

Parklife



The Friends of Kennington Park Newsletter • **Working together to make the park better**

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We changed the park – for good

Twenty years ago, Kennington Park was unloved and abandoned – friendless. Yes, local people visited, played and exercised in the park, but it was not a welcoming place – it was edgy, rundown and forlorn. In 2002, the founders of the Friends of Kennington Park vowed to change the park – to turn it around and transform it into the much-loved park we have today.

Friends organised a day of music, dancing, sports, even alpacas from Vauxhall City Farm – we made the park a welcoming, fun place.



Back in 2002, the playground was on the Camberwell Road edge of the park. The Friends wanted it to be at the heart of the park, close to the café. We lobbied and fundraised intensively for a new playground. By 2008 the new, cutting-edge playground had become a real draw

Early days

It takes time to build a team of helpers and to forge relations with Lambeth Council. So early on, progress was slow, but steady. Things hotted up in 2004 – the park's 150th anniversary. The

to the park. The Fitness Trail was added in 2006. And it's been improved and expanded. A Children's Fitness Trail was installed in 2011. In 2014, we got funding from Sport England and put in the two table tennis tables. ... continued on p.6

How it all started – a shaggy dog story

Co-founder Rob Pateman describes the beginnings of FoKP

With so much to celebrate in twenty years of the Friends, it would be easy to overlook one key player without whom we may never have got going.

My dog, Bella.

Well, she was actually my neighbours' dog. They fell ill in January 2000 and, unable to take her out, asked me to step in. I did so



happily. But walking Bella every day opened my eyes to the dilapidated state of the park: the pathways were crumbling and dangerous, the flowerbeds sparse and bedraggled. Children clambered on worn out, uninspiring play equipment while breathing in fumes from the congestion on Camberwell New Road. ... continued on p2

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Drug dealers had taken up residence in the café's picnic area. Then the café closed completely and fell into disrepair.

I kept bemoaning the state of the park, hoping 'someone' would do something about it.

Eventually – reluctantly – I realised that someone might have to be me.

As an advertising copywriter, I hadn't the faintest idea what managing green spaces involved. But I plucked up the courage to ring Lambeth Council and ask how to set up a Friends' group. Despite their encouragement, I was still hesitant, so I sat on the idea.

Six months later, I had a call from Mark Rogers, a digital/tech entrepreneur and local resident who'd been asked by the Kennington Association to investigate setting up a Friends' group. We met up. We got on. We thought we'd give it a go, aided by pointers from Friends' groups at Brockwell Park and Myatts Fields.

The biggest shock was discovering that local authorities had no legal obligation to maintain public parks. They could, technically, wash their hands of them. It explained why parks' budgets are always the first to be cut: some council services just have to take priority when money is tight. Parks were an expensive bauble, albeit a popular one with voters.

At regular public meetings, we asked what

local people wanted, drew up a strategy and a constitution, and formed a committee of volunteers. We built momentum, but improvements to the park needed money – money Lambeth simply didn't have.

None of us had the expertise to prepare bids for funds. So, in a first for Friends' groups in Lambeth, we approached a local charity, Sheepdrove Trust, to fund a part-time fundraiser. But progress was still slow. Wheels didn't just need to start turning; they had to be invented. But slowly, paths were repaired, fencing replaced, new flowerbeds planted.

We were lucky – a new leaseholder took over the café just as the Friends got going. That attracted more people into the park, and drove antisocial behaviour out. The relocation of the playground put play at the heart of the park, changing its atmosphere at a stroke.

Other improvements followed. And in 2011, the park won a coveted Green Flag for excellence in a public park, an accolade it has retained ever since. And it's all down to the hard graft of hundreds of individuals and organisations, paid and voluntary.

Not forgetting Bella, of course. After her owners died, she was my faithful companion for a year and a day. I scattered her ashes under a tree overlooking the tennis courts, where I would eat my lunch – and she would eye my sandwich. In her own way, she's still playing a part in the park – just as she did at the start.



Rob Pateman, co-founder of the Friends, was happy to take over dog-walking duties from his neighbours when they became ill. And he enjoyed the company of Bella, her canine pals and other dog walkers. It was during their walks around the park, several times a day, that Rob woke up to just how old and tired the park was

Dog walking area open again, at last

The Friends have been working hard with Lambeth to get the main dog area back in action. Now, it's finally open. It's been a long and challenging journey since the Northern Line Extension work closed it in 2015. There are still issues, and we're keeping up the pressure to get the promised bins and benches. We hope dog owners will now make maximum use of the area. It's a great space to let your dog run and play.

