

On the Common

NEWSLETTER OF THE

FRIENDS OF BARNES COMMON



Summer 2021



Vine Road Project

It's time to have your say!

Our lead architects are finalising the sketch plans for the Master Plan which will then be made available for public consultation events. These have been set for the weekends of July 17 & 18 and August 14 & 15, along with one virtual meeting and smaller surgeries.

The resulting feedback will be used to help finalise the proposal to Richmond Council. If the Master Plan is 'approved', we will then seek outline planning consent, followed by funding and then full planning consent – so there will be several stages, but this summer's public consultation will be important in establishing if there is broad support from the community.

Proposed new facilities will include a 'Hub' eco building that will be available for use by all the community, as well as providing for education, particularly 'Outdoor Learning'. A brand new café will add vibrancy to the site, with new toilets also planned. Exercise facilities for all ages will feature strongly along with water and adventure play for early years and young people, including a pump track, aimed primarily at skateboarders. We will also ensure space for dogs to run!



Our Open Day on 13th June

Landscaping for biodiversity and conservation will ultimately lie at the heart of the Master Plan, including naturalising the Beverley Brook and retaining our community growing plots. Innovative ideas will be used for water saving and to address flood and climate resilience.

To confirm, public consultation events will be held outdoors at the Vine Road Rec on the weekends of July 17 & 18 and August 14 & 15. There will also be a virtual meeting for those who prefer to meet online along with smaller 'surgeries' or one-on-one meetings for those who wish to go into issues in more detail.

We look forward to discussing the proposed Master Plan with you. Please check vineroadproject.org.uk for times and further details including survey form.

New Funding for Flood Resilience

Exciting news came in an invitation to FoBC to join a new partnership, led by Richmond Council, along with WWT, in a bid for funding to improve resilience to flood risk from surface water within the Beverley Brook catchment. The fantastic news is we were selected as one of 25 successful bids out of 79 applications across the nation - and just one of two successful bids in London. The award will provide funding of up to £6million over six years.

FoBC will contribute with its local knowledge of the brook, catchment, surface flooding and neighbourhood and by utilising its existing Community Engagement, Participation and Learning activities.



Key aims are:

- To identify innovative ways to 'Engage the Community' in all stages of flood resilience planning and implementation
- To identify and evaluate innovative solutions, not only for flood resilience but also for climate change, biodiversity and wellness, especially where these help naturalise watercourses and improve water quality
- To modernise flood risk management and address capacity within the existing drainage and sewer system

It will take several months of planning to define the project but topics may include:

- SuDS proposals around Barnes
- Naturalising the brook, particularly at Vine Road and Barnes Green
- Investigating if Leg o' Mutton can help build flood resilience in north Barnes and improve water quality and levels.
- Incorporating flood resilience measures into the Vine Road Project
- Identifying sustainable 'legacy' opportunities to maintain Community Engagement

This is a hugely important project for our whole community and we look forward to working with stakeholders, Friends and indeed everyone when the time comes!

Nature walk and Picnic

To celebrate the coming of summer and the easing of restrictions, Miranda and Sharon hosted an appropriately distanced picnic brunch for our Growers and Yaffles groups. And what a lovely time it was - friends old and new, flying stag beetles, sunshine, laughter and of course the privilege of hearing Miranda share her knowledge and passion for our Common. We are looking forward to offering more activities as things begin to open up again.



Dragonfly by George (age 10) inspired by our walk

Green Flag Judging

The Vine Road volunteers went into overdrive in the run-up to the visit from the Green Flag judges. The injection of increased activity and presence has led to really positive feedback. A huge 'thank you' and 'well done' to everyone involved! We are likely to hear results later in the summer.

Making the most of the 'Outdoor Classroom'

Sharon recently met with staff at Lowther School to visit their thriving outdoor space that has become a real asset during the pandemic. On top of already-full timetables, it is not always easy for teaching teams to find ways to 'take things outside'. We are delighted that she has been invited to meet with the full team early in the new term, to explore ways to make the most of outdoor classroom space, and link to curriculum.

Throughout the pandemic, our links with staff and student educators at Roehampton University continued to strengthen. On-line presentations and team-teaching between Roehampton staff and Sharon have explored the best ways of teaching outside, the power of local places, and the value of integrating 'outdoor classrooms' with curriculum needs.



