of ward councillors, Friends' group and others to make decisions on priorities;
- b) Friends' or other community groups to take over and manage their own park;
- c) the current set up, where

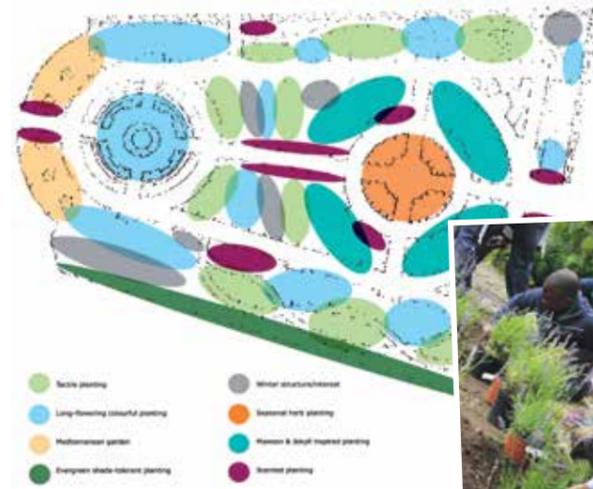
the council makes decisions although Friends groups are informed and consulted.

FoKP urged members to vote for option a), as it was more democratic and inclusive. The committee also felt that the Friends, although they have done a lot to improve the Park, lacked the resources and personnel to take over and manage the Park, its contracts and its staff.

Twelve parks will now move towards Formal Board or Independent Management

status. Kennington Park has recently been added as the thirteenth. Before accepting this, the Friends' committee have asked for more details of how the pioneer initiative is developing, so that we are not having to devote more resources to formal meetings. We also want to be sure that 'non-pioneer' parks are not placed at a disadvantage in the allocation of resources.





**New planting zones** (top) are planned for the Flower Garden. You can join in the fun when it re-opens next April: email us at [friends@kenningtonpark.org](mailto:friends@kenningtonpark.org) to find out what's happening

education and learning for schools will dovetail with health and wellbeing sessions. Look out for music, photography, arts & culture and social media events in our new Garden. We'll build on the oral history of local people, and schedule talks between different generations about gardening. We plan to link up with other historical gardens in South London and beyond – even as far as Portugal, and North Africa! There'll be something for everyone – a Garden Party, an Olive Festival, and even a May Queen. And of course, plenty for people who just love flowers and plants or who would like to find out more



about them and the heritage of our Flower Garden. At the heart of the Activities Programme will be lots of opportunities for new volunteers. Want to develop your green fingers? Roots & Shoots will be providing a specialist gardener to work with and train you to help maintain the Garden. Are you good at organising? You could help run events across the seasons. Maybe you can make music, or show off your culture? We very much want local people to be involved, and need your help to make it all happen.

If you are interested, please contact the Friends: email us at [friends@kenningtonpark.org](mailto:friends@kenningtonpark.org) Lambeth and the Friends are extremely grateful to the Heritage Lottery Fund for this wonderful opportunity to make a difference to the quality of life of people in and around the Park. April 2015 will be a time of great excitement when the Garden re-opens and the fun and activities begin – they'll carry on well into 2016. There's lots to look forward to, so come and join us! It's going to be blooming wonderful!

© Photo (bottom) courtesy of Eva Evangelakou

**Our wooden fitness equipment** (right) is so popular, we need to come up with something more robust. If you have ideas about this, or could help raise funds for a refit, email [friends@kenningtonpark.org](mailto:friends@kenningtonpark.org)

## High bars hit by heavy use

The fitness trail installed by the Friends in 2006 has proved incredibly popular – so much so that equipment suitable for children was added a few years later.

The adult equipment has a large group of enthusiastic users – some of whom travel from all over the country to use the chin up bar which is unique because its length allows three or four people to use it at the same time.

However, the high usage has taken its toll on the wooden equipment. Lambeth's conservation department would not

allow a metal fitness trail to be installed in a listed park.

The users offered to repair the equipment but Lambeth needed to ensure the work was carried out to their safety requirements and sought a quote



from their approved contractor. The quote for repairing just a couple of items was marginally less than the cost for the entire fitness trail, and was refused.

Lambeth, the Friends and trail users are working together to find the right sort of equipment and the funds to pay for it. If you'd like to help find ways of raising funds for the fitness trail please let us know: send an email to [friends@kenningtonpark.org](mailto:friends@kenningtonpark.org)

In the meantime, we're happy to report this popular feature of the Park has been repaired and is back in use.

© Photo courtesy of Ryan West / UK bartendaz

## Park positively popping with Pipistrelles!

Many of London's parks and open spaces are visited by those elusive and fascinating 'creatures of the night' – bats – the world's only true flying mammals.

More than thirty people, young and old, turned out for an evening bat walk on Saturday, 7th September, organised by the Friends of Kennington Park and led for us by Dr Iain Boulton from Lambeth Parks and Open Spaces.



Iain showed us how to use his 'bat detectors' – microphones which convert ultrasound – the high-pitched calls that bats use – into sounds we humans can hear. Each species of bat produces a unique 'suite' of calls in order to find their food – flying insects like moths and mosquitoes – as well as to talk to their neighbours and even find a mate!

Fortune favoured the intrepid searchers and just after dusk we were rewarded with a barrage of bat calls, picked up on the detectors, particularly around the Flower Garden and café. These calls, sounding like a series of 'smacks', 'wet kisses' and 'chips', identified the species as the Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), which is Britain's commonest – and smallest – bat. Pipistrelles are very cosmopolitan bats, often found living in communal 'roosts' in trees, churches or houses – regardless of age – and happily cohabit with their human neighbours

Common Pipistrelle © Hugh Clark / Bat Conservation Trust

without causing any nuisance or fuss.