The increased use of the park over the last couple of years has been lovely, and the comments we get are overwhelmingly positive. It's tricky for the Friends to respond to all the needs of a huge range of park users. We get



Alfie has a rest after his run in the dog area. Now it's finally open again, there's lots more space for dogs to run and play safely in the park

hundreds of emails each year highlighting problems, requesting improvements or complaining about other users. We understand how much dog owners love their dogs. But some people – old and young, families with babies, find dogs intimidating, especially those running free.

We strongly believe the dog exercise areas are the safest places for dogs in the

park. And we know that many dog owners agree, and are already using the new space.

We've been campaigning to keep the smaller dog area open – the council had planned to close it. We look forward to seeing both areas fully used and enjoyed.



Come to our Dog Show!

It's happening on Sunday, September 11th, on the north field in the park. Registration is from 1pm, and the show starts at 2pm. We look forward to seeing you there!

New park plans ahead

At last, Lambeth Council has some money to spend on things that have been on FoKP's wish list for many years. Some areas of the park will be redeveloped, and we hope to tackle the winter flooding of paths and drains. The capital programme is extensive and of course, costs are skyrocketing. But we're getting started. Here are some highlights:

The skatebowl

The iconic Kennington Park skatebowl was one of the first of its kind in London. The bowl shape makes it a fabulous place to learn skateboarding. But after 40 years, it's beyond its last legs: the supports don't work and the concrete is cracked. We removed the top coating, to make sure the slabs underneath were OK. We hoped that if we could repair the adjustment mechanism, we'd get the bowl up and running again quickly. But the mechanisms are a mess. Creating new foundations means removing the slabs and underpinning the main structure. Taking whole slabs away is a big job that can only be done with huge equipment that will damage the trees. So we'll need to break up the slabs and create a whole new skating surface once underpinning is done. It's a big job.

We have a broad steering group: the Council, FoKP, engineers and skaters. We hope we can restore the bowl to meet modern safety standards. We have an outline design, but no timetable yet. Progress has been slow – we couldn't find a contractor with the experience to do the work. But we're keen to get cracking!

Playground

The playground is also showing its age. Extensive tree roots all around mean we can't make it bigger – or extend it into the picnic space. But we could improve it with a separate toddler area and buggy park. We need to retain any existing equipment that's in good condition, and balance that with the cost of new ideas.

We have two committee members on Lambeth's steering group. They've visited other playgrounds, in Lambeth and beyond, to see what's popular, what works and what doesn't. They're reassured to have seen some terrific spaces. They specifically recommend we install a roundabout that's accessible for kids in wheelchairs.



Toilet block feasibility option plan (above), commissioned by Lambeth from architects Pace Jefford Moore LLP, shows three cubicles. We want more. Exploratory work began on the **skatebowl** (above left) in 2021. This sketch by Betongpark Ltd (left) shows step-free access to the bowl, and a viewing area for spectators. Removing the planting in front of the bowl will promote more engagement with the community

Lambeth plan to issue tender documents to attract designers and developers in September. The work should start next Spring and should take about 3 months.

Toilets

The park toilets are often vandalised and out of service. People hate them. So this is a priority.

A new toilet block will be built on the footprint of the children's toilet block. Each loo will have its own sink, and there will be baby-changing and disabled facilities. Two cubicles will face the playground, and at least one will face the picnic area – we're pushing for as many cubicles as possible. We hope the new toilets will help cut out repeated misuse and damage.

Water fountains

The Council are buying new water fountains, suitable for both humans and dogs. They've chosen a design already used in other local parks, including Vauxhall. One will be near the war memorial/dog area, the other on the extension.

Youth Zone

The final phase is a brand new Youth Zone, near the table tennis tables: a space where young people can get active, or just meet up. Work starts in 2023, and we'll be asking young people what they want. Do you have any ideas? Get in touch at friends@kenningtonpark.org

Lockdown park love

Lockdown changed us all. And it changed the park as well.

Kennington Park was always well-used for exercise, dog walks, a trip to the playground, or a picnic lunch. But it changed drastically when lockdown happened. Lockdown prevented us going about our daily lives. All that time we would have spent in the gym, on the sports field, in the cinema or the pub suddenly had to be spent ... at home?

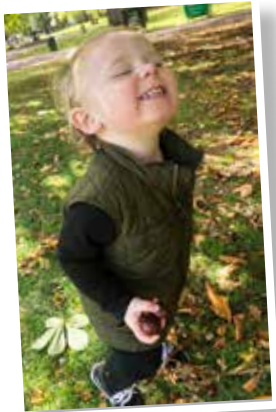
For those living in or near the park, the word 'home' quickly acquired a new meaning. The park became our new living room, pizza restaurant, pub and gym.

Yes, there were downsides: pizza boxes, bottles and cans, piled high around the bins every morning. And worse on Mondays. Our poor park keepers had to spend many hours each day clearing it all away.

And plusses? There were more park users – lots of new people who had never spent time in the park before.