Lowther School

Lifelong Learning: please contact Sharon to find out more education@barnescommon.org.uk

Acid grassland recovery

Due to wear and tear, we have continued to temporarily fence off some of our acid grassland but the benefits have been clear to see. Areas are now thriving again, often with shimmering red carpets of sheep's-sorrel. We really appreciate everyone respecting these spaces, allowing the flora time to recover.

Some of our trees are also looking rather worn and tired, particularly where heavy footfall has compacted the surrounding soil which then inhibits the tree from accessing water and nutrients. Unfortunately, climbing up trees also causes damage where bark flakes off and then exposes the vulnerable cambium layer underneath. You may see us fencing a few trees off to help them recover and protect them for future generations.



It's that season again!

The survey season is back in full swing with weekly butterfly transects across the Common and at Leg o' Mutton. The dragonflies and damselflies are all emerging too so we will be monitoring these along with our monthly Riverfly surveys of the Beverley Brook.

We are partnering with London Zoological Society again for our annual camera trap survey of hedgehogs. We're hoping to go further afield in Barnes this year, surveying many of your gardens as well. Unfortunately, we've already had several hedgehogs found dead on the roads around the Common but even these are helping with research; we collect them for a PhD student to carry out genetic analysis to understand the local population further.

A massive thanks to all the volunteers that help with all the survey work, we couldn't do it without you!



Above Left: Volunteers looking for Brown Hairstreak eggs. Right: Common Darter Dragonfly

Barnes Commonartshow

Invitation to an exclusive
PRIVATEVIEW

An Exhibition of
Painting, Sculpture,
Ceramics and Photography
inspired by Barnes Common

Barnes Artists and a local branch
of London Independent Photography
are delighted to invite

The Friends of Barnes Common
to an exclusive Private View

Monday 26th July 2021
6.30 – 8.00pm
at St Mary's Church, Barnes

The exhibition continues
27th July to 4th August 2021
10.00am – 5.00pm most days.

See daily opening times at
www.barnesartists.org

www.barnesartists.org
www.barnescommon.org.uk
www.londonphotography.org.uk
www.stmarybarnes.org





Local artists and photographers were so delighted to discover the abundance of natural beauty on their doorstep during lockdown, they have decided to make it the focus of their summer show.



The Barnes Common Artshow 2021 is an exhibition of affordable artwork by local artists and photographers who have been inspired by the beautiful natural flora, fauna and wildlife on our doorstep. All carefully and expertly managed by the Friends of Barnes Common team. The art show has been organised by BarnesArtists in partnership with the Putney and Barnesgroup of the London Independent Photographers. The show is open to the public from 27th July to 4th August at St Mary's Church, Barnes. Admission is free and open daily please visit www.barnesartists.org for timings.

Top: *Falling Willow* by Heather Mackinlay
Left: *Favourite Climbing Tree* by Katie James



There's Always One by Andrew Wilson

Throughout the spring and early summer months, over two lockdowns, local artists and photographers have been quietly observing and discovering the rare butterflies, and wild species of plant life that flourishes from a unique and precious landscape that has been free of industrial and agricultural pesticides and fertilisers for centuries. There are now

over 30 species of butterflies recorded visiting the native meadows, orchards, acid grasslands and woodlands that make up the greater area of Barnes Common.

Early morning starts and late afternoons have provided exquisite light for photographers and plein-air landscape painters. Individual trees, insects and rare dragonflies are the subject for printers, abstract painters, sculptors, ceramicists, and the local jewellery designer Gerry Summers who is designing a ring inspired by his favourite tree on the common.

Co-founder of BarnesArtists David Pearce said "We are so incredibly lucky to have so much natural beauty on our doorstep and it seemed obvious for BarnesArtists to focus on it for their summer show. It has been a fascinating journey discovering and uncovering the wildlife of Barnes Common with the expert guidance of Friends of Barnes Common".

All artwork will be for sale and a percentage of sales from the show will go to both Friends of Barnes Common and Friends of St Mary's Barnes.



Heron in Beverley Brook by David Pearce



Morning Sun by Sarah Dickinson



Small Copper by Helen Pettigrew



Painted Lady by Sue Pearce



Barnes Blossoms by Julian Newton



The Knot by John Kelly



Abundance by James Kirkland



Red Eye by Tammy Marlar



Renewal by Jeremy Frearson

New wildlife pond for the Common

After a successful bid to the Thames Water 'Rivers & Wetlands Community Days' fund, which was generously matched by LBRuT, we will be creating a new wildlife pond this autumn. It will be tucked away, behind the black poplar nursery, which is already a seasonally wet area.

