

Dear Friends of Cassiobury Park,

Welcome to a short update on what is happening in the park, as winter sneaks up on us and droughts are a thing of memory as the Park returns to green prior to the autumnal colour show.

1. **Wetlands Project** - Final bids from the approved contractors are due in this week and we hope to have some indication of the timing and scope of initial works in the coming weeks. A permit extension has been granted by the Environment Agency, due to the delays incurred because of Covid, so things are looking positive.
2. **Nature Signage around the Park** - We have funding for a first round of interpretation signs around the nature reserve. Working with the Council and Herts&Middlesex Wildlife Trust, the plan is to have A4 sized signs on wooden posts at 15 sites. These will tell visitors about the wildlife of interest near the sign and will have a QR link, so that additional information can be accessed. It will be done in phases, so that we can get feedback before completing the project. We are also planning to install or refurbish larger signs at the entrances to the nature reserve.
3. **Cha Cafe** - Sadly, Brian and Mandy, the long-time hosts have left the Cha and they will be sorely missed by many of us. The community atmosphere at Cha was appreciated by many community groups and local residents and it is important that going forward we maintain the DOG friendly and CASH friendly venue under new Management. Cash is important to some older users and also to youngsters wishing to purchase an Ice Cream etc. Please contact your Local Councillors and contacts at the Council to make it clear that the community needs should be reflected in the tender process in the selection of a new management company at the Cha.
4. **Benches** - Progress is being made on additional benches around the Park and we expect some new benches to be placed soon. Now we will tackle Whippendell Wood where the opportunity to sit down comfortably is rare but acknowledged by the Council, who must in places comply with Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) requirements.
5. **Mountain Bikes** - the unauthorised and slowly evolving track in Whippendell Wood has been closed as it was damaging the SSSI. An alternative site nearby has been identified for a track and progress is being made to move that forward.
6. **Work Parties** - As well as the monthly litter picks on the third Saturday of each month we also have volunteers who work to help manage the Nature Reserve. Conservation and biodiversity doesn't just happen and "Many Hands make Light Work". We need more volunteers who care about nature and enjoy helping look after habitats so that wildlife can prosper in the park. No experience is needed and work parties are led by an HMWT reserve officer.. There is a simple email process to let us know you are coming to join in the fun, outside work, and the satisfaction of helping nature. With our new team leader, Matt Butters, we will be working on the Woodland and Ponds in the run up to Xmas.
7. **Cycling**- The new paths are being well received; the removal of the white lines has taken away an accident hazard as cyclists had fallen because of them. Also, the 'Share/Slow' signage on paths and the vertical signs that show that 'Pedestrians have Priority', have generally been observed. We are, however, still concerned about the accident hazard from some speeding cyclists (as well as electric scooters). More Beryl Bikes in the park will only increase the danger but we understand that the council is allowing another 'trial' of Beryl Bikes at the Hub. The proposed 'Green Ring' cycling route around Watford may bring yet more cyclists through the park. So we will need to monitor the expansion of cycling and electric

scooters and ensure that the revisions to the Bye-Laws, allow some element of safety and control on cycling in the park.

8. **Meeting with the new Park Manager.** We recently were delighted to hold our first monthly meeting with the new park manager, Isabel Crozier, who we welcome to Cassiobury Park and with whom we look forward to working for the benefit of all park users.

Continue to Enjoy our Park and please report any Anti-Social Actions to the Police so we can increase their visibility where required.

Best Regards,

Steve Jakeman

Council Liaison

Friends of Cassiobury Park