We ran a fun competition, asking people 'What's been your best thing about the park in lockdown?' There was no end to the positive emotions shared. The park had become *the* place to be, a home from home. For many, it had become a friend, even a mental health toolkit – of grass and trees. And puppies! We're not sure so many puppies have ever gathered in one place before!

With restrictions eased and life back to near-normal, local people continue to treasure this amazing resource on their doorsteps. And we hope this will continue long after lockdown has become a distant memory.



Our lockdown competition definitely got the best out of people. We loved seeing the pictures and reading the stories people sent in. There's no doubt – the park was a lifeline for most, and a lifesaver for some! These are just a few of the winning entries. You can see them all on our website – kenningtonpark.org/competition



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Kennington Park is an oldie, enclosed over 160 years ago. It was south London's first public park. Its Green Heritage Award (above) is one of only two in Lambeth

In and around the park

Flags are out again!

Seen the flagpole, near the tennis courts? Its flag says Kennington Park is the winner of the prestigious **Green Flag Award**, which recognises and rewards popular, well-run parks. Awarded by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities and by Keep Britain Tidy, it's the park's 12th win! We saw a huge increase in park users during lockdown.

It's getting tougher to keep the park in tip-top shape. Cuts in the Council's parks budget mean FoKP volunteers taking on a bigger role. We partner with Lambeth to repair and restore the park and push through plans for improvements.

The park is an oldie! Its historic importance and architectural structures have been recognised with a **Green Heritage Award**.

And there's more this year, Kennington Park won not just one, but two Gold awards from **London in Bloom**: one for the park itself, and one for the Flower Garden. The judges said "the Flower Garden was a joy to judge, a rarity in urban parks these days ... an especial 'well done' to the volunteers from FoKP."

Friends' Chair Marietta says "our park is vital to the local community, and it's brilliant that this is being recognised and rewarded."



Drought damage defence

The park is home to hundreds of wonderful trees, including many mature Oriental Planes, and some beautiful recent additions, such as Italian Alder and Turkish Hazel.

We asked Lambeth Council's environment guru, Dr Iain Boulton, how can we protect this heritage?

'Right tree, right place, right purpose' is the universally recognised principle,' says Iain, who is Lambeth's Environmental Compliance Officer. Here are his top tree tips:

- **Choose** new trees from species which establish well in drought conditions, and require less watering. And species with higher resistance or tolerance to plant-borne diseases. Drought can make trees more vulnerable to infections.

- **Water** newly planted trees for the first three years, and regularly mulch around their bases to minimise water loss and prevent weeds competing with them for water.

- **Plant** in tree pits that are the correct depth, and in the right location to capture and retain as much soil and groundwater as possible. Try to avoid planting trees above ground in raised planters or beds.

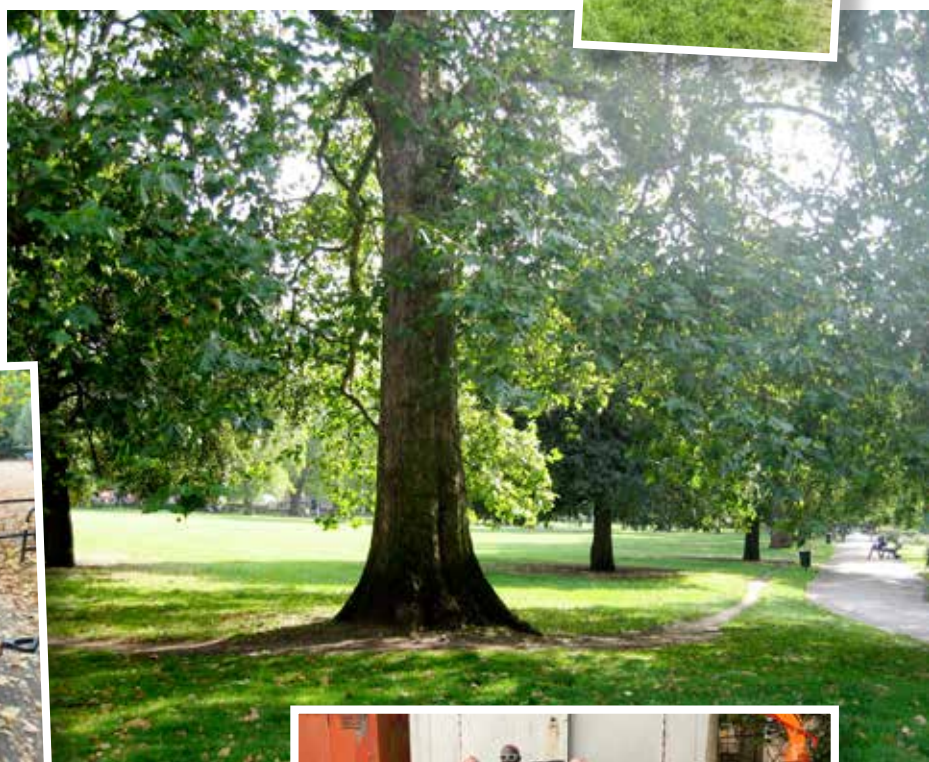
- **Maximise** tree to tree support. Trees interact with each other through their root systems, including via mycorrhiza (fungal) networks, and can exchange nutrients and water. Planting trees

in clusters or groups can increase their success rate for survival. Trees planted far apart from each other might not be able to make these vital 'life support' connections.