Unfortunately in the UK, we've lost over half a million ponds in just the last 5 years. Ponds are brilliant habitats for wildlife and provide a life line for many species, whether for amphibians or acting as 'insect chimneys' for emerging aquatic invertebrates that in turn, attract feeding birds and bats.

In order to minimise disturbance and pollution from dog flea treatments, the pond will be protected by the black poplar nursery fence. Things will look a little drastic during construction, but rest assured it will soon take shape and become an exciting corner of the Common - we're looking forward to seeing how it develops over the years.



Help us Hedge

For any business owners, we've launched a campaign on the 'Neighbourly' platform, to 'help us hedge'. With all the roads that criss-cross the Common, we have numerous 'edges' that provide suitable gaps for hedge planting. Hedges are not only wonderful for wildlife but also for people too as they trap car pollution and absorb carbon. If you and your business would like to do some team building, while getting their hands dirty and volunteering outside, please contact our Conservation Manager, Will Dartnell (manager@barnescommon.org.uk). Thank you to the Barnes Pantry who have already donated £100 and whose team will plant some hedges this November.

Sunflower Superhighway

Children from Barnes Primary Eco Team joined us before the start of their school day, to plant their sunflowers, having sown seeds back in April. Please take a look along the fence line by the polytunnel at Vine Road to watch how our sunflowers and sweet peas continue to grow!



FoBC Storage

It has become clear that should FoBC storage remain at Vine Road, consequent vehicle movements will be an issue for the Project. We are therefore minded to seek permission for a functional storage barn and workshop in an unobtrusive place on the Common. Essential facilities for management of open spaces are permissible developments within open spaces so, along with the Vine Road Project consultation, we will also be seeking broad community support for this.

Leg O' Mutton - terns return

It still manages to prove an exceptional site for birds, with the sighting list often nearing 50 bird species in a month. The reservoir is home to several breeding pairs of cetti's and chattering reed warbler while a real rarity was a sighting of a tree sparrow. At the time of writing, the common terns have returned from their wintering grounds in the southern hemisphere and are attempting to find nesting space on the rafts that are not otherwise occupied by the black headed gulls, so fingers crossed for a few successful nests.



Slim pickings for the Terns (on the right) as the Black-Headed Gulls take all the good spots on the rafts we have at the Leg o'Mutton.

The arrival of some new chestnut fencing will further help us protect more of the key nesting areas from disturbance by people and unfortunately, occasional incidents where dogs are not on leads.

Recent Sightings

We've had some excellent sightings across the Common this spring and summer. An early surprise was three tawny owl owlets, while local wildlife enthusiast, William McDonnell was lucky enough to hear and get a great picture of a wood warbler, a real rarity for London let alone Barnes (see bottom left)! A whitethroat at Van Burens and presumably the same bird at the orchard was also a new addition to the bird list while the cetti's warbler continues to call down along the brook with another good year for the blackcap nesting amongst the dense brambles.



The heavy rains in May seemed to bring a good flush of fruiting fungi, including a beautiful silky rosegill mushroom found on a decaying horse chestnut (bottom right, picture Will 2). Green hairstreak butterflies have also been spotted which are always a welcome treat - keep your eyes peeled for them around the gorse patches (bottom middle). If you've noticed that some of the oaks are looking a little leafless, that's because it's been a bumper year for the green oak tortrix moth, whose larvae feed on the leaves. They can often be seen suspended on a silken thread hanging about head high from the branches. Completely harmless to us, the oak trees have also evolved to deal with them as they often produce a second flush of leaves, usually in late July, known as lammas growth.



Address Label

'Skate along' Open day

After the success of our recent crowdfunding campaign including £13,000 funding from the Mayor of London's GLA London Resilience fund for the Vine Road Project, you may have already noticed some improvements, including three beautiful new picnic tables which have already been put to good use with plans for a brand new seat planter where the old heather bed used to be. The first of our consultation events also took place, with a Skate-Along Open Day on Sunday the 13th June. This was a huge success with many families, skating enthusiasts and a team from Kimber Skatepark joining us to try out some ramps and share feedback.



'Travels with my Camera'

Local photographer and Friend of Barnes Common, Andrew Wilson, brings us up to date with what's been catching his eye on the Common recently. You can follow Andrew's 'travels' on Twitter and Instagram @WildLondonPics

With a packed edition this month, there is only room for a couple of recent pictures. One from a family of 4 fox cubs from beside the station and a beautiful small heath butterfly from The Orchard.