Not only could we hear the bats – we could see them, fluttering around above our heads and in the trees. And what a show they gave! Iain reckoned at least ten Pipistrelles were active that night, which is pretty impressive for a built-up location like Kennington, and shows that the Park and its surroundings must be providing them with plenty of places to forage and feed. It's not certain if bats live in the Park itself, but the Friends are working to increase opportunities for bats to roost there: we've installed bat boxes and created insect-friendly habitats to ensure bats have every reason to come and stay in the Park.

More bat walks are planned for Spring and Summer 2014. The best way to keep informed about events in the Park is to join the Friends: [www.kenningtonpark.org/join](http://www.kenningtonpark.org/join). Or you can check on our website or Facebook page.

**Bat watchers** gather in the dusk to hear Dr Iain Boulton's talk (above) and join in the search for those elusive 'creatures of the night.' Our patience was rewarded when several Pipistrelles (left) came out to play!

## We need more Friends

As you can see from this edition of **Parklife**, the Friends are involved in lots of exciting projects which will make our park an even more enjoyable place for the local community. But we can't do this without the continued support of lots of members. Of course, the more members we have, the bigger our voice and the more we can get done. Individual membership is just £4 (£2 for concessions).

As a Friend, you'll have the chance to help decide the future of the Park, be part of valuable community projects, and keep up to date with what's happening in the Park. You'll also get regular editions of **Parklife** and updates on park activities.

The easiest way to become a Friend is to visit [www.kenningtonpark.org/join](http://www.kenningtonpark.org/join) or you can fill out and return the form on the back page of this edition



of **Parklife**. And if you're already a Friend, why not persuade a friend or neighbour to join? The more, the merrier!

### Lend a helping hand

If you prefer to be hands-on, why not play a more active part in helping to run and promote the work of the Friends

of Kennington Park? We have a wide range of satisfying and rewarding assignments: we need gardeners, handy people, writers for **Parklife** and our social media, and volunteers to deliver membership leaflets in their local area. As a committee member you could help drive activities. If you'd like to take part in any of these activities, please visit [www.kenningtonpark.org](http://www.kenningtonpark.org) or email us at [friends@kenningtonpark.org](mailto:friends@kenningtonpark.org)





## The Friends of Kennington Park

is a voluntary organisation of local people. We work together to improve the Park. Our aim is to help people to enjoy the Park, and for it to enrich their lives.

### The Park needs your support, energy and ideas – so why not join us now?

It's easy to join online at:

[www.kenningtonpark.org/join](http://www.kenningtonpark.org/join)

If you'd like to pay annually by standing order, please email [membership@kenningtonpark.org](mailto:membership@kenningtonpark.org) for a form.

Or you can complete the form below.

### MEMBERSHIP FORM

I'd like to \*join/renew my membership \*(delete as applicable)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

email \_\_\_\_\_

#### Membership rates

Please tick the relevant box. Cheques should be made payable to **The Friends of Kennington Park**

£4 Individual  £6 Household  £2 Concessions

#### I'd like to make a donation

£5  £10  Other £ \_\_\_\_\_

Total enclosed £ \_\_\_\_\_

#### Gift Aid

To enable us to claim back the tax already paid on your donations, and add 25p to every £1 you give, please complete the Gift Aid declaration below.

I agree to all my gifts in the last four years and any future gifts being eligible for Gift Aid. I have paid tax at least equal to the value of tax to be reclaimed.

Yes  No, I am not a UK tax payer

No, I regret I am unable to help in this way

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**I'd be happy to help out/have expertise in** (eg admin, horticulture, events, first aid, sport, PR, fund raising, leaflet distribution, copywriting & editorial, design/web design):

**Please return this form to:** Membership Secretary,  
The Friends of Kennington Park, c/o Prince Consort Lodge,  
Kennington Park, Kennington Park Place, London SE11 4AS

## DIRECTORY

### The Friends of Kennington Park

email: [friends@kenningtonpark.org](mailto:friends@kenningtonpark.org)

### Area Parks Manager: Lara Mifsud-Bonici

tel: 07958 028275 (9am-5pm)

email: [LMifsud-bonici@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:LMifsud-bonici@lambeth.gov.uk)

### Lambeth Parks Dept

tel: 020 7926 9000

email: [parcs@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:parcs@lambeth.gov.uk)

### Police – Oval Safer Neighbourhood Team

tel: 020 8721 3592

(in emergencies dial 999)

### Animal Welfare Officer: Claire McMahon

email: [CMcMahon@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:CMcMahon@lambeth.gov.uk)

### Lambeth Events Team

email: [events@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:events@lambeth.gov.uk)

tel: 0207 926 6207

### Lambeth Events Calendar

[www.lambeth.gov.uk/eventsinparcs](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/eventsinparcs)

### Sports facilities bookings

(Games Pitch and Tennis Courts)

Greenwich Leisure Ltd

tel: 0845 130 8998

Bookings can be made seven days a week:

Monday to Friday – 9am to 6pm

Saturday to Sunday – 9am to 4pm

### Café in the Park

tel: 020 7793 8886

email: [cafeinthepark@supanet.com](mailto:cafeinthepark@supanet.com)

### Bee Urban: Barnaby Shaw

tel: 07985 220277

email: [beeburbanlondon@gmail.com](mailto:beeburbanlondon@gmail.com)

### Trees for Cities

tel: 020 7587 1320

email: [info@treesforcities.org](mailto:info@treesforcities.org)

### SCCC at the Kia Oval

tel: 0844 375 1845

email: [enquiries@surreycricket.com](mailto:enquiries@surreycricket.com)

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t: 020 7735 1444

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