- **'Halo'** around mature trees – leave grass to grow long around their trunks out as far as the maximum tree canopy; This captures moisture and reduces ground erosion and tree root compaction.

- **Reprofile** open spaces to encourage groundwater to stay close to tree bases; This means creating bunds and swales, which allow us to store, disperse and contain water where we want it for tree roots.

Kennington Park's trees are its crowning glory. But they're under stress, especially in a hot, dry year like this. One way to help them is to leave a 'halo' of long grass around them – Lambeth's Trees Team are trying that this year (below)



Parks at risk: 'Without volunteers, we would struggle'

Friends are absolutely vital to the survival of parks, new research shows.

The Guardian summarised the situation in August 2022: Friends' groups and other volunteers are picking up the slack as councils make drastic cuts to budgets.

Funding for parks has been slashed by £330m since 2010. That means cuts to staff, litter-picking, bin-emptying, hedge-cutting and horticulture. Fences aren't fixed, playgrounds

unrepaired and pathways suffer.

The Association for Public Sector Excellence found 72% of parks managers expect cuts to budgets in the coming five years. Almost half talked about poor morale. In their own report, Public Health England highlight the importance of high-quality green spaces. Low-quality spaces – poor footpaths, vandalism and litter – can have a negative effect on health.

Liverpool Council is to

guarantee all its green spaces – for ever. More than 100 parks in the city will be secured in perpetuity in collaboration with the charity Fields in Trust.

This is important. FoKP have been pursuing it for some time. Many council leaders, volunteers and workers are campaigning for parks to be a mandatory service.



The Friends persuaded Lambeth to let us help water the trees this year. Our trusty team of watering volunteers have been out in the park, one evening every week, filling up bowers and buckets, and watering and mulching the youngest trees (above & left)

Telling the park's stories

Kennington Park has a long and fascinating history, and the Friends want to share it: signs throughout the park tell its stories.

In 1940, a shallow trench shelter in the park, crammed with people during a wartime air raid, took a direct hit. The tragedy had long been forgotten. But not by us. We raised money for a beautiful memorial to the victims, as well as funding the cleaning of the park's war memorial.

In 2018, the Kennington Chartist Project retold the story of the Chartists, the Monster Rally, when thousands met on Kennington Common in April 1848, and its role in the history of our democracy. Together, we organised talks, walks and events in local schools. We want to commemorate next year's 175th anniversary. What about a permanent memorial?

In 2021, the History Hut opened, documenting the park's long and fascinating history in a lively and accessible way.

The Flower Garden & dog area

Many will remember the Flower Garden as a no-go area: overgrown and unvisited. Our 2012 Masterplan made it a priority. We needed to revitalise it and make it popular again. After years of lobbying and meetings, a £374,000 Heritage Lottery Fund grant, cash from Lambeth and thousands of volunteer hours funded a root and branch restoration. Our prize-winning Flower Garden opened in 2015 – including a lovely new sundial, commissioned by the Friends.

The dog area at the north end of the park has just reopened – read about it on p.2. It needs work to bring it up to scratch – we'll keep up the pressure. We've lobbied continuously for the dog area to be given back, after being fenced off for over seven years.

Gates & gardening, plants & trees

The shape of the park has changed too – the Midnight Path through the middle was widened and straightened to make it safer. The link with the extension was reclaimed. Now, it's an orchard, full of meadow grass, and fruit trees planted by Bee Urban and Trees for Cities. Have you seen the beautiful park gates on St Agnes Place? We helped design them – look out for the iron bats!

Roots & Shoots helped replant the flowerbeds by Prince Consort Lodge. The Guys Gold roses by the Lodge were a golden wedding gift from past chair Gordon Johnston and his wife Jill.

The Friends organise a monthly gardening group. During lockdown, the sessions were a

lifeline for many local people.

Not just flowers – what about trees? In 2017, with Trees for Cities, we counted and listed all the trees in the park. Then, we worked with TfC, volunteers and local schools to plant twenty more, bringing the grand total to 500!

Looking forward

We want the park to be fun. We run regular bat hunts and history walks, and join in the Big Garden Birdwatch in January. July 2022 saw the

Park improvements (right) - the children's fitness trail was installed in 2011. The first adult trail (made of wood) was replaced by sturdier apparatus in 2015. Roots & Shoots helped us replant the sunken flowerbeds. And the new playground, right at the centre of the park, opened in 2008



second Kennington Park Festival – bigger and better than the first in 2021. And September will see our first Dog Show since 2004.

We welcome other volunteer groups to the park: GoodGym and Lambeth Friends of the Earth are regular visitors.

We keep up the pressure on rubbish collection, bins, benches. We know Lambeth Council are short of money and staff. We try to make sure big commercial events in the park don't damage the park or close

off large areas for too long during holidays.

What about the park's future? There's a long shopping list: update the playground, better toilets, restore the skatebowl, better drains and paths. Read about it on p.3.

Lockdown made it hard to recruit members and supporters. In our 21st year, we want to make sure our park doesn't return to the bad old days. It needs Friends – please join us! www.kenningtonpark.org/joinus

www.kenningtonpark.org/joinus

Photos © Haris Finazzi, Loran Mak, FoKP



Maddy's poster (left) for our litter campaign was shared all over Lambeth. We commissioned the air raid memorial to remember local people who died in the park in 1940. The renovated Flower Garden, complete with new sundial, opened in 2015 (below left). Fruit trees and meadow grasses (below) abound in the park's orchard. Twenty new trees were planted in 2017 by local school children (bottom left) and volunteers. And the kids learned all about the Chartists when we celebrated the 170th anniversary of the Monster rally on Kennington Common. A table tennis tournament (below) celebrated the installation of the tables in 2013



From Whitehall to Kennington, with love

A great and true Friend of Kennington Park looks back at his highs and lows



As an Officer Cadet in the Cambridge University OTC (above), Gordon marched in the Queen's coronation procession in 1953, and was awarded a coronation medal. He wore it with pride (right) at the unveiling of the air raid memorial in the park

Kennington's proximity to Parliament means it's always had more than its fair share of MPs and Whitehall mandarins, but none have had a more direct influence on the park than Gordon Johnston, FoKP Chairman from 2006 to 2016.

His long career of public service started as an Officer Cadet in the Queen's coronation procession back in 1953. Later, he served as private secretary to several ministers as well as in the Cabinet Office during the Ted Heath and Harold Wilson governments.

Apart from earning him a Companion of the Order of the Bath, his work also brought him into contact with Margaret Thatcher.

"Margaret Thatcher was very dogmatic," he recalls. "When she visited the newly built Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre, she told me, 'It's a very ugly building. I don't understand how anybody gave it approval.' I said, 'Philip Powell, the architect, has just been made a Companion of Honour by the Queen.' When we arrived, she greeted him, 'Oh Sir Philip, what an interesting building!' But she criticised everything, including the conference chairs. She said 'I want chairs with four



wooden legs like I have in my dining room. Go and talk to Sir Terence Conran ... I'll make the final selection.' And off she swept. That was very much her way. 'I know what we'll have. This is what you'll get.'" It was good practice for his dealings with Lambeth Council in his time with FoKP. As was his experience handling 4,000 staff who oversaw the construction and maintenance of government buildings and military installations overseas. Small wonder that, in 2005, Mark Rogers,

then Chair of FoKP, asked Gordon to help out. Gordon recalls starting as Chair:

"I thought, I don't want to let them down, but I don't want to promise more than I can actually do. I realised the difference with a voluntary organisation was you had to ask people to do things, but if they didn't, there wasn't much you could do about it. It was hard to adjust. I was an organiser, clipboard in my hand, asking people if they could do something, rather than actually doing it."

That approach often led to frustration. "There were very good officers at Lambeth but also some who were not as effective. I'm a

Colour portrait © Suzanne Jansen

In and around the park

What's on at Kennington Park Centre

Kennington Park Centre, on St Agnes Place, is open all year round.

• **Stay and Play** runs 10am

- 1pm, Monday to Thursday, for children 0-5 years olds with a parent or carer.

• **Adventure Playground**, for

6-16 year olds, is open 3.30 - 6.30pm every Tuesday and Wednesday in term-time.

• **During school holidays**, the centre is open Monday to Thursday, 10am - 3pm,

providing a range of games, sports and arts activities.

• **Every Tuesday**, there are family capoeira sessions, and separate classes for kids, teens and adults.

And there's lots more on offer, for children and adults. Including pilates, yoga, fencing, acupuncture and sound bath. Find out more at www.uincap.com.

Need a venue? The centre is available for hire - email kenningtonparkcentre@gmail.com

Bee a volunteer!

Where? At Bee Urban, every Thursday and Friday afternoon, 12.30-5pm. Just turn up and get a buzz!

Doing what? Not only looking after the park's very own busy bees, but fun activities in their garden and wider park. Bee Urban help manage the park's Orchard, planting new fruit trees, pruning, mulching and watering.

They've paid special attention to the young trees this year, which have struggled in the heat. But the older fruit trees are fabulous -



Photo © Kennington Park Centre / Uincap

great believer in hands-on. Go and look at the thing yourself. Meet the people and form your own judgement. You don't succeed by sitting in an office with spreadsheets. I told the councillors, 'You've been elected. Tell the officers what you want and when.'

Despite his frustrations, Gordon oversaw a lot of changes in the park. Which of these is he most proud of? The answer comes without hesitation. "The restoration of the Flower Garden. It was a very big project. It used to be the haunt of drug dealers and drinkers, and now it is used by a wide range of people." In recognition of his efforts, the Garden boasts a bench bearing his name, and an inscription calling him a 'good friend to Kennington Park.'

And, given the chance to wave a magic wand and bring about one instant change, it's benches that get the nod. "At this advanced stage of my life, I'm very keen to see more park benches. Back in 2006, we put in 20 new benches. I'd like to see some more, so every fifty yards, I could sit down! And I've always felt there's some missing link for teenagers. There's a playground for little children but they could really use something like the Stay and Play for teens."

He finds pleasure in one of the smallest projects too. "It's wonderful to see so many people playing table tennis. The tables were a very useful investment of

£3,000 that came from Sport England."

But there are regrets too. "There was a missed opportunity with the park extension. The football and cricket teams needed a very simple pavilion with changing facilities. But the various sports couldn't agree on what was needed or how to run it, so we ended up with a single storage container for football equipment. I'd like to see something more ambitious. And we hoped the Nature Trail would be used by local schools. But that never happened."

What challenges does he see for the park in the next ten to twenty years? "The size of the population. Over a thousand new flats will go up on the old gasometer site. And the Oval Village marketing says 'six minutes' walk from Kennington Park.' That will put further pressure on the space."

Although he stepped down as Chair in 2016, he has found it hard to let go. "My wife will tell you! When I walk around the park, I say 'Oh, this needs doing and that needs doing,' and Jill says 'Leave it! You don't help anyone by writing letters to Lambeth or the Friends. They probably know already.' I find it hard to stay on the touchline. But you've got to accept that new people have new ideas. There comes a time when you have to take a back seat."



Gordon, longest serving chair of the Friends, with co-founders Mark Rogers and Rob Pateman, in the park to celebrate the raising of Kennington Park's first Green Flag, in 2011



Gordon and Jill try out their new bench, unveiled in the Flower Garden in September 2012. The carved inscription commemorates the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and honours Gordon: 'a good friend to Kennington Park'



maturing well, with bags of blossom and fruit.

Do they use their own compost? They certainly do, and it's been a great success. They've been composting with other park users and local residents: turning, aerating, and digging out the rich compost. It has really improved the quality of the soil in the borders around the park. And it helps save the planet too!

You can find out more at beeburban.org.uk

Junior parkrun powers on

It's off and running! – Junior Parkrun in Kennington Park. Children from 4-14 can take part. It's free, and there's no time limit. Some kids walk around the 2k route. Others run the whole way; some do a bit of both.

Parkrun is a national event – it happens at venues across the country every Sunday at 9am. You don't have to register to take part. But if you want your time recorded, you need to register in advance.

25-30 children attempt the route in the park, which is mainly on the pathways.

Some children run with a parent or carer, others run alone. There are marshalls all around the course, so either is fine.

Can you run 2k in under 8 minutes? Some of the young kids can! The rest take things at a more leisurely pace. Everybody who takes part gets cheered on. Parkrun give small prizes to regular participants who reach certain milestones, like finishing ten events. 21 events is equivalent to a marathon.

For each event, they need

at least 15 volunteers to marshal the route and check times. Please come and help – or just cheer! It's great fun, and the kids love the encouragement.

Find out more or register at www.parkrun.org.uk/kenningtonpark-juniors



Gardeners get great results

Our gardening stalwarts keep the Flower Garden beautiful. They get together every month. Here, Ruth Morgan keeps us up to date on what's been going on:

It's seven years since the Flower Garden redesign. The planting continues to thrive. As we expected, some plants have become more dominant. And with water being so scarce this summer, it's the drought-resistant plants that do best.

The gardening group have worked hard to tackle the bindweed, so it doesn't swamp seasonal flowers and bulbs – it's an ongoing battle!

Some dogs think the purpose of the pond is for fetching sticks, and we were

worried the planting had been destroyed. But it survived and has been a treat this summer.

We pruned the climbing roses on the pergola around the sundial beds to improve flowering and coverage. And we mulched and fed them. We added new plants for Autumn and Winter interest – Winter Jasmine and Clematis. These needed regular watering to establish, so thanks to all who helped.

A special thank you to Gordon and Jill Johnston, who care for the Guys Gold Rose bed by Prince Consort Lodge. And big thanks to Linda Phillips of Roots & Shoots for her advice on plants, and to Katie Hillier for expert advice and action on rose pruning. Our old friends Bee Urban helped out with watering and training the wisteria. And of course, we're grateful to Reece and Lucien of Lambeth Parks for all their work in the garden.

Want to come and have a go? All you have to do is join the Friends: kenningtonpark.org/joinus. We'll send you the dates so you can just come along (under 12s must be accompanied). You don't need to be an expert, and we provide all the tools. Sessions are very relaxed, usually on the second Sunday of each month, 12-4pm, from February to December.



Join the jolly gardeners!

Ruth brings all the tools and equipment (above), and we all join in the (not very hard) work. If you're here for our session on September 11th, you might get to pick your own lovely lavender to take home!



Fabulous Festival is a big hit

Frothy feathers! Don't you just love these amazing plumed headdresses (right)? Worn by our fabulous Samba de Rainha dancers, who came back this year to entertain us at the festival – huge fun!

Our first Kennington Park Festival, in 2021, was such fun, we wanted to do it all over again! We wanted even more people to enjoy it this year, so we made it bigger and better.

We had musical sets from DJ Soulprovyder, and Punch & Judy with JoJoFun. Archbishop Tenison's Youthphonics, Caporales Centralistas San Miguel, Boury Academy and Wuntanara were just a few of the fantastic acts who entertained us all day.

All our exhibitors and stallholders, like Lambeth Links, Carers Hub Lambeth, Coconut & Lime and South London Cares, had a productive day.

It was a beautiful, but hot day. So thanks to everyone who came out in the sunshine. Especially to all the lovely Friends who came to say hello, and all of you who joined us for the



first time – welcome to FoKP!

And a massive shout out to all our wonderful helpers, who were in the park before 9am, helping with the stage, marshalling traffic, hauling tables and chairs, putting up gazebos, bunting and banners. And after 6pm, taking everything down again. Special thanks to Reece Turner from Lambeth Parks, who was there from early in the morning until 8.30pm. He did continuous circuits of the park to keep the bins clear all day. And stayed until all the exhibi-

tors were safely out of the park at the end.

Finally, thank you to our partners, without whom this would not have been possible: Melanin Health & Wellness, Berkeley Foundation, Active Communities Network, and Thriving North Lambeth. See you next year!

We love the History Hut!

And we're so glad you love it too. We got some fabulous feedback (*right*)!

The park's new History Boards were conceived, written and designed by the Friends of Kennington Park, to celebrate the rich history of Kennington and its park. Kings and Cricket, Charlie Chaplin, Chartists, pop stars and parakeets – they're all right here! Lambeth Council and Surrey County Cricket Club helped us turn this idea into a reality.

MP Florence Eshalomi cut the ribbon and unveiled our lovely new History Boards last December. And we're so happy Year 6 students from Henry Fawcett were able to join us. Local councillors, Lambeth Council staff and FoKP members came along too. It was cold, but sunny.

Ms Eshalomi was a big hit with the kids (*right*). She pointed them to the story of William Cuffay and the 1848 Chartist Rally on Kennington Common, and told them about the importance of democracy.

We've designed some quizzes about the History Boards. Lots of people, especially the kids, have enjoyed searching the boards to find the answers.

Now you can have a go: do the quiz online at www.kenningtonpark.org. Or do it here (*right*). Post the form to Friends of Kennington Park, Prince Consort Lodge, Kennington Park Place, SE11 4AS. You'll find all the answers on the History Boards.

First prize is a pizza of your choice at Collective Café in the park – yum! Second prize is a coffee and a pastry.

To be considered, entries must be in by noon on Monday, 9th January 2023. The first correct entry drawn at random will win, and the judges' decision is final. We are unable to enter into any correspondence. Answers will be in the next issue of **Parklife**.

Don't forget to fill in your name and contact details on the entry form. If you don't, we can't include it in the draw. Good luck!

Not visited the History Hut yet? There's so much interesting stuff on the boards – what are you waiting for? Have a look next time you're in the park. We hope you enjoy them – we'd love to hear what you think!

... so lovely to see King Viv!



... a brilliant addition to the park



Very nicely done. This is a real gift the Friends of Kennington Park have given ...



Fantastic! Huge congratulations. A wonderful asset – content, design and presentation. And the use of the hut. Really engaging ... a brilliant achievement



Can you do our history quiz?

- Which knight was a devastating striker?

- What is only 8cm long but weighs as much as a pound?

- What was a monster that wanted the vote?

- Who liked clapping but preferred fighting?

- Who tramped about before becoming very famous?

- Who liked a Starry Night and a walk in the Park?

- Who wanted everyone to have an inside loo?

- Who worked in a pawn shop and founded an army?

- Who was pink in the flower garden?

- What was renamed and went to Morden?

- Who was short of stone in 1531?

- What ran across the common and changed its name?

- Who was the Clerk who told tales?

- Which fiery Jamaican was inspired by Haiti?

- Which family did the Jacobites want on the throne?

- In 1848, who got no pay but owned property?

- Which bits of cow flew over London?

- Whose inspiring words were carved in stone?

- Who came with 11, won 14, took 245, then went home?

- Which 20-year olds put their name on the benches?

Your details: Name _____

Email _____

Address _____

Postcode _____



The Friends of Kennington Park

is a registered charity, made up 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.

To help us reduce admin & volunteer time, please join us online. It's the best and most useful way to join:

www.kenningtonpark.org/join

If you'd like to pay annually by standing order, please email membership@kenningtonpark.org for a form.

Or you can complete the form below.

Data Protection

The Friends of Kennington Park will store safely the information requested in this form, so we can keep in touch with you. We are registered with the Information Commissioner's Office. To read our Privacy Policy, go to www.kenningtonpark.org/privacy-policy

We'll keep you informed by email about what's going on in the park. If you're not happy to get email updates from us, you can unsubscribe at any time

FoKP is a registered charity no. 1188922

Parklife is designed by Marnie Searchwell

✉ marnie.s@btinternet.com and edited by Frank Kindred

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PARKLIFE IS FREE. BUT A DONATION WILL HELP TO MAKE THE PARK EVEN BETTER!

MEMBERSHIP FORM

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

Name _____

email _____

Address _____

_____ Postcode _____

Membership rates (per year)

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

☐ £6 Individual ☐ £10 Family ☐ £3 Concession

☐ £15 Community group ☐ £40 Business

☐ £120 Corporate sponsor

I'd like to make a donation

☐ £10 ☐ £20 ☐ £50 ☐ £100

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'm happy to help out/have expertise in (eg admin, horticulture, events, first aid, sport, PR, fund raising, leafletting, journalism/editorial, design/web design, social media):

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

PARK CONTACTS

The Friends of Kennington Park

✉ friends@kenningtonpark.org

Lambeth Parks Dept

☎ 020 7926 9000 • ✉ parks@lambeth.gov.uk

Police - Oval Safer Neighbourhoods Team

🐦 @MPSOval • In an emergency ☎ 999

✉ SNTLX-Oval@met.police.uk

Animal Welfare Officer • Abbie Peterson

☎ 020 7926 8860 • ✉ animalwelfare@lambeth.gov.uk

Lambeth Events

☎ 020 7926 6207 • ✉ events@lambeth.gov.uk

Events calendar: www.lambeth.gov.uk/events

Astroturf bookings

Currently closed for extensive renovation

🌐 beta.lambeth.gov.uk/parks-sports-and-leisure/parks/sports-facilities-parks/all-weather-pitch-astroturf3g-pitch

Tennis courts bookings

🌐 clubspark.lta.org.uk/kenningtonpark

Flower Garden Expert Gardener • Ruth Morgan

✉ ruthmorgan66@hotmail.com

Café Collective • ☎ 07852 131 710

✉ team@collective-kennington.co.uk

Bee Urban • Barnaby Shaw

☎ 07985 220 277 • ✉ beeurbanlondon@gmail.com

Trees for Cities

☎ 020 7587 1320 • ✉ info@treesforcities.org

SCCC at the Kia Oval

☎ 020 3946 0100

✉ enquiries@surreycricket.com

Kennington Park Centre, St Agnes Place

Sarah Moltoni • ☎ 07739 973 890

✉ kenningtonparkcentre@gmail.com

Stay & Play

Jolene Campbell • ✉ kennington.sap@gmail.com

Oasis Adventure Playground, Bolton Crescent

☎ 020 7820 0527 • ✉ info@oasisplay.org.uk

Lambeth Archives

☎ 020 7926 6076 • ✉ archives@lambeth.gov.uk

Other park contacts

📘 Kennington Park Playground Users Group

📘 Dogs in Kennington Park

Kennington Ward councillors

Councillor David Amos • ✉ damos@lambeth.gov.uk

Councillor Liam Daley • ✉ LADaley@lambeth.gov.uk

Councillor Jacqui Dyer • ✉ jdyer3@lambeth.gov.uk

Oval Ward councillors

Councillor Diogo Costa • ✉ DCosta@lambeth.gov.uk

Councillor Claire Holland • ✉ cholland@lambeth.gov.uk

Councillor Issa Issa • ✉ IIssa@lambeth.gov.uk

WORKING TOGETHER TO MAKE THE PARK BETTER

www.kenningtonpark.